



Language Cert

Preparing Learners for
the LanguageCert International ESOL
Speaking Exams

Language Cert

This booklet has been composed to assist with the preparation of learners for the **LanguageCert International ESOL Speaking** exams. It aims to familiarise teachers with the tasks featured in these exams, to recommend teaching strategies and speaking activities, and to share some tips from our team of expert marking examiners. It also includes three papers that are of the exact same format as the exam papers used by LanguageCert Interlocutors to conduct official speaking exams.

All activities, course books, methodologies and strategies used to enhance learners' fluency and to improve their accuracy will be just as effective in preparing them for the LanguageCert speaking exams. The **communicative** nature of the exam together with the **consistency** of the structure of the test throughout the six CEFR levels allows teachers to dedicate minimum teaching time to *teach to the test* while at the same time makes preparing for the exam an integral part of the learning process with distinctively **positive washback**.

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LanguageCert International ESOL Speaking exams – Official Past Papers

Achiever Paper B1

Communicator Paper B2

Expert Paper C1

About LanguageCert

LanguageCert is an **Ofqual** recognised Awarding Organisation responsible for the development and award of language qualifications. LanguageCert’s mission is to offer high quality language qualifications that are truly fit-for purpose for the candidates they serve.

LanguageCert International ESOL Qualifications

LanguageCert ESOL International qualifications are designed for candidates who are not native speakers of English and who wish to achieve a high quality, internationally recognised qualification in English. They are designed to reference the descriptions of language proficiency in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The **LanguageCert International ESOL Speaking qualifications** are separately administered spoken examinations available at the same levels as the International ESOL (Listening, Reading and Writing) suite of qualifications.

The structure is the same across all levels of the exam to ensure consistency and at the same time the candidates’ familiarity with the exam format, requiring minimum teaching time dedicated to preparing for a test.

Format of International ESOL (Speaking)

Level	Duration	Structure
A1 - Preliminary	6 minutes	Part 1 Personal information Part 2 Situational role plays Part 3 Exchanging information Part 4 Long turn
A2 - Access	9 minutes	
B1 - Achiever	12 minutes	
B2 - Communicator	13 minutes	
C1 - Expert	15 minutes	
C2 - Mastery	17 minutes	

Format of International ESOL (Speaking)

	Skill & Focus	Task
Speaking Part 1	<p>to communicate personal information</p> <p>to communicate opinions and ideas on a variety of topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell name • Give country of origin • Answer up to five questions
Speaking Part 2	<p>to communicate in real-life situations using a range of functional language to elicit or respond as appropriate</p> <p>to show the ability to use a range of language functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three situations are presented by the interlocutor and candidates are required to respond to and initiate interactions.
Speaking Part 3	<p>to exchange information to complete a task (Preliminary / Access)</p> <p>to co-operate to reach agreement/decision (Achiever / Communicator)</p> <p>to engage in discussion and to justify, challenge and persuade when expressing and eliciting opinion (Expert / Mastery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange information to identify similarities and differences in pictures of familiar situations at Preliminary and Access levels. • Hold a short discussion to plan, arrange or decide on a topic using visual prompts at Achiever, and written text as the prompt at the three higher levels.
Speaking Part 4	<p>to present a topic</p> <p>to demonstrate the ability to use sentences and produce a piece of connected spoken English</p> <p>to narrate, communicate ideas and express opinions</p> <p>to speak in depth on one topic from a wide range of abstract and complex subjects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 30 seconds of preparation time, talk about a topic provided by the interlocutor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preliminary – for half a minute ▪ Access – for 1 minute ▪ Achiever – for 1 and a half minutes ▪ Communicator – for 2 minutes ▪ Expert – for 2 minutes ▪ Mastery – for 3 minutes • Answer follow-up questions

The four parts of International ESOL (Speaking)

Part 1 – communicating personal information

The aim of this part is to settle the candidate and to elicit personal and everyday information. The interlocutor first asks the candidate for the spelling of their family name and their country of origin for identification reasons - these are not assessed. The interlocutor then selects further questions from the list provided. From **Access** to **Mastery** levels, the questions are given under five topic headings. The questions allow the candidate to respond by giving personal information, ideas and opinions on a range of topics.

Questions range from very simple, e.g. *How old are you?* (**Preliminary**) to complex, e.g. *Which aspects of your education so far have been the most beneficial for you?* (**Mastery**). The interlocutor may expand the questioning, particularly at the higher levels, to help the candidate produce sufficient language.

Part 2 – communicating appropriately in social situations

The aim of this part is to test the candidate's use of functional language in a range of real-life situations. The interlocutor and candidate enact at least two situations. The interlocutor may need to assume a different persona, but the candidate is never required to do so.

At the lower levels, the dialogue will usually involve four exchanges (up to two short turns each). At the higher levels, the given situations will require the candidate to enter into exchanges of greater length and complexity.

At Preliminary level, a typical situation might be:	Interlocutor: We are in a café. I'm a waiter. You're a customer. I start. <i>'Good morning. What would you like to drink?'</i>
At Achiever level, a typical situation might be:	Interlocutor: I'm your friend. You look tired. I start. <i>'Why don't you take a holiday?'</i>

<p>At Mastery level, a typical situation might be:</p>	<p>Interlocutor: We're both in a meeting. I'm the chairperson. I start.</p> <p><i>'Well, I'm quite concerned. John Phillips hasn't arrived yet. I wonder what's happened to him and if we should start. What do you think?'</i></p>
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The interlocutor then chooses one from four given situations which require the candidate to initiate the interaction.

<p>At Preliminary level, a typical situation might be:</p>	<p>Interlocutor: You want to find a post office. Ask me. You start.</p>
<p>At Achiever level, a typical situation might be:</p>	<p>Interlocutor: I'm waiting for you outside the cinema. You're very late. You start.</p>
<p>At Mastery level, a typical situation might be:</p>	<p>Interlocutor: I'm your neighbour. Complain about the large tree in my garden and say what you want me to do. You start.</p>

At **Preliminary** and **Access** levels the interlocutor guides the interaction and supports the candidate. At the higher levels, especially **Expert** and **Mastery**, the interlocutor allows the candidate to guide and maintain the interaction. At the higher levels the candidate's contribution is expected to demonstrate an awareness of the tone and register appropriate to the situations. For example, when making a complaint, it is necessary to consider how direct the language should be and which tone of voice should be used.

Part 3 – exchanging information and opinions

The aim of this part is to test the candidate's ability to use English to give and receive information in order to perform a communicative task. The task topics do not require the candidate to have specialist knowledge but at **Expert** and **Mastery** levels candidates are

required to have an awareness of and opinions about social and contemporary issues. The interlocutor and candidate exchange information to perform a task.

It is the language used in the interaction that is most important, not the ability to complete the task in the given time. However, the interaction should move towards achievement of the task set.

At **Preliminary** and **Access** levels the candidate needs to give and ask for information to find the differences between two pictures.

At **Achiever** an attempt at agreement after a discussion based on visual prompts is expected.

At **Communicator** level a plan or arrangement is attempted after a discussion based on written prompts.

At **Expert** and **Mastery** levels the task takes the form of a discussion or negotiation based on written prompts. The candidate is asked to rank or prioritise, analyse, eliminate or hypothesise. Candidates at these levels will be required to expand and exemplify, justify, challenge and ask the interlocutor for clarification.

A typical discursive task at Mastery level is:

Interlocutor: Here is a list of some of the factors which might be important for job satisfaction. Let's discuss the different factors and decide the most and least important ones for us. Let's also consider which jobs involve the different factors.

social status variety lack of pressure being praised
exercising power freedom meeting people

Part 4 – presenting a topic

The aim of this part is to test a candidate's ability to speak at greater length with minimum participation by the interlocutor. This part of the test gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their range and fluency in English. The interlocutor selects a topic for the candidate to talk about. The candidate is given pencil and paper to make notes during 30 seconds of preparation time.

At Preliminary level, a typical topic might be:	What you do on Sundays.
At Achiever level, a typical topic might be:	An amazing experience.
At Mastery level, a typical topic might be:	How the design of towns and cities affects our lives.

The candidate may be asked to answer follow-up questions to their presentation or may be interrupted with questions from the interlocutor, as time allows.

More information on LanguageCert qualifications, support materials and webinars, together with our full series of official practice papers can be found on www.languagecert.org

Even though few would disagree that speaking is the most common means of communication, and most language teachers recognise its crucial role in language learning, teaching speaking can prove to be challenging if underestimated.

Language teachers need to set up **activities** to help their students learn to speak English. This may sound obvious even to recently trained teachers, but it was not that long ago when it was thought that if the students learnt the grammar of English, then somehow spoken communication would take care of itself. This is evidently not the case. We need to encourage students to speak fluently in situations as close to real-life contexts as possible. This not only gives students a chance to practise speaking before testing out their knowledge in the outside world but also gives them evidence of how well they are progressing and how much they know or need to know. This feedback also informs the teacher and gives direction to future lessons. In addition, learners see speaking activities as relevant and enjoyable, so they are motivating in themselves.

Quick Tips

- Don't just give your students a practice opportunity
- Teach them subskills
- Teach them strategies
- Teach them what they cannot learn outside the classroom
- Break the overall task down to manageable chunks

Planning a speaking activity

There are many different types of speaking activities, which allow **freer or more controlled practice**, depending on how they are designed and implemented. Planning is the most important stage, and this usually includes a much more holistic overview of the lesson(s) than just the specific task to be used. In *How to Teach English*, Harmer categorises different types of activities in the classroom as Engage, Study and Activate. There may be Study activities either before or after a speaking activity and almost certainly there will be an Engage activity to get the students' interest and attention beforehand; however, a speaking activity is almost always Activating. This means students are given the chance to try out language in situations where the most important aim is to get the message across without worrying about mistakes.

Most common types of Speaking activities

- Information gap activities
- Opinion gap activities
- Role play activities
- Presentations
- Task-based problem-solving
- Drilling

The following is a brief example of the different stages in a lesson which includes speaking practice.

Stage	Activity	Aim
1	Students (individually or in pairs) are given a short amount of time to list as many different forms of transport as they can, in competition style.	Activating vocabulary
2	Students ask each other which forms of transport they have used.	Engaging students - Making it personal
3	Students study railway/timetable related vocabulary.	Teaching vocabulary / supporting for next activities
4	Students study present simple questions, e.g. When does the train leave? Which is the platform for...?	Teaching/revising question form (could be repeated after controlled practice if needed)
5	Students listen to station announcements and write down the information they need.	Listening for gist first / Listening for detail the second time.
6	Students work in pairs. One student is given access to the internet and to a railway website with real-time information. The other is a traveller asking for information about a journey.	Speaking – controlled practice – focus on accuracy
7	Students work individually to prepare a 2-minute talk which they then record, on a relevant topic, e.g. "A time I helped a tourist", "A memorable journey", "My favourite means of transport", depending on their level.	Speaking – freer practice – focus on fluency

Error Correction

With speaking activities, **delayed feedback** is the preferred methodology in most cases. Interrupting students while they are speaking detracts from fluency practice and can make students hesitant and insecure. In delayed correction, the teacher monitors closely as learners perform the speaking activity and makes notes of the most interesting or common errors. When the activity finishes, feedback focuses first on task completion. Then, errors are discussed in plenary mode. Examples of good language use should also be mentioned.

There are several delayed correction techniques. Some ideas are:

- You write the phrases containing the errors on the board and elicit corrections.
- You write the errors and ask students to correct them on the board.
- You write the phrases containing the errors on the board and ask students to correct them individually and pair check their answers.
- You write a series of sentences as said by the students. Some of them contain errors, whereas some are correct. You ask students to spot the errors.
- You write on the board some phrases that students said, containing no errors but consisting of rather simple vocabulary and grammar. You ask learners to upgrade them, by enhancing the lexical and grammatical complexity of the utterance, as the task objective, perceived audience, and CEFR level dictate.

Remember that the right approach with this is “a little over a long time” rather than “everything all at once.”

Students may be speaking during a lesson but in fact that does not necessarily mean they are practising speaking as a skill. For this to take place, learners need to be thinking about meaning and to have a genuine reason to communicate. Speaking tasks should not only put communicative pressure on learners, but also allow them to use their full repertoire of English knowledge freely, without interruption or correction. This should happen even at the lower levels where teachers can set up more controlled fluency practice. The requirements of a speaking skills lesson put demands on the teacher to plan and predict and to manage the lesson effectively.

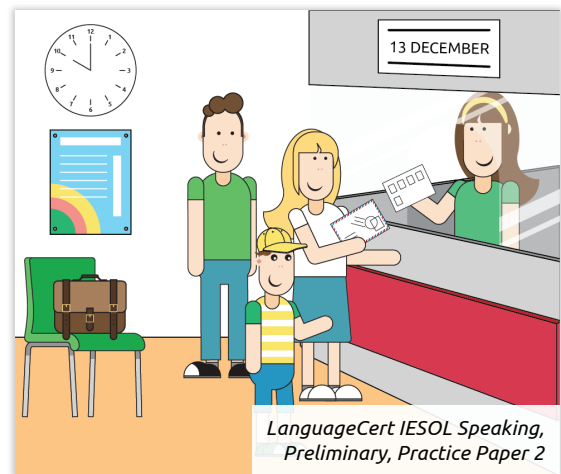
Further reading

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- Nation, I.S.P. & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*, Routledge.
- Richards, J. (2008). *Teaching Listening and Speaking; From Theory to Practice*, CUP.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to Teach Speaking*, Pearson.
- Underhill, N. (1987). *Testing Spoken Language: A Handbook of Oral Testing Techniques*, CUP.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching. Practice and Theory*, CUP.

Speaking activities need to be carefully planned and structured to enhance learners' speaking skills effectively. This does not mean, however, that they need to be long, serious, or that they cannot be used as part of a lesson aiming at working on other skills at the same time. Below is a collection of activities that can be used in several different lessons and with several different materials.

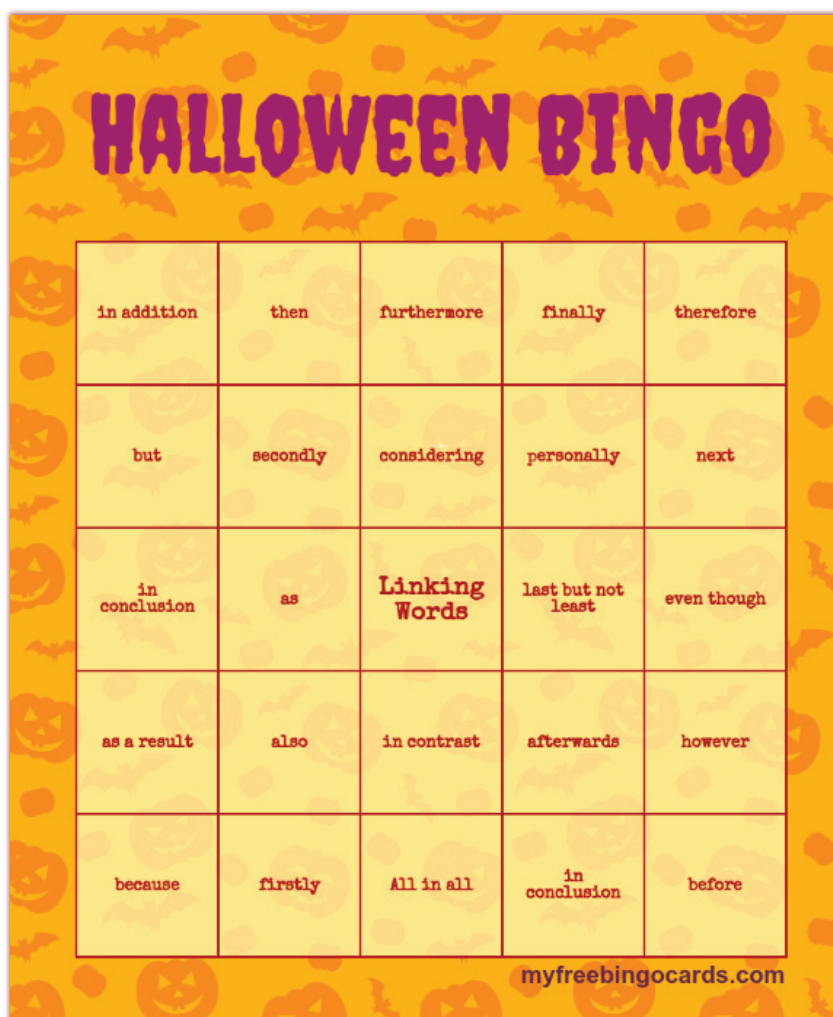
- After completing a listening activity, remember to take advantage of the audio scripts. Have learners underline features of spoken speech such as fillers, turn-taking strategies, etc.

- Students work in pairs. You give one person in each pair a picture showing a simple scene (you may use one from LanguageCert A1 and A2 levels, Part 3) and ask them to describe it to their partner without showing it to them. The other person needs to draw it, and should ask questions or clarifications as necessary.



- Give the students a topic. This could be something you have covered at a recent lesson, or a topic taken from a LanguageCert speaking exam, part 4, at their level (e.g. An amazing journey). You start telling a story on that topic, but stop after a few sentences, and leave the story hanging with a cohesive device. The next student needs to attempt to continue the story for a few more sentences, leaving it incomplete again using a different linker this time. The next student will have to continue from there, following the same pattern. This will make students think of cohesive devices, and sometimes even try to think of using the ones they would use the least, to make it more challenging for the next person! This activity can also work in pairs. You may choose to support your students by showing them a list of linkers that they could use.
- You can also do a shorter speaking activity as a warmer/lead-in to a reading lesson. You write on the board the title of the reading text the students are going to read and you show the class some photographs that accompany the text. You then ask them to work in groups and discuss what they think the text is about.
- Engage them. Ask students to take a photo from their journey home with their phone to describe in the next lesson. You may ask them to describe their photo in different pairs, and then ask some of the students to present it to the class.

- Teachers and most students like lists, especially ones with cohesive devices and linkers. Take such a list and turn it into a bingo cards to use during speaking activities. Students complete the speaking activity in pairs, with one person speaking on a topic and the other ticking the box, if the linker was used appropriately. A different version of this could be with students having different bingo cards with different linkers to tick while one person is presenting a topic. You can make your own bingo cards or use a free bingo card generator for fancier results, which you could also personalise to match the topic the students will be talking about.



- Debates: Give each student a piece of paper with “agree” written on one side and “disagree” on the other side. Show them or read aloud a controversial statement, and have each student hold up their paper showing the “agree” or “disagree” side depending on their opinion. Choose one student from each side to explain their position and participate in a short debate. (This can also be done with mini whiteboards.)

Technology in language teaching is a familiar topic on teacher training and development courses and at conference workshops. Over the years, technology has had a great influence on what happens in the classroom and used imaginatively it allows teachers to unlock the potential for successful learning.

In the next pages, you will find some practical ideas for incorporating the use of a recording device in your teaching. All the activities have been tried and tested by practising teachers in a variety of situations: at a range of different levels and ages; with monolingual and multilingual groups; on year-round and short courses.

Technology should not dictate or limit what we teach or how we teach it. The same applies to examinations: they should reflect what happens in the classroom. The LanguageCert International ESOL Speaking suite of exams promotes the learning and teaching of communicative language skills. These activities have all been adapted for teaching speaking skills with a focus on exam preparation and the voice recorder offers an extra dimension to make them more successful for learners and teachers. The **benefits of using the voice recorder** include:

▲ Error correction

Language learners often want to be corrected when they are speaking, while teachers would prefer to let spoken production and interaction flow without the interruption which restricts fluency. The Common European Framework of Reference discusses the action to be taken with regard to learner mistakes and errors (CEFR p.155) and the options which teachers frequently agree with are (c) *all errors should be noted and corrected at a time when doing so does not interfere with communication (e.g. by separating the development of accuracy from the development of fluency)* and (d) *errors should not be simply corrected, but also analysed and explained at an appropriate time*. The use of the voice recorder makes this possible and gives teachers the kind of permanent record of learners' spoken language which we have in writing.

▲ Learner autonomy

The introduction to *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy* (Wenden, 1991) quotes the basic principles underlying Communicative Language Teaching and the development of autonomous learning. These include:

- *Give learners considerable say in the decision-making process*
- *Place teachers in the role of facilitator whose task is to develop and maintain a supportive class atmosphere*
- *Stress the role of other learners as a support group*

The activities described below are designed for the learner-centred classroom. The voice recorder is not just the teacher's aid, it is also the learners' and helps lead to the self-realisation which is part of learner autonomy.

▲ Test preparation

At LanguageCert exams, the speaking interview is recorded at the test centre and then sent to LanguageCert for assessment. Candidates can be inhibited when being recorded and too often limit what they say for fear of making mistakes. If learners become familiar with the practice of recording what they say, and see that it leads to long-term improvement, they will naturally perform more confidently and successfully as candidates.

In the next pages you will find a compilation of speaking activities that you can use with your students, submitted to us by experienced teachers. The original activities can be completed without a recording device, but you can read how they were adapted to be used with one. Each activity includes a comment by a LanguageCert Assessor, matching the activity's usefulness with specific competencies assessed in different tasks of the LanguageCert speaking exams.

Speaking Activity 1: It's really me!

Speaking Activity 2: My great Uncle Jack

Speaking Activity 3: I know who you are!

Speaking Activity 4: Roving reporters



Characteristics of a successful speaking activity

- ✓ Learners speak a lot
- ✓ Participation is even
- ✓ Motivation is high
- ✓ Language is of an acceptable level

Ur, P. (1996). A Course in Language Teaching, CUP



Speaking Activity 1: It's really me!

Questionnaires are always popular. I often use them as reading activities, which is fine but I don't feel that my students always exploit them as interesting topics to speak about. The discussion tends to be rather general and unfocussed.

The voice recorder gives me the chance to use questionnaires to introduce a real study focus into a speaking skills development lesson. Here's what I do.

1. I divide the class into two main groups. One stays in the main room; the other group goes out to record an interview – the latter group consists of 4 volunteers, 2 Interviewees and 2 Interviewers, but it depends on numbers in the class.
2. We all have the same questionnaire. Here's a general example – you should adapt for lots of different topics or according to level.

Is it you?

Put **+** in the box if you generally agree, **++** if you strongly agree, **x** if you disagree and **x x** if you strongly disagree. Put **?** if you don't know or don't have any strong feelings.

a) Maths and sciences are more interesting for me than literature and history.	
b) I am happy to spend time alone.	
c) I usually listen to music if I'm working or studying.	
d) I enjoy crosswords and word puzzles.	
e) I like to organise people and lead a team.	
f) I am good at reading maps and floor plans.	
g) Sports and physical activities are an important part of my life.	
h) I believe that everything has a rational explanation.	

3. The Interviewees complete the questionnaire outside the room before speaking about it. The students who remained in the classroom discuss what answers they think their classmates the Interviewees will give (e.g. 'For, (b) Ali will say ++ and Naomi will say x'). They then note down their predictions individually and I explain that they'll get a point if they guess right about their classmates' agreement/disagreement and a bonus point if they are right about the strength of his/her agreement – in the example above, if Ali agrees, they get a point, if he agrees strongly, they get two points.

4. I then join the interviewers and instruct them to turn the statements to questions to ask the Interviewees. They then record their interviews on the voice recorder. I tell the Interviewees not to give just 'Yes', 'No' or 'double plus' as answers. Their task is to give a full answer, e.g.

Interviewer: *'Are sports and physical activities an important part of your life?'*

Interviewee: *'Absolutely. I run every day and I love football. I train three times a week, which is quite demanding physically but also necessary to improve my skills. I'm also in a football club and we play a match every Sunday. We're pretty good!'*

I remind them that words like 'really' and 'quite' can make what we say stronger or less strong and that the way we say things also gives clues to how strongly we feel.

5. While the Interviewers and Interviewees record, I go back to the main group and we discuss what answers they expect from their classmates and what extra information they may give, for example *'I love to organise people and I'm the captain of the school basketball team.'*
6. I get the whole group together again and the two teams say what answers they think their two classmates have given. I make a note of these on the board. Then we play the recording **and** discuss the answers. I ask the teams to say why they think an answer was strong (dis)agreement or just (dis)agreement and then we check the Interviewees' original answers.

There are lots of follow-ups to this activity. When my students have actually focussed on what makes the things they say sound different, they're far more willing to work on stress and intonation, as well as on choice of words (and avoid 'nice' or 'fantastic'), or word order like *'I don't really like sport'* and *'I really don't like sport.'* When we do a questionnaire activity like this later in the course, the students who play Interviewees really throw themselves into it.

Assessor's view

This activity practises spoken interaction and spoken production – which is what LanguageCert Speaking exams assess. It's good for Part One, which is about giving personal information and opinions. The focus on intonation in the interviewees' responses is very helpful as this is such an important part of pronunciation.

It also invites the use of a wider range of language, which is important because in the test candidates are sometimes reluctant to say more for fear of making more mistakes. As assessors, we always want to hear more from candidates and are ready to give credit whenever we can.

Speaking Activity 2: My great Uncle Jack

My great Uncle Jack has been a well-loved character in my classes for years. He lives in the house he was born, in the village he was born in about 100 years ago. He's perfectly happy with the world he has always known; it has everything he wants and he sees no need to travel or to use 'modern technology' (like electricity, for example). I sometimes spend the weekend or holidays with my great Uncle Jack, and when I meet my students again, I'm completely out of touch with what has happened. They have to fill me in, or compare their break with mine, and it makes a nice start to a new week or new term.

The voice recorder has given my great Uncle Jack a new lease on life! Now I can give the 21st century the chance to communicate with him - and vice versa. We don't even need electricity, as batteries will do the job. Here's what I've done.

1. On my latest visit, I told my great Uncle Jack about the students I work with and how they use all sorts of fantastic new technology he's never dreamed of. Of course, he didn't believe me – he thinks I'm making it up and to be honest I'm not very good at explaining things. If only my students could do it for me ...
2. I split the group into smaller groups of three. In each group, two of the students are going to exchange given information and express their opinions while the third member of the group – the Monitor - listens and makes notes.
3. The two students who exchange information and opinions each have a task sheet – here's an example:

Student A

We each have a list of technology people use all the time in our days. Let's compare the items on our lists and think about how we would explain them to someone not familiar with modern technology. Let's try to decide which of the things on our lists people today would find it most difficult to live without.

- **Facebook**
- **Microwave oven**
- **Mobile phone**
- **Smart watch**
- **Anything else?**

Student B

We each have a list of technology people use all the time in our days. Let's compare the items on our lists and think about how we would explain them to someone not familiar with modern technology. Let's try to decide which of the things on our lists people today would find it most difficult to live without.

- **You tube**
- **Dishwasher**
- **Tablet**
- **DVD player**
- **Anything else?**

4. The students exchange information and opinions for two to three minutes. Then, I get together with the Monitors and ask about good ideas they heard (I make sure there's something from every group, because I also monitor during the interaction.) We decide who should record what – again, I try to give everyone a more or less equal chance to contribute.
5. We get the Monitors back with their groups and they prime them for their contributions to the recording. I've stressed that my great Uncle Jack is, naturally at his age, a little hard of hearing so clear pronunciation and taking turns to speak will help him follow the exchanges.
6. We record, pairs in turns, and discuss which technology we can't live without – it doesn't matter if we can't decide - and I promise to take the voice recorder with me the next time I visit my great Uncle Jack.

The only problem I've had with all this is that my students now want my great Uncle Jack to record an answer ... any suggestion?

Assessor's view

Perfect for Part Three! The candidate and interlocutor need to take turns and if they discuss all – or at least most – of the options on their lists they are bound to use a wider range of language.

The focus on comprehensibility is just right: like great Uncle Jack, the assessor isn't too worried about perfection but does need to hear things clearly so that he/she can give credit where credit is due.

Conditions for Developing Fluency

- ✓ The activity is meaning-focused
- ✓ The learners take part in activities where all the language items are within their previous experience
- ✓ There is support and encouragement for the learner to perform at a higher than normal level

Speaking Activity 3: I know who you are!

This is a simple question and answer activity. Students act out an interview in pairs. One of them pretends to be a famous person, the other asks questions and puts prompts which will elicit clues to his/her identity without actually giving names. The rule is that the questions can't be just 'Yes/No', like 'Are you a sports person?' but they have to be open-ended, like 'What sports do you play?' or 'Please tell me about the sports you play.' The rest of the group listens and says who the interviewee is. It's fun but the students acting out the interview can be a little nervous in front of the class and the others can tend to guess the identity too soon and not listen to the rest of the interview.

The voice recorder has made it possible for me to develop this activity and to make far wider use of it not just in a group but with other groups as well. This is what happens.

1. The students get into pairs. One in each pair chooses the identity of someone (real or fictional) the others are very likely to know and the other thinks of interview prompts which will produce clues about who the famous person is. I ask them to come up with five or six questions based on different everyday topics like family, clothes etc. (the IESOL syllabus is an obvious starting point and I usually give them a list of these*). The topics will depend on the famous person and what is generally known about him/her. They prepare in different parts of the room so their classmates can't overhear.
2. To avoid everyone choosing the same person, I usually have categories on separate slips of paper which they draw as lots without the others knowing what's there (sports person, singer, cartoon character, politician – again, it depends on the group and their interests). I monitor and help by suggesting how questions and prompts can be modified so they produce clues but don't give the game away, especially at the start of the interview. I remind them they need to say things clearly and give enough information to help their classmates get the answer.
3. When everyone is more or less ready, I ask for the first pair to leave the room and record their interview. This gives any pair still not quite ready a few minutes to finish.
4. If possible, I want everyone in the group to record an interview. This works fine with 12 to 15 students – if we have an odd number, one interview can be with a famous couple (if it's a very large group and this isn't possible, I give some of the students the chance to record this time and others at some future date). The pairs record one after the other until we have around six interviews.
5. We need an open-ended activity to involve the rest of the class while the pairs are out of the room recording. I take the opportunity to focus on the topics candidates may talk about in Part One of the speaking test and ask them to think of different everyday prompts in selected categories – later, I'll give them the interlocutor copy from a sample paper so they can see if the prompts they thought of are there (word for word or broadly). It gives them confidence if they know what to expect.

6. When I have all the recordings, the students get together in their interview pairs. We play each recording – they listen to every prompt and answer, no shouting out – and the pairs can write a name at any stage, but they have only one try; they raise a hand to signal that they think they've got the speaker's identity and I make a note of the stage in the recording.
7. At the end of each recording, I ask who the pairs thought the speaker was. If they're right, they get a point – if they were the first to guess and write down, it's two points but no points if they were wrong. The winners are the ones with most points.

Now that I have the recordings, this activity has been extremely useful for follow up in the lesson or, ideally, at a lesson in the near future.

I ask how and when the students know who the famous person was. We can listen again to check. It leads very naturally from 'I wear a blue and red costume ...' to 'He said he wore a blue and red costume ...' etc. I'm a communicative teacher and I don't want to be too pedantic about grammar in a fluency activity, but there is a time and a place for language points like *reported speech*. The problem is that my students don't always see the real value of speaking activities; they sometimes think that having fun and learning don't go together. When they see that a fun speaking game can be the basis for a 'serious' grammar lesson it adds a welcome new dimension to learning and teaching.

I have also used the recordings to play to other student groups and give positive feedback. This shows my students that they *can* communicate. Sometimes, they ask if they can record again before another group listens so that they can correct any mistakes and add words and phrases. This is fine by me: we want to encourage long term improvement.

Assessor's view

This activity is ideal for Part One. Students can become familiar with the pattern and they have a genuine communicative purpose – they not only respond to prompts but really give information about who they are.

The focus on clear Pronunciation is useful and also the need to produce enough range to be successful. As assessors very often notice, a successful Part One leads to good performance throughout the IESOL Speaking test.

* the IESOL (Speaking) Qualification Handbook is available at <https://www.languagecert.org/materials-support>

Speaking Activity 4: Roving reporters

This is an activity I've used on many occasions – you have probably done something similar. I get the students in my class to think of interview questions to ask people outside the class. In a language school in an English-speaking country it's easy to find people to interview, and when I've taught in a place where English isn't the first language, it's always been possible to find someone they all know like another student, teacher or any member of staff who is willing to answer a few questions in English. We then use the answers in a future speaking. It's good to take the language presented and practised in the classroom outside the classroom and to bring language from the outside in – it makes it real.

The voice recorder makes it even more real. It gives my students the chance not just to tell their classmates about their interviews but to actually present them. The others are far more interested in *hearing what was said* than just *hearing about what was said* and it is easy to motivate them to practise speaking skills. Here's what I do.

1. I hand over the voice recorder to a pair of students. They are going to interview someone in the school (or outside in the afternoon/over the weekend if convenient). The interviews should be natural, so the roving reports need to use appropriate language – we discuss expressions like '*Excuse me..*', '*Can I ask you..?*', '*Do you mind ..?*' etc.
2. As a whole group, we decide which topics we are going to ask about and what questions the roving reporters might put to the interviewee(s). I guide them in their choice of topics – it makes sense to use those in the LanguageCert Speaking Handbook*. I also try to get the students to think beyond '*Do you watch TV?*' and expand into '*What kind of TV programmes do you watch? Which don't you watch?*' and tell the reporters that '*Why?/Why not?*' questions can be useful for follow up.
3. Here's what we do in a lesson in the near future (I find it's best not to make it the next lesson in case the roving reporters haven't managed to conduct successful interviews. It's better if they can have the chance to listen to the recording before planning a lesson featuring it). The roving reporters briefly say who they interviewed and which of the topics they asked about. If the interview includes, for example, '*Which time of the year do you like most?, Which don't you like?*' I make it into a quick pair work discussion task; it takes seconds to put this on the board:

Which is the best time of year for someone to visit this part of the world and why? Discuss this and order these times of year from 1 = best to 4 = worst.

- autumn
- winter
- spring
- summer

What activities would you arrange for a visiting group of overseas students?

4. While the students in pairs discuss the topic, I get together with the roving reporters in another part of the room or outside. We listen to the interview(s) and decide how we will present them – it's usually fun to ask the other students to speculate on the interviewees' answers, especially if they are people we all know.
5. I ask the pairs for feedback on their discussion – I stress that it doesn't matter if they haven't agreed, the important thing is to speak and to cover as much ground as possible. It's good that the roving reporters and I haven't been listening to the discussions because the other students really need to tell us what they've said.
6. Now we prepare to listen to the interviews. The roving reporters ask the group – we often play in teams, keeping to the pairs who carried out the discussion task. – I encourage them to give certain clues based on their classmates' pair discussions. *'We interviewed Dimitri and his answer was very similar to this pair.'* etc. The group are always interested to hear if their guesses are correct, especially if we award points.

It's surprising just how much you can get from this activity when you have a recording to make it interesting. If the roving reporters have asked their interviewee half a dozen questions, you have lots of discussion topics and tasks. It's an activity my students often ask to repeat (everyone wants a turn at being a roving reporter). I also like the activity because it makes the students very active. They take control of the learning, which I think is important. The simple fact that I give them the voice recorder to take away gives them the feeling that this isn't just my class with my equipment, it's ours.

Assessor's view

This activity gives useful practice for different parts of the speaking test. The focus on interview topics and prompts is great for Part One – it gives the students the interlocutor's view. The focus on 'Excuse me' etc. is ideal for Part Two.

The pair discussion the roving reporters' classmates carry out is just right for Part Three and it's good that the emphasis is on Range and Fluency rather than Accuracy (if the teacher is otherwise occupied, he/she can't correct errors and the students need to get on with it).

It's useful that the activity gives the students more control because that's what happens as the IESOL test develops. The recordings can be used as a stimulus for Part Four practice as well: the prompts used in the interviews can easily be adapted as Part Four topics e.g. 'My favourite time of the year.' prepared and presented by different students.

* the IESOL (Speaking) Qualification Handbook is available at <https://www.languagecert.org/materials-support>

In addition to the numerous obstacles teachers need to overcome when teaching speaking, speaking is also widely regarded as the most eluding skill to assess. This is down to a number of factors which render the assessment of speaking one of the most challenging tasks in the field of language testing.

Speaking can often be the product of spontaneous action on the part of the speaker, not necessarily a structurally sound production of meaning. The spoken output can well be structurally imperfect, present contradictions in meaning, consist of syntactical fragments. All these aspects of language production clearly do not make the rater's job any easier, when it comes to assessing the speaking competence of a language learner.

To expand on the above point on the personal nature of spoken production, one should not fail to mention that speaking also lends itself readily to cultural connotations in a far more apparent way than is the case with other skills. A learner's pronunciation and/or accent may reflect much more about her than the mere fact that English is not her first language, for example.

As a result of the above features, a substantial number of the conventions which would otherwise dictate the assessment of speaking are not as straightforward to define. This regularly leads to increased discrepancies among learners in comparison to the mastering of other skills. To add to the complexity, speaking is the skill that requires another person to speak to, listen to, and interact with, so that any practice of the skill makes sense in terms of a communicative context and a task objective. It can then be extremely difficult to discern the impact of one person's performance and attitude on the other person's opportunity to perform. In speaking exams where two candidates are examined concurrently, the most frequent complaint refers to the matching of learners, implying that one's performance has somehow adversely affected another's result. Finally, the option of physically retaining the spoken performance (i.e. using recording equipment) needs to be considered, along with the implications such a practice may bring about.

▲ The LanguageCert approach to standardising the assessment of speaking

The LanguageCert International ESOL (Speaking) qualifications offer a comprehensive test of spoken English which can either be a standalone examination or a complement to the International ESOL (Reading, Writing and Listening) examinations. The tasks are sufficiently universal to suit all language learning styles and preparation methods and are designed to test the use of English in real-life situations. Exam content authentically replicates real-life English in use. All efforts are made to minimise bias in the examination materials. This includes robust quality assurance in the qualifications/exams development

process and extensive trialing of the assessment materials before live use. The purpose of trialing is to run 'mock' tests under examination conditions to ensure that Speaking materials are accessible, fair and easy to understand. Student output is recorded so that output data from the tasks can be analysed. In this way, LanguageCert can ensure materials are fair, provide equal challenge to students and allow students to show their ability in English.

Reliability is crucial for all test stakeholders who need to be confident that different administrations of the test deliver identical results. This is essential for fairness to test-takers and to ensure that receiving institutions such as universities and employers can be guaranteed that the same ability level is required to pass the same examination at different administrations. The start of the process of achieving reliability of results is to standardise the test-taking experience. This begins with test specifications that ensure tests can be replicated over years of administrations, through standardised test-taking conditions and finally through the difficulty of the test materials and the way tests are graded. Specifications and robust standardised item-production techniques permit a constant supply of new test items into the item bank. Harmonised procedures for test day administration are provided to test centres. Finally, having an item-difficulty scale enables LanguageCert to produce tests of the same, or very similar, difficulty across multiple test administrations.

In the LanguageCert standard model for the International ESOL Speaking tests, tests are conducted by a local interlocutor with individual candidates. The tests are recorded and subsequently marked at a distance by an examiner. The training of marking examiners focusses on marking sample interviews, until LanguageCert is satisfied that they can mark accurately and consistently before becoming certified.

The nature of the Speaking tests and the marking scale for the tests again ensures that a broad range of speaking skills are sampled and assessed, and that candidate performance during the spoken examination is accurately representative of the candidate's communicative competence. To ensure this, the relevant assessment criteria include Task fulfillment and coherence, Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, intonation and fluency.

To conclude, the format of the tests and the nature of the assessment criteria reflect the broad multi-faceted construct underlying these examinations. Communicative ability is the primary concern, while accuracy and range are increasingly important as the CEF level of the test increases.

No matter how well prepared candidates are, their performance in the exam room may vary from how they usually perform with their teacher. We have asked LanguageCert Marking Examiners to share some advice from their experience.

Here are some tips from the marking examiners:

- *Make sure you understand the question in Part 1 before you answer it. Don't give rehearsed answers based on the topic. And make sure **your answer covers what was asked!***
- *Focus on the instructions in Part 2. You need to understand what your **role** in the scenario is, who is supposed to start and what you need to say. If you didn't understand the scenario, ask the interlocutor to repeat it.*
- *In Part 2, there's no need to take on a persona or act in an unnatural way. Make sure you **focus on the register** you have to use, and initiate or continue a dialogue as naturally as you can.*
- *Remember that Part 3 is about taking an active part in a discussion, so don't be afraid to **take the initiative** and move on to the next item on the task sheet once you have agreed on it. You **don't have to wait** for the interlocutor to do so.*
- *The aim of Part 3 is to reach some sort of an agreement or make a rank order. Instead of just reading out the key ideas, tell the interlocutor any ideas you might have on the topic and always **support your views**.*
- *Use the time you get for preparation in Part 4: gather your thoughts, make sure you understand the topic you are supposed to talk about, and **make notes about the key ideas** you wish to highlight. Practise beforehand: you should be comfortable talking on your own for a short time about a given topic.*
- *If you have difficulties finishing a sentence, try to backtrack and reformulate the sentence. In other words, do not struggle for minutes with a sentence that you cannot finish. **Start a new one** instead.*
- *During preparation, use **authentic listening materials** such as films. They will help you acquire a natural **intonation**. Do not talk monotonously. Try to use your voice as an instrument to express yourself, your message, your feelings.*
- *Use your intonation to convey feelings (excited, sad, worried). This will be especially useful in Part 2 where the scenario might require you to comfort a sad friend or congratulate someone on passing an exam.*
- *Remember that the exam is recorded, so you need to communicate **using your voice** and not body language or gestures.*
- *Use music to help improve your pronunciation. It can help with the pronunciation of individual sounds as well as word stress, sentence stress and intonation. Download the lyrics too as they can help you the same way as subtitles can help you understand films. You can also try singing along and imitating the artist's accent and intonation.*
- *Make sure you know how to spell your name!*

Feedback Form

When preparing students for exams, teachers need to be familiar with the criteria used to assess the candidate's performance, so as to develop an understanding of whether their students are at the expected level.

The form in the next pages has been designed as a **tool for teachers** interested in implementing classroom-based assessment. The form can be completed by:

- ▶ the teacher, during **mock tests**
- ▶ the student, during **self-assessment**
- ▶ the students, during **peer assessment**

For assessment to have a **positive impact** on learning, the teacher should then use the comments made on the feedback form and align these with **teaching aims** and **instructional strategies** in such a way that the process has tangible **learning outcomes**.

Fig.1 LanguageCert International ESOL Speaking Marking Criteria

Criteria	Description
Task fulfilment and coherence	The ability to engage in effective communicative exchanges and connect utterances
Accuracy and range of grammar	The ability to vary and demonstrate control of grammatical structures as appropriate to the task
Accuracy and range of vocabulary	The ability to vary and demonstrate control of lexis and register as appropriate to the task
Pronunciation, intonation and fluency	The ability to produce the sounds of English in order to be understood with appropriate stress and intonation and maintain the flow of speech

To ensure consistency, the same criteria are used across all six levels of the LanguageCert exams. To be able to assess the elicited performance, teachers are expected to be familiar with the CEFR descriptors and the standard of competence relevant to the level.

The IESOL **Speaking Qualification Handbook** (available on the LanguageCert website) includes a syllabus outlining the standards a learner must achieve to gain a pass and also describes the grammar areas expected at each of the six levels of the examination. This can help teachers understand the performance required and to distinguish between, for instance, the range of prepositional phrases expected at lower and more advanced levels.

Task Fulfilment and Coherence

The Marking Examiners assess:

- the extent to which the candidate can fulfil the task in question in each part of the exam
- the relevance of the candidate's contributions
- the extent to which the candidate's intended message is successfully communicated
- the candidate's ability to link their ideas effectively and the range of cohesive devices

Are the answers of an appropriate length?	
Are contributions relevant to the task?	
Is the intended message communicated?	
Does the candidate interact effectively to complete the task?	
How much support does the candidate need?	
How successfully are the candidate's ideas linked?	
Is the range of cohesive devices used appropriate for the task?	

Accuracy and Range of Grammar

The Marking Examiners assess:

- the control the candidate has over the grammatical structures expected at the level
- the grammatical range of the candidate's contributions

Does the candidate maintain control when using grammatical forms expected at the level?	
Is the grammar range the candidate uses adequately wide for the level?	
Does the candidate attempt to use grammatical forms above their level?	
How often do errors occur?	
Do errors impede communication?	

Accuracy and Range of Vocabulary

The Marking Examiners assess:

- the effectiveness of the candidate’s choice of vocabulary
- the control the candidate has over the vocabulary expected at the level
- the range of vocabulary the candidate uses to deal with the task

Does the candidate have the lexical resource to give and exchange views as required?	
--	--

Is the vocabulary range the candidate uses adequately wide for the level?	
---	--

How often do errors occur?	
----------------------------	--

Do errors impede communication?	
---------------------------------	--

Pronunciation, Intonation and Fluency

The Marking Examiners assess:

- the candidate’s clarity of pronunciation
- the use of intonation to support meaning
- the extent to which the candidate is able to maintain the flow of language

Is the candidate’s pronunciation clear for the level?	
---	--

Do any major pronunciation errors occur?	
--	--

Do errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns put strain on the listener or impede communication?	
--	--

At higher levels, is the candidate’s intonation used to convey and enhance meaning?	
---	--

How well can the candidate maintain the flow of language?	
---	--

Other comments

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LanguageCert International
ESOL Speaking exams

Official Past Papers

B1

Achiever

**LanguageCert
Achiever B1
Entry Level 3
International ESOL (Speaking)
Sample Paper**

Interlocutor's instructions

CHECK THAT THE RECORDER IS ON AND WORKING

Test time: 12 minutes

I = Interlocutor C = Candidate

PART 1 (3 minutes)

- I: LanguageCert International ESOL, Speaking, Achiever level, *(give today's date)*.
(Give candidate's full name.) Exam begins.
Hello. My name's *(give full name)*. Can you spell your family name for me, please?
- C: *(Spells family name.)*
- I: Thank you. Where are you from?
- C: *(Responds.)*
- I: Thank you. Now, Part One. I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself. *(Choose up to five questions, one from each of the different topic areas, as time allows. Name the topic; eg 'Now, Food and drink'.)*

Topics

Food and drink

- What are the traditional drinks in your country?
- Tell me about your favourite restaurant or coffee shop.
- Which is more important, the quality or price of food?
- Chips, cake and chocolate. Do you ever eat these?

Weather

- What type of weather do you like best? (Why?)
- What is the nicest time of year in this country?
- What is the worst weather you have ever experienced?
- How do you find out about the weather forecast?

(continued)

Education

- Tell me about your first teacher.
- What would you like to study in the future? (Why?)
- What is/was your favourite subject at school? (Why?)
- How do you use the Internet to help you study?

Relationships

- What do you like most about your best friend?
- How do you keep in touch with people who live far away?
- What have you done with your friends recently?
- Who would you call in an emergency, friends or family?

Travel

- How did you come here today?
- What type of holiday accommodation do you prefer?
- Which country would you like to visit and why?
- How is travel better now than it used to be?

C: *(Responds.)*

I: *(Interlocutor makes **brief** responses and/or comments.)*

I: Thank you.

PART 2 (3 minutes)

I: Now, Part Two. We are going to role-play some situations. I want you to start or respond.
First situation (*choose one situation from A*).

A

- We're friends. We've agreed to go out tonight. I start.
So, what are we going to do?
- I'm the manager of a restaurant. You want a job here. I start.
And why do you want this job?
- I'm a visitor to your town. I start.
Could you tell me where I can buy some stamps, please?
- We're both students in the same English class. We meet outside college. I start.
You weren't in class yesterday. What happened?

C: (*Responds.*)

I: (*Role-play the situation with the candidate – approximately two turns each.*)

I: Second situation (*choose one situation from B*).

B

- I am your waiter in a café. There is a problem with your drink. You start.
- I'm your friend. I've asked you to help me with my English homework but you can't. You start.
- We're colleagues at a meeting. You want to introduce someone to me. You start.
- We're friends. I'm wearing a new jacket. You start.

C: (*Initiates.*)

I: (*Role-play the situation with the candidate – approximately two turns each.*)

I: (*Role-play a third situation from A or B if time allows.*)

I: Thank you.

PART 3 (3 minutes)

I: Now, Part Three. In this part of the test we're going to discuss something together. All right?

My sister is getting married and I can't decide what to buy her for a wedding present. You are my friend and I have asked you to help me. Here are some ideas. *(Hand over candidate's task sheet.)* Let's ask and answer questions to help us decide. I'll start.

Interlocutor's Task Sheet

The image displays six gift options arranged in a grid, with a central text box. Each option is shown in a separate panel with its price listed below it. The central text box reads "Wedding present for my sister".

Gift Option	Price
Living Room Furniture (sofa, chairs, coffee table)	€3000
Two Airplane Tickets (to New York)	€1400
Washing Machine	€700
Painting of a Farmhouse	€1000
Hotel Card (Dinner for 2)	€300
Wristwatch	€500

I: Thank you. *(Retrieve candidate's task sheet.)*

PART 4 (3 minutes including follow-up questions)

I: In Part Four you are going to talk on your own for one and a half minutes. Your topic is *(choose topic for candidate)*.

Topics

- A An interesting film you've seen**
- B The house you'd like to have in the future**
- C Why exercise is important**

I: *(Hand over piece of paper and pen/pencil.)* You now have thirty seconds to write some notes to help you. So your topic is *(repeat topic)*. *(Withdraw eye contact for thirty seconds. Leave recorder running.)*

I: *(Candidate's name)*, please start.

C: *(Talks.)*

I: *(When candidate has talked for a maximum of one and a half minutes, say, 'Thank you', and then ask some follow-up questions.)*

Follow-up questions

An interesting film you've seen

- Do you prefer watching films on TV or in the cinema? (Why?)
- What type of films do you like best?
- Have you ever seen a very boring film?
- When was the last time you went to the theatre?

The house you'd like to have in the future

- Do you think you will ever have a house like that?
- What type of houses do people in your country usually live in?
- How are houses in cities different from houses in the countryside?
- How have houses changed in your area?

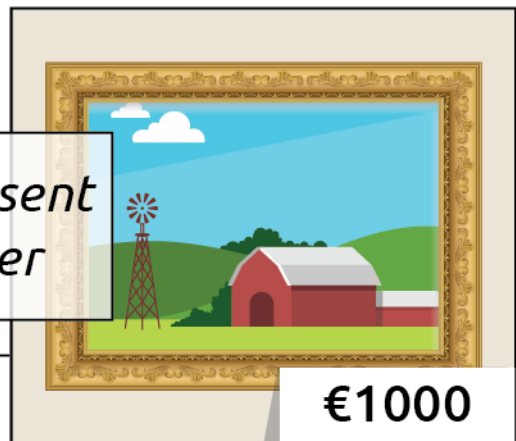
Why exercise is important

- How often do you exercise and what do you do?
- How can old people stay healthy?
- Do you like team sports? (Why?/Why not?)
- What do you do every day to keep fit?

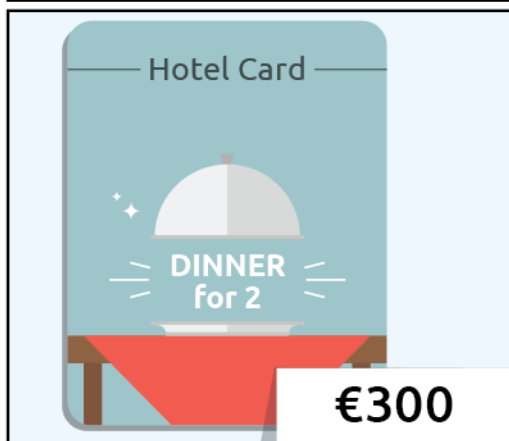
I: Thank you, *(give candidate's name.)* That is the end of the exam.

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Candidate's Task Sheet for Part Three (Candidate's copy)



*Wedding present
for my sister*



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B2

Communicator

**LanguageCert
Communicator B2
Level 1
International ESOL (Speaking)
Sample Paper**

Interlocutor's instructions

CHECK THAT THE RECORDER IS ON AND WORKING

Test time: 13 minutes

I = Interlocutor C = Candidate

PART 1 (3 minutes)

I: LanguageCert International ESOL, Speaking, Communicator level, *(give today's date)*.
(Give candidate's full name.) Exam begins.
Hello. My name's *(give full name)*. Can you spell your family name for me, please?

C: *(Spells family name.)*

I: Thank you. Which country are you from?

C: *(Responds.)*

I: Thank you. Now, Part One. I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself and your ideas. *(Choose **up to five** questions, one from each of the different topic areas, as time allows. Name the topic; eg 'Now, **Local environment**'.)*

Topics

Local environment

- Do you prefer living in a busy or quiet area? (Why?)
- What would your ideal area to live in be like?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in your home town?
- Which places in the countryside would you recommend to a visitor to your area?

Friendship

- Are you and your neighbours close friends?
- What for you are the characteristics of a true friend?
- Tell me about a time when you helped a friend.
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to make new friends?

(continued)

The future

- What are you most looking forward to in the future?
- Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the future? (Why?)
- What job would you like to do in the future?
- How do you think your life will be different in ten years' time?

Learning English

- What are the advantages of learning English in an English-speaking country?
- How important is it to have English-speaking friends to help you learn?
- What advice would you give an English speaker who wanted to start learning your language?
- How do you see yourself using English in the future?

Dates, times and days

- Which is your favourite time of day? (Why?)
- How did you celebrate your last birthday?
- Which dates in the year do your family celebrate?
- Would you call yourself a morning or an evening person? (Why?)

C: *(Responds.)*

I: *(Interlocutor makes **brief** responses and/or comments.)*

I: Thank you.

PART 2 (3 minutes)

I: Now, Part Two. We are going to role-play some situations. I want you to start or respond.
First situation (*choose one situation from A*).

A

- I'm your classmate. I start.
I am thinking of having private English lessons.
- We're friends. I start.
Guess what! My sister's having another baby!
- I am a stranger in the street. I start.
Excuse me. Could you tell me where I could get something quick to eat near here?
- I'm a receptionist at a sports club. You phone to find out about swimming lessons. I start.
Hello. Golden Lane Sports Centre. How can I help you?

C: (*Responds.*)

I: (*Role-play the situation with the candidate – approximately two turns each.*)

I: Second situation (*choose one situation from B*).

B

- I'm the tour guide on a tour you're on. I'm talking too fast. You start.
- We're friends. You'd like to borrow my new bicycle. You start.
- I'm a taxi driver. You're a passenger. You don't feel well. You start.
- We're friends in a restaurant. You realise you've left all your money at home. You start.

C: (*Initiates.*)

I: (*Role-play the situation with the candidate – approximately two turns each.*)

I: (*Role-play a third situation from A or B if time allows.*)

I: Thank you.

PART 3 (3 minutes)

I: Now, Part Three. In this part of the test we're going to discuss something together.

We are going on a camping holiday together and we need to decide what to take. We both have some suggestions. Let's talk about our ideas and make some decisions. Here are some ideas. *(Hand over candidate's task sheet.)* I have some different ideas.

Take twenty seconds to think about what you want to say. *(20 seconds)*. Please start.

Interlocutor's Task Sheet



I: Thank you. *(Retrieve candidate's task sheet.)*

Candidate's Task Sheet for Part Three (Interlocutor's copy)



PART 4 (4 minutes including follow-up questions)

I: In Part Four you are going to talk on your own for two minutes. Your topic is *(choose topic for candidate)*.

Topics

A The good and bad points about keeping pets

B How travel can broaden the mind

C The importance of fashion in everyday life

I: *(Hand over piece of paper and pen/pencil.)* You now have thirty seconds to write some notes to help you. So your topic is *(repeat topic)*. *(Withdraw eye contact for thirty seconds. Leave recorder running.)*

I: *(Candidate's name)*, please start.

C: *(Talks.)*

I: *(When candidate has talked for a maximum of two minutes, say, 'Thank you', and then ask some follow-up questions.)*

Follow-up questions

The good and bad points about keeping pets

- How popular is keeping pets in this country? Why do you think this is?
- What's the most suitable pet for an old person? Why?
- Do you think people should be allowed to keep pets in cities? (Why?/ Why not?)
- What can children learn from keeping a pet?

How travel can broaden the mind

- When is the best age to travel? (Why?)
- How can tourists affect the places they visit?
- How important is tourism in your country?
- What must you be careful of when travelling?

The importance of fashion in everyday life

- Does following fashion have to be expensive? (Why?/ Why not?)
- How much can we judge somebody by their clothes?
- Why are uniforms important in some occupations?
- Why do fashions change?

I: Thank you, *(give candidate's name.)* That is the end of the exam.

Candidate's Task Sheet for Part Three (Candidate's copy)



A solid red vertical bar is positioned on the right side of the page. At the bottom of this bar, the text 'C1' is written in white.

C1

Expert

**LanguageCert
Expert C1
Level 2
International ESOL (Speaking)
Sample Paper**

Interlocutor's instructions

CHECK THAT THE RECORDER IS ON AND WORKING

Test time: 15 minutes

I = Interlocutor C = Candidate

PART 1 (3 minutes)

I: LanguageCert International ESOL, Speaking, Expert level, *(give today's date)*.

(Give candidate's full name.) Exam begins.

Hello. My name's *(give full name)*. Can you spell your family name for me, please?

C: *(Spells family name.)*

I: Thank you. Where are you from?

C: *(Responds.)*

I: Thank you. Now, Part One. I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself and your ideas. *(Choose **up to five** questions, one from each of the different topic areas, as time allows. Name the topic; eg 'Now, **Travel**'.)*

Topics

Travel

- When you travel, what are your priorities when choosing accommodation?
- Do you think it is important to speak the language of the country you are visiting? (Why?)
- In What do you understand by 'green travel'?
- Do you think travel broadens the mind? (Why?/ Why not?)

Eating habits

- How important is it for families to eat together, in your opinion?
- Some companies conduct business discussions over meals. What do you think of this?
- Some people don't like trying out new tastes and flavours. What about you?
- Should governments try to influence people's diets?

(continued)

Scientific development

- How can scientific development improve the quality of life in poorer countries in your opinion?
- Should more money be given for scientific development or for the arts? (Why?)
- Can you tell me about the effect new technological developments have on your daily life?
- Should money be invested in space exploration in your opinion? (Why?/ Why not?)

Pollution

- Do you think pollution will get better or worse in the future? (Why?)
- Who should be responsible for reducing pollution?
- How much do you think an individual can help in the fight against pollution?
- What do you think is the best way to reduce the air pollution caused by excessive traffic?

Music

- Why do different generations enjoy different types of music in your opinion?
- Is music a distraction for you or does it help you concentrate better? (Why?)
- Do you pay more attention to the lyrics or the tune of a song? (Why?)
- How does the music you listen to vary depending on your mood?

C: *(Responds.)*

I: *(Interlocutor makes **brief** responses and/or comments.)*

I: Thank you.

PART 2 (3 minutes)

I: Now, Part Two. We are going to role-play some situations. I want you to start or respond.
First situation (*choose one situation from A*).

A

- We're friends. I start.
Oh no! My camera's not working and I need it tomorrow! What shall I do?
- We are flatmates. I start.
My parents would like to come and stay for a weekend at the flat. Would it be a problem for you?
- We're colleagues at work. I start.
I'm really behind with this project and the deadline's tomorrow. Could you give me a hand?
- I'm your boss. I start.
We'd like to put you in charge of a major new project but you would have to relocate. What d' you think?

C: (*Responds.*)

I: (*Role-play the situation with the candidate – approximately two turns each.*)

I: Second situation (*choose one situation from B*).

B

- I'm your tutor. I've just told you that you passed your final exams with flying colours. You start.
- We're colleagues. You've just heard that I'm leaving at the end of the month. You start.
- We're friends. Our friend Jane is getting married and you want us to buy her a present together. You start.
- We're neighbours. You want me to look after your pet while you're on a trip. You start.

C: (*Initiates.*)

I: (*Role-play the situation with the candidate – approximately two turns each.*)

I: (*Role-play a third situation from A or B if time allows.*)

I: Thank you.

PART 3 (4 minutes)

I: Now, Part Three. We're going to discuss something together.

A survey was conducted to discover which things constitute a good education system. Let's look at what people answered and discuss why they chose these things and which ones we think are the most and least important in achieving a good educational system. Here are some of the ideas that were mentioned. *(Hand over candidate's task sheet.)*

Take twenty seconds to think about what you want to say. *(20 seconds.)* Please start.

Interlocutor's Task Sheet



I: Thank you. *(Retrieve candidate's task sheet.)*

PART 4 (5 minutes including follow-up questions)

I: In Part Four you are going to talk on your own for two minutes. Your topic is *(choose topic for candidate)*.

Topics

- A Social media and society**
- B A person who taught you something significant**
- C How to learn a foreign language**

I: *(Hand over piece of paper and pen/pencil.)* You now have thirty seconds to write some notes to help you. So your topic is *(repeat topic)*. *(Withdraw eye contact for thirty seconds. Leave recorder running.)*

I: *(Candidate's name)*, please start.

C: *(Talks.)*

I: *(When candidate has talked for a maximum of two minutes, say, 'Thank you', and then ask some follow-up questions.)*

Follow-up questions

Social media and society

- Which social media are the most popular to your generation?
- Why do some people refuse to use social media?
- How could we use the social media to improve life for the underprivileged?
- How far have the social media changed our perception of reality?

A person who taught you something significant

- Can we learn through negative experiences?
- How effective is teaching through examples in your opinion?
- Are older siblings or grandparents good teachers? (Why?/ Why not?)
- Would you be a good teacher for others? (Why?/ Why not?)

How to learn a foreign language

- What should you avoid doing when learning a new language?
- How easy did you find it to learn to speak English?
- Some people believe testing is important when learning something. Do you agree?
- Which other foreign language apart from English would you like to learn? Why?

I: Thank you, *(give candidate's name)*. That is the end of the exam.

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Candidate's Task Sheet for Part Three (Candidate's copy)



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