

A2 SPEAKING

› **TEACHER GUIDE**

The purpose of the Teacher Guide

This guide is for teachers preparing learners for the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test.

It offers valuable insights, strategies and practical tips to help learners strengthen their speaking skills, build confidence and become more effective speakers.

It also supports you in addressing common challenges learners may encounter and helping them to enhance their existing abilities.

It features a range of practice activities drawn from the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test, with follow-up tasks that can be easily tailored to your classroom needs.

You can download free practice papers for the ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test from the LANGUAGECERT website.

Visit: [languagecert.org](https://www.languagecert.org)



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> The importance of developing speaking skills

In order to speak effectively, learners need to develop a range of skills, including:

- > conveying a message clearly and clarifying or rephrasing it if misunderstood.
- > using language appropriate to the context.
- > manipulating language (grammar, syntax, etc.) successfully to be understood.
- > using appropriate communicative functions.
- > producing both 'short turns' and 'long turns', making sure each turn relates to the previous one.
- > organising and presenting ideas clearly.
- > speaking as spontaneously as possible while checking that the listener is engaged and understands.

To ensure they are fully prepared for the Speaking test, it's essential to give learners plenty of opportunities to build these skills throughout the school year.



The challenges of speaking in a second language

For A2 learners, speaking in a second language can be exciting but demanding. At this level, learners often have a limited vocabulary and are learning only basic grammar structures. This can make it hard for them to express themselves clearly. Pronunciation can be difficult too, and many learners don't feel confident speaking in class or with others. A2 learners often need more time to think of the right words, which can make speaking feel slow or uncomfortable. Understanding native speakers, particularly if they talk quickly, also impacts learners' ability to speak.

These challenges are a normal part of learning at this level. With regular practice and support, A2 learners can build their confidence and improve their speaking skills.

KEY CHALLENGES OF SPEAKING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE



Pronunciation and accent

Some English sounds don't exist in a learner's first language, so saying certain words clearly can be hard. A2 learners may find it difficult to know where to put stress in words or how to change their tone when asking questions. Speaking with an unfamiliar accent can also make learners feel shy or nervous.



Limited vocabulary

Many A2 learners know only basic words and phrases. This makes it hard to talk about feelings, opinions or more detailed topics. They may repeat the same words often or stop speaking when they don't know a word. This can make conversations slow or confusing.



Grammar and sentence structure

Using grammar correctly while speaking is not easy. Learners may mix up verb tenses or word order, which can make their meaning unclear. Some grammar rules in English don't exist in their first language, so they feel strange or confusing. Thinking about grammar while talking can also slow speech.



Fluency and hesitation

Fluency means speaking smoothly and easily. A2 learners often pause a lot or speak slowly while searching for the right word or fixing mistakes. This can make conversations feel unnatural.



Confidence and anxiety

Many A2 learners worry about making mistakes or not being understood. This fear can cause them to avoid speaking, especially in front of others. Feeling nervous is normal, but too much anxiety can stop learners from practising.



Cultural differences

Even when A2 learners use correct grammar and vocabulary, they might not sound natural if they don't understand the cultural aspects of language use. For example, they may not know how to be polite in English or how to respond to jokes or sarcasm.



Listening skills

Good speakers also need to be good listeners. But A2 learners often struggle to understand fast speech, informal language or different accents. This can make it hard to follow conversations or answer questions.

Global speaking skills at A2 level

At A2 level, learners can:



take part in short conversations, ask and answer questions about everyday topics such as family, school and hobbies, and use full sentences to describe their daily lives



express likes and dislikes, give simple opinions and talk about past and present events in a limited way



while they may still rely on memorised phrases or need some help from listeners, they are able to keep basic conversations going with support

A2 Proficiency Scales

The A2 Proficiency Scales outline the speaking skills learners should be able to demonstrate at A2 level, as defined by the CEFR.

At A2 level, learners can:

- **take part in short conversations on familiar topics** like family, school and hobbies.
- **ask for and give personal information, talk about their daily routine and express wants or needs.**
- **use simple sentences and memorised phrases** to talk about themselves, other people, places and possessions.
- **handle short social exchanges**, including greetings, making suggestions and apologising.
- **tell a simple story or describe something using a list of points.**
- **link ideas using basic connectors** like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
- **make themselves understood** even if they sometimes make mistakes or need to repeat things.
- **use a small range of words and grammar structures correctly** in everyday situations.
- **be understood** even if they have a strong accent or hesitate when speaking.
- **ask for information and respond to simple questions** in routine situations.



Getting to know the ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test

The ESOL for Schools test assesses all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) across two components – Written and Spoken. The Speaking test is part of the Spoken component.



The Speaking test consists of four parts.



The overall duration of the Speaking test is 9 minutes.



KEY FEATURES OF THE TEST

The table below summarises the key features of the test (skill assessed / focus, tasks presented, format of each part, marks awarded).

| PART | SKILL & FOCUS | TASK FORMAT | RAW MARKS |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Communicate personal information | Spell their surname and give their country of origin, then answer up to 5 questions about themselves (family, school, hobbies, etc.) | 12 |
| 2 | Communicate appropriately in social situations using a range of functional language to elicit or respond as appropriate | Respond to and initiate interactions in two or more situations | |
| 3 | Exchange information to complete a simple task | Exchange information to identify similarities and differences between two pictures of familiar everyday situations | |
| 4 | Present a topic demonstrating the ability to use sentences and produce a piece of connected spoken English | Prepare a talk on a topic provided by the Interlocutor, then speak for a minute about the topic and answer follow-up questions | |

HOW THE TEST IS MARKED

- › The assessor uses four assessment criteria to evaluate the test taker's response: Task Fulfilment and Coherence; Accuracy and Range of Grammar; Accuracy and Range of Vocabulary; Pronunciation, Intonation and Fluency.
- › Each criterion is given equal importance and test takers are awarded up to 3 marks per criterion. The maximum raw score is 12 marks.
- › Marks are then converted to a scaled score from 0–50.
- › In order to be successful, test takers need to attain a minimum of 50% in their Speaking test.

KEY FEATURES OF THE TEST

Each of the four assessment criteria is scored on a scale from 0–3, with 0 being the lowest and 3 the highest. Descriptors for each criterion are provided (see table below), specifying what test takers are expected to demonstrate for each one. This markscheme helps assess whether learners' performance is below, at or above the required standard, and will enable you to gain insights into their strengths and weaknesses.

For more information about marking and assessing the A2 ESOL for Schools Speaking test, please refer to the 'Assessing Speaking Performance' handbook on our website.

Visit: languagecert.org

| | Task Fulfilment and Coherence | Accuracy and Range of Grammar | Accuracy and Range of Vocabulary | Pronunciation, Intonation and Fluency |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasks are fulfilled with relative ease Interaction is maintained with support from the interlocutor Contributions are mostly relevant Intended message is mostly communicated Ideas are clearly linked and sequenced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of A2 level grammar is used Grammar is sufficiently accurate Errors may occur, but do not impede communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sufficient range of A2 level vocabulary is used to deal with the tasks Errors may occur, but do not impede communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation is sufficiently clear despite first language influences Noticeable pronunciation errors do not impede communication The flow of language is generally maintained, occasionally without interlocutor support Occasional hesitations and reformulations may be noticeable |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasks are mostly fulfilled Interaction relies on the support of the interlocutor Contributions are broadly relevant The intended message is generally communicated despite occasional misunderstandings Ideas are simply linked and sequenced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited range of A2 level grammar is used Grammar is generally accurate Errors occur and may occasionally obscure the message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of A2 vocabulary is used to deal with the tasks Errors occur, and may occasionally obscure the message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation is sufficiently clear for general understanding First language influences may occasionally obscure the message The flow of language in short exchanges is generally maintained with the support of the interlocutor Frequent hesitations and reformulations do not impede communication |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasks remain largely unfulfilled Interaction breaks down despite the support of the interlocutor General failure to respond or initiate Contributions lack relevance Intended message is not successfully communicated Ideas mostly expressed through unconnected words and phrases | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of grammar is too limited to deal with the A2 level tasks Frequent errors often make the message difficult to follow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of vocabulary is too limited to deal with the A2 level tasks Vocabulary errors often obscure the intended message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear pronunciation leads to frequent difficulty in understanding Long hesitations and reformulations lead to frequent breakdowns in communication |
| 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tasks are unfulfilled and intended message is not communicated No connected language OR insufficient sample of language to assess | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of control in basic structures The intended message is generally obscured OR insufficient sample of language to assess | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks the vocabulary to attempt the tasks The message is generally obscured OR insufficient sample of language to assess | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear pronunciation prevents understanding Frequent hesitation prevents communication OR insufficient sample of language to assess |



Helping learners prepare for the ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test

Familiarising learners with the format and content of the test, as well as providing targeted practice, can significantly enhance their performance on Test Day.

In this section, you will find ideas for preparing learners for each of the four parts of the test, followed by clear, easy-to-use classroom activities drawn from A2 Speaking practice papers. These activities are designed to introduce learners to the test format and provide authentic practice. Additional activities are also included to reinforce learning for each section of the test and offer further opportunities for practice.

You can download free practice papers for the ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test from the LANGUAGECERT website.

Visit: languagecert.org

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING PART 1: ANSWERING PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Learners will be asked up to five questions about themselves.

- › Learners should listen carefully to the questions the Interlocutor asks to make sure they respond appropriately.
- › Ensure they know how to introduce themselves, spell their name and answer questions about personal details (e.g. *age, where they're from, where they live, their family, their home*).
- › Explain that each question will be about a different topic, but they will all ask for personal information.
- › Get learners to role play with a partner, asking and answering simple questions about themselves. You could create question cards for them to use. (See the Qualification Handbook on the LANGUAGECERT website for a list of A2 topics: www.languagecert.org)
- › Teach and practise simple language for expressing likes, dislikes and preferences.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.

CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE SPEAKING PART 1



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Speaking test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 1 of the Speaking test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

LanguageCert Access A2

PART 1 (2 minutes)

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

C: (Spells surname.)

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; e.g. 'Now, **Personal identification**'.)

Topics

Personal identification

- Where were you born?
- Which languages do you speak?
- How big is your family?
- Describe a member of your family.

Free time and entertainment

- Do you play any sports? (What?)
- What are your favourite television programmes?
- What kind of music do you like?
- What do you do in your free time?

Shopping

- Do you like shopping? (Why?/ Why not?)
- How often do you go shopping?
- Do you go shopping alone? (Why?/ With whom?)
- Where do you usually buy your clothes?

Food and drink

- What is your favourite food? (Why?)
- What do you like to drink?
- What did you have for dinner last night?
- How often do you go to a restaurant?

(continued)

Sample taken from A2 Speaking Part 1 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › How does Part 1 begin? (answer: with two personal questions – how you spell your surname and where you are from)
- › After these two questions, how many more questions will the Interlocutor ask you? (answer: up to five questions)
- › What kind of questions are they? (answer: questions about personal information)
- › Are all the questions on the same topic? (answer: no, each question is on a different topic)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge, reviews asking and answering simple questions and provides practice for the Part 1 task.

Step 1

Tell learners they are going to perform a role-play, with one of them as the Interlocutor and the other as the candidate (they will switch roles later).

Step 2

Write the following prompts on the board (these are related to the first topic in the practice paper):

- › Where / born?
- › Which languages / speak?
- › How big / family?
- › Can / describe a member of / family?

Working individually, learners write down four questions that they will ask their partner, using the prompts.

Step 3

Put learners in pairs and assign roles – one is the Interlocutor, the other is the candidate. Set a time limit and tell the Interlocutors to ask the candidates their questions (see complete questions in the practice paper task). Observe pairs as they work, keeping notes (mental or written) of their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. use of auxiliaries and modals, word order). If necessary, plan remedial work for the next lesson.

Step 4

Write another set of prompts on the board, this time related to a different topic in the practice paper, e.g.

- › *What / favourite food?*
- › *What / like drink?*
- › *What / have for dinner / last night?*
- › *How often / go to a restaurant?*

Have pairs swap roles and ask and answer the questions as in Step 3 (see complete questions in the practice paper task).

Note: If time allows, repeat for the other two topics on the practice paper.

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SPEAKING PART 1 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more speaking skills.

1. Play a game of speaking Bingo

Prepare a bingo-style grid with between 8–12 statements related to A2 topics, e.g. *'Find someone who has a pet'* or *'... speaks two languages'*. Give a copy of the grid to each learner. Learners mingle, asking their classmates yes/no questions, e.g. *'Do you have a pet?'*, *'Do you speak two languages?'* When a classmate answers 'yes' to a question, learners write that person's name in the relevant box on their grid. After about ten minutes, stop the activity and ask a few volunteers to report their findings.

Note: You can model and practise converting statements into questions before the activity.

This classic speaking activity gives learners a motivating and structured reason to ask and answer personal questions in a communicative setting. It reinforces question formation, builds fluency, and supports listening comprehension in an engaging and low-stress way.

2. Conduct a 'mystery student' interview

Prepare slips of paper, each with a character description consisting of three statements (e.g. *'You are from Brazil. You have one sister and a cat. You speak Portuguese and English.'*). Put learners in groups and give each group the same set of descriptions (one for each group member). Group members take turns to pick a slip and become the 'mystery student'. The rest of the group ask simple personal questions such as *'Where are you from?'*, *'Do you have any brothers or sisters?'* and *'What languages do you speak?'* The mystery student answers using the information on their slip. After several questions, the next group member becomes the mystery student. Continue until every group member has had a turn at answering questions.

Note: You may want to write question prompts on the board to support weaker learners.

The format of this activity gives learners repeated practice with common test questions in an enjoyable way. It also strengthens listening and questioning skills while promoting confidence in giving personal information. Using fictional identities helps reduce pressure and adds a fun, test-like element to practice.

3. Run a 'Show and tell' session

Ask learners to prepare a small 'Me Box' (or bag) with 3–5 objects, pictures or drawings that say something about them (e.g. *a photo of their family, a drawing of their pet, or their favourite snack*). In small groups, each learner shows their items and talks about them using simple sentences such as *'This is my favourite book'* or *'This is a picture of my house'*. Encourage group members to ask one or two follow-up questions about each item.

Note: You could model a few questions (either orally or on the board) before the activity to support weaker learners.

This activity is ideal for practising key Speaking Part 1 language related to personal information. It gives learners the chance to talk about things that matter to them, building confidence and fluency.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING

PART 2: TAKING PART IN ROLE-PLAYS

Learners will be asked to take part in two or more role-plays in different situations.

- › To familiarise learners with the task, put them in pairs and ask them to role play dialogues, with one of them acting as the Interlocutor and the other acting as the candidate.
- › Tell learners that the first role-play will be initiated by the Interlocutor and that they'll be asked to initiate the second role-play. If there's time, there may be a third role-play, which will be initiated by either the Interlocutor or the learner. Both the Interlocutor and the learner will be expected to produce two short turns for each role-play.
- › Before learners practise role playing, ask them to review the language they will need to use. You could also provide them with a model response to guide them.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE SPEAKING PART 2



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Speaking test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 2 of the Speaking test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

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PART 2 (2 minutes)

I: Now, Part Two. I'm going to read some situations. I want you to start or answer. First situation *(choose one situation from A)*.

A

- We're on the bus. I almost hit you with my bag. I start.
Oh, I'm really sorry.
- I'm your friend. I start.
Where shall we go at the weekend?
- We're classmates. I start.
Are you interested in joining the school's art club?
- I work at the cinema. You want to see a film. I start.
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

- We're friends. Welcome me to your party. You start.
- We're friends. You want to plan a fun game for the next school event. You start.
- I'm your teacher. You want me to speak more slowly. You start.
- I'm a shop assistant. You want to buy some presents. 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.

Sample taken from A2 Speaking Part 2 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › What do you have to do in Part 2? *(answer: role play some situations)*
- › How many situations are there? *(answer: two situations, or more if time allows)*
- › Who starts the first role-play? *(answer: the Interlocutor)*
- › Who starts the second role-play *(answer: the test taker)*
- › How many times do you speak? *(answer: around two times per role-play)*

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge of basic language functions used in everyday conversations, and provides practice for the Part 2 task.

Step 1

Tell the class that before tackling Part 2, you will review a few language functions. Explain that a language function is the reason or purpose we use language, e.g. *requesting something, asking for information, offering to help*.

Step 2

To review language functions related to section A, ask the class these questions:

- › You want to apologise to someone (e.g. *for being late, for forgetting to call them, for breaking something*). What do you say?
(example answers:
Sorry! / Sorry about that!
I'm so sorry! / I'm sorry for ...
I'm (really/very) sorry!
I didn't mean it! / I didn't mean to ...)
- › You want to make a suggestion to a friend (e.g. *to go somewhere, to do something, to visit someone*). What do you say?
(example answers:
Let's ...
Why don't we ...?
I think we could ... / Maybe we could ...?
How about ...?)
- › You want to ask someone if they're interested in something (e.g. *a sport, a film, a book*). What do you say?
(example answers:
Are you interested in ...?
Do you enjoy ... (+ gerund)?
Would you like to...?
Would you be interested in ...?)
- › You are a shop assistant and a customer needs some help. What do you say?
(example answers:
Can I help you? / How can I help you?
Can I help you with anything?
What would you like?
What can I do for you?)

Step 3

Put learners in pairs and read out one of the situations from section A of the practice paper. Give learners a few minutes to role play the situation with their partner. Observe pairs as they work, keeping notes (mental or written) of their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. question forming, word order, tenses). If necessary, plan remedial work for the next lesson.

Note: Repeat Steps 2 and 3 for section B of the practice paper.

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SPEAKING PART 2 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more speaking skills.

1. Organise a language functions matching challenge

Prepare a few cards with a different phrase on each one (e.g. *'I'm sorry'*, *'Would you like to ...?'*, *'Can I help you?'*) and a set of cards with matching functions (e.g. *'Apologising'*, *'Inviting'*, *'Offering'*). Put learners in pairs and give each pair both sets of cards. Learners match the phrases to the functions. When they have finished, challenge them to create a mini-dialogue using some of the phrases. Invite volunteer pairs to perform their mini-dialogue for the class (as many as time allows).

Note: You could provide a model dialogue (either orally or on the board) to support weaker learners.

By linking phrases used in everyday interactions to their functions, this activity supports recall, develops fluency, and helps learners use language appropriately in short everyday exchanges.

2. Freeze the moment

Put learners in pairs. Give each pair a different everyday situation to act out (e.g. *apologising for breaking a friend's pencil*, *inviting someone to a party*). Pairs prepare a short two-turn dialogue, then perform it for the class. As each pair performs their role-play, pause ('freeze') them after one turn and ask the class what phrase or sentence they expect to hear next, discussing suitable responses. Alternatively, give every pair the same situation and invite two or three volunteer pairs to perform their role-plays for the class.

This activity encourages active listening and prediction of language functions. It also encourages natural communication, as well as promoting creativity and spontaneity in using social language.

3. Create a listen and match task

Choose a picture that clearly shows an everyday place or event, e.g. *a shop*, *a classroom*, *a café* or *a sports competition*. Ask the class what they can see and encourage them to describe the scene using basic vocabulary. Put learners in pairs and ask them to imagine what people in that situation might say. They then create a role-play, each speaking twice. For example, one learner could be a customer asking for help, and the other a shop assistant responding. Provide some useful phrases and sentence starters on the board (e.g. *'Can I help you?'*, *'I'd like ...'*, *'Sorry I'm late'*) to support learners with simple exchanges. If time allows, invite volunteer pairs to perform their role-plays for the class.

This activity helps learners practise short role-plays in familiar social situations. It strengthens their ability to speak spontaneously in everyday contexts, while building confidence through visual cues and partner support.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING

PART 3: EXCHANGING INFORMATION

Learners will be asked to identify similarities and differences between two pictures of familiar situations.

- › Review the language and functions learners will need for this task, e.g. *how to ask for information* and *how to express agreement*.
- › Practise the task using pairs of pictures with clear differences and similarities, eliciting from learners the key vocabulary items in each picture.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



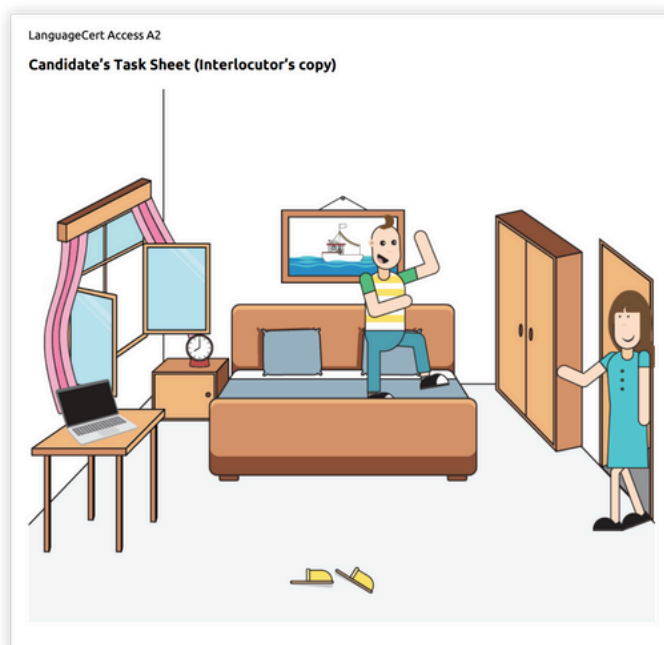
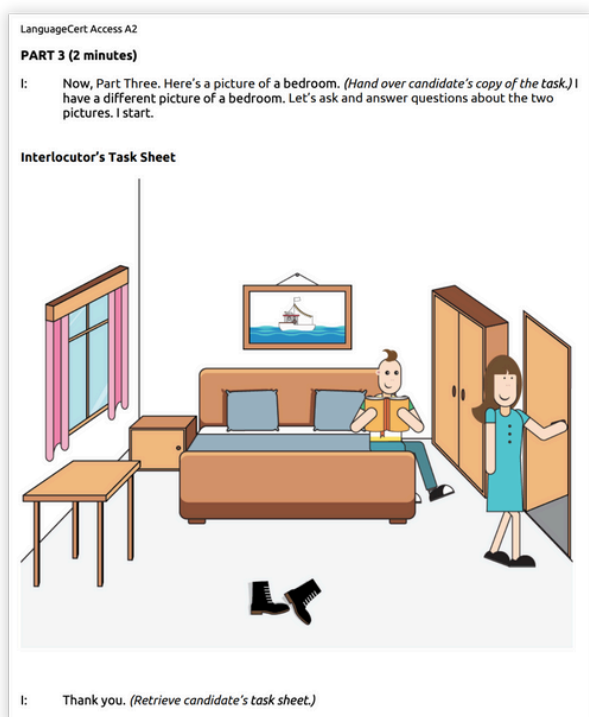
CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE SPEAKING PART 3



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Speaking test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 3 of the Speaking test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.



Sample taken from A2 Speaking Part 3 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › What do you have to do in Part 3? (*answer: ask and answer questions about two pictures*)
- › Are the pictures similar? (*answer: yes, they are similar but there are a few differences between them*)
- › Can you look at the Interlocutor's picture on their task sheet? (*answer: no, you can't see the Interlocutor's picture*)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge, develops their ability to form short sentences and provides practice for the Part 3 task.

Step 1

Give learners a copy of the Candidate's Task Sheet and tell them to look at the picture. Ask them to describe what they can see, encouraging the whole class to participate.

(example answers:

The boy is standing on the bed.

The window is open.

It is windy.

There is a laptop on a table.

The time is 8 o'clock.

There is a cupboard near the door.

The woman is standing by the door.)

Step 2

Put learners in pairs. Give one learner in each pair the Interlocutor's Task Sheet and tell the other learner to look at the Candidate's Task Sheet they were given in Step 1. Explain that they will take turns asking and answering questions about each other's pictures. Before they begin, model some questions and answers with a volunteer, e.g.:

Teacher: In my picture, the boy is sitting on the bed. What about you?

Learner: In my picture, the boy is standing on the bed.

Learner: In my picture, there is a laptop on the table. What about your picture?

Teacher: In my picture there isn't a laptop on the table.

Note: Tell the learners with the Interlocutor's Task Sheet to ignore the instructions and focus on the picture only.

Step 3

Learners ask and answer questions about their pictures, trying to identify similarities and differences. Remind them to ask questions about their partner's picture too, rather than just talking about their own. To support them, write these prompts on the board:

- › What about your picture?
- › Do you have ... in your picture?
- › Is there also ... in your picture?
- › Can you see ... in your picture?

For extra challenge, ask learners to try to use some or all of these prepositions in their answers:

- › on (example answer: *The laptop is on the table.*)
- › in (example answer: *There are two people in the bedroom.*)
- › near (example answer: *The table is near the window.*)
- › in front of (example answer: *The woman is in front of the door.*)
- › behind (example answer: *The picture is behind the bed.*)
- › between (example answer: *The small table is between the window and the bed.*)

Step 4

Observe learners as they work and provide feedback on how well they completed the activity (e.g. *use of prepositions and tenses, word order*).

Step 5

For further language practice, ask learners to compare their picture with their bedroom at home and say a few things about it. (You may want to write a few model sentences on the board to guide them, e.g. 'In my bedroom, there is a desk near my bed.'). Alternatively, ask learners a few questions about their bedrooms, e.g.:

- › *Is there a window in your bedroom?*
- › *What can you see from your window?*
- › *What colour are the walls?*
- › *Are there pictures/posters on the walls? (What do the pictures/posters show?)*
- › *Is there a cupboard/table/clock/mirror/desk in your bedroom?*
- › *Do you have a computer/laptop in your bedroom?*
- › *Are there books in your bedroom?*

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SPEAKING PART 3 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more speaking skills.

1. Organise a 'Describe and draw' challenge

Put learners in pairs. Give one learner in each pair a simple picture (e.g. *a park scene, bedroom or a school event*) and give their partner a blank piece of paper. The learner with the picture describes it and their partner draws what they hear. When they have finished, they compare the drawing with the original picture and discuss similarities and differences using expressions such as 'In my picture, there is/are ...', 'Is there a/an ... in your picture?' and 'What's happening in your picture?' Have learners swap roles and give the new describer a different picture.

This activity encourages active listening and question formation – key skills needed to compare and discuss pictures in the test.

2. Play a game of 'Same or different?'

Source two pictures that are similar but have clear differences (e.g. *one shows a sunny park and the other a rainy one*). Put learners in pairs and give each of them a different picture. Tell them not to show their picture to their partner. Learners ask and answer questions to find out the similarities and differences between their pictures. They can use language such as 'Is there a tree in your picture?', 'Are the people sitting or standing?'

Note: You may want to provide question prompts (either orally or on the board) to support weaker learners.

This activity gives learners practice in identifying and explaining similarities and differences, while encouraging both speaking and listening accuracy.

3. Plan a compare and contrast activity

Put learners in pairs and ensure they are sitting together. Place two or three objects on each desk (e.g. *pens, erasers, notebooks*) but make sure there are slight differences between each item (e.g. *a blue pen vs a red pen, a notebook vs an exercise book, two rulers vs one*). Pairs ask and answer questions about the items on the two desks, using phrases such as 'Do you have a ...?', 'What colour is your ...?', 'My pen is blue, what about yours?'

Note: You may want to provide question prompts (either orally or on the board) to support weaker learners.

Using real classroom objects gives learners practice in describing and comparing familiar items, easing them into picture comparison.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING

PART 4: PRESENTING A TOPIC

Learners will be asked to speak about a topic selected by the Interlocutor for one minute, and answer follow-up questions. They will be given 30 seconds to prepare.

- › Learners should make good use of their preparation time to plan what they're going to say and to ensure they're able to maintain a steady flow as they answer. They'll be given a pen or pencil and a piece of paper to write notes before they speak.
- › Explain that the Interlocutor may interrupt them, for example, if they have said enough and don't need to provide any further information.
- › Remind learners that the Interlocutor will ask them a few follow-up questions after they have finished speaking.
- › When practising for the test, start by allowing learners to speak for less than a minute. Gradually increase their speaking time as they become more confident.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE SPEAKING PART 4



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Speaking test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 4 of the Speaking test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

LanguageCert Access A2

PART 4 (3 minutes including follow-up questions)

I: In Part Four you are going to talk on your own about something for one minute. You are going to talk about *(choose topic for candidate)*.

| Topics | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| A | Your home |
| B | School life |
| C | Staying healthy and well |

I: *(Hand over piece of paper and pen/pencil.)* You now have thirty seconds to write some notes to help you. You are going to talk about *(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 minute, say, 'Thank you', and then ask some follow-up questions.)*

| Follow-up questions | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Your home | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you got your own bedroom?• What do you like the most about where you live?• What is your favourite room in the house?• What can you see from your bedroom window? | |
| School life | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's the best thing about school?• Describe your classroom.• Do you have a favourite subject? (What?)• Do you enjoy studying English? (Why?/ Why not?) | |
| Staying healthy and well | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What exercise do you do?• Do you like healthy food? (Why?/ Why not?)• How often do you eat fast food?• Why is it important to eat vegetables every day? | |

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

Sample taken from A2 Speaking Part 4 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › What do you have to do in Part 4? *(answer: talk about a topic chosen by the Interlocutor)*
- › How long do you have to talk about the topic? *(answer: one minute)*
- › Do you have any time to prepare? *(answer: yes, 30 seconds)*
- › Can you make notes? *(answer: yes, you are given blank paper and a pen/pencil to make notes)*
- › What happens after your talk? *(answer: the Interlocutor asks a few follow-up questions)*
- › Are the follow-up questions about the topic? *(answer: yes, all of them are about the topic)*

TEST ACTIVITY

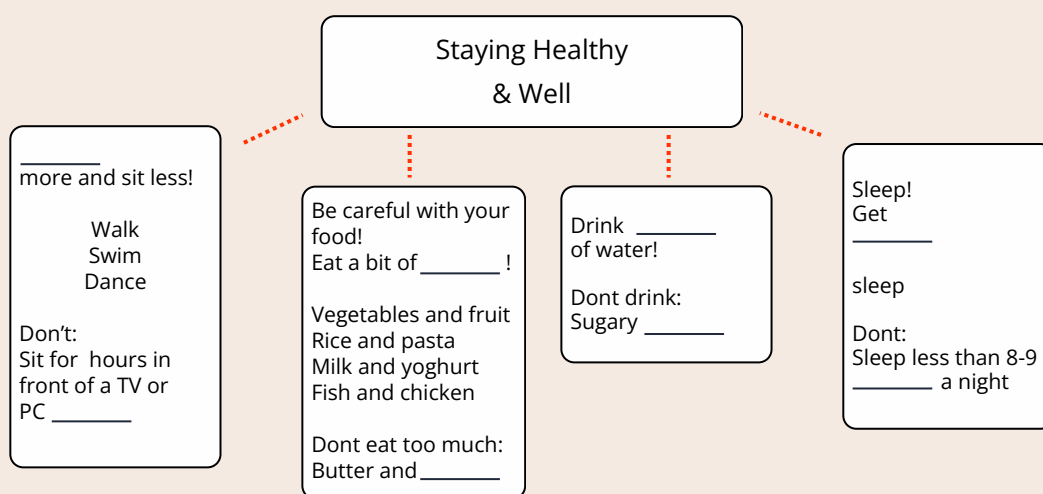
This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge, encourages personal engagement with the topic and provides practice for the Part 4 task.

Step 1

Put learners in pairs and tell them to discuss with their partner how they can stay healthy and well.

Step 2

Give each learner a copy of the spidergram and word list below (or draw them on the board and have learners copy them into their notebooks). Working individually or in their pairs, learners complete the gaps in the spidergram with the words. Set a time limit for this part of the task.



drinks / lots / screen / enough / everything / hours / sugar / move

Step 3

When they have finished completing the gaps, ask learners to compare their answers with the rest of the class as a whole-class activity, before providing the correct answers.

(answers:)



Step 4

Ask a few volunteers to give a talk to the class about staying healthy and well, using their completed spidergrams to guide them.

Note: To begin with, give learners 30 seconds to talk, but gradually increase the time to one minute as they approach Test Day.

Step 5

After each volunteer has given their talk, ask them one or two follow-up questions from the relevant section of the practice paper. Observe learners and make brief mental or written notes on areas that need attention. If necessary, plan remedial work (e.g. *on word order, articles, prepositions*) for the next lesson.

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SPEAKING PART 4 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more speaking skills.

1. Create a topic box

Prepare slips of paper, one for each learner. Write a simple A2 topic on each slip (e.g. 'My favourite meal', 'A sport I like', 'My weekend', 'My best friend', 'A place I like going to').

Note: Include five or six different topics to create variety and use some more than once. Place the slips in a box or envelope. Each learner comes to the front and picks a topic from the box. They have 30 seconds to prepare a short talk about their topic, using a blank sheet to write notes. Allow each learner to speak for 30–40 seconds (extend this over time to one minute). After speaking, classmates ask one or two follow-up questions.

This activity helps learners become familiar with spontaneous speaking on a range of everyday topics, while practising note-taking and preparation.

2. Ask for opinions

Prepare a task sheet with a simple yes/no A2 topic question at the top, e.g. *'Do you like summer holidays?'* or *'Do you enjoy studying at home?'* Insert a dividing line down the middle and put YES on one side and NO on the other. Give each learner a copy of the task sheet. Learners choose a side and write 3–5 short notes to support their opinion. Set a time limit for this part of the task. Then invite volunteers (or every learner, if time allows), to speak for up to one minute, explaining their view. Encourage them to use linking phrases such as *'I think ...'*, *'because ...'*, *'also ...'* and *'but ...'*. Follow up with a couple of peer or teacher questions.

This activity helps learners organise ideas quickly around a simple opinion or preference question, developing fluency and coherence.

3. Use a picture prompt

Show learners a picture related to an A2 topic (e.g. *a family having lunch, someone studying, a market scene*). Give them 30 seconds to make notes about what they can see and how it relates to their own life (e.g. *'I like eating with my family too'*, *'I usually study in the evening'*, *'I go to the market every Saturday'*). Then, ask them to speak for up to one minute using their notes. To extend the task, ask simple follow-up questions, e.g. *'Do you eat lunch at home or at school?'*, *'What subjects do you like studying?'*

By using images to help learners generate ideas and vocabulary, this activity makes it easier to speak more fluently and confidently.



A2 general speaking tips

These tips provide useful strategies for tackling the different A2 Speaking tasks and will help learners approach the test with confidence.

- › Explain to learners the role of the Interlocutor and what is expected of them well before they take their test.
- › Remind them to always listen carefully to the Interlocutor's prompts to ensure they provide an appropriate response.
- › Reassure learners that they will not be penalised for asking the Interlocutor to repeat a question or prompt but make it clear that they cannot ask the Interlocutor to paraphrase or translate a question.
- › When they're practising for the test, encourage learners to make their responses interesting and engaging, and to avoid one-word answers.
- › Reassure learners that there are no right or wrong answers, and that they will only be marked on the language they use, and not their opinions.
- › Tell learners that if a topic or question does not apply to them (e.g. *favourite sports*) they can use their imagination and invent their answers.
- › Divide your class into pairs and get them to practise both asking and responding to similar questions with their partner.
- › Foster a supportive atmosphere in class where learners feel comfortable speaking.

Ensuring learners are ready for the ESOL for Schools A2 Speaking test

When learners have finished preparing for the Speaking test, it's important that they retain key information about it. On Test Day, learners often experience nerves, which can lead to forgetfulness or confusion about the procedures. Taking extra time to review test expectations and ensure learners are fully prepared can help alleviate anxiety and ensure the test process runs more smoothly.

Here's a list of questions to remind learners of what to expect in the Speaking test (you may wish to add some of your own):

- › How many parts does the Speaking test have? *(answer: four parts)*
- › What do you have to do in Part 1? *(answer: spell your surname, say where you are from and answer up to five questions)*
- › What do you have to do in Part 2? *(answer: role play two or more situations with the Interlocutor)*
- › What do you have to do in Part 3? *(answer: exchange information with the Interlocutor to find similarities and differences between two pictures)*
- › What do you have to do in Part 4? *(answer: talk for a minute on a topic chosen by the Interlocutor and answer follow-up questions)*
- › Are test takers assessed in pairs? *(answer: no, all test takers are assessed individually)*
- › How long is the Speaking test? *(answer: 9 minutes)*

Helpful resources and contact information

At LANGUAGECERT, we're committed to providing comprehensive support for both learners and teachers.

Our website offers a wealth of free resources to help prepare for both the Written and Spoken components of the ESOL for Schools A2 test.

Handbooks provide teachers with practical tips and valuable strategies for effectively preparing learners for the test. They also include detailed descriptions of tasks at every level. Our free downloadable practice papers are an excellent tool for helping learners become familiar with the format and content of the test.

ESOL for Schools Written component resources:

- Listening-Reading-Writing Qualification handbook
- Qualification Overview handbook
- Assessing Writing Performance handbook
- Official Practice Papers
- Sample answer sheets
- Teacher Guide (Listening & Reading, Writing)

ESOL for Schools Spoken component resources:

- Speaking Qualification handbook
- Preparing Learners for the ESOL Speaking Exams Guide
- Assessing Speaking Performance handbook
- Official Practice Papers
- Teacher Guide (Speaking)

Additional support available:

- Books
- FAQs
- Live webinars

To access these resources, visit: www.languagecert.org/en/preparation

Further information

For more information about the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools tests, visit our website www.languagecert.org or contact our Customer Services team.

Appendix

Appendix: Essential language structures and functions for A2

At A2 level (for Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking), learners are expected to be familiar with a number of structures and language functions as shown in the table below.

› Functions/notions

Advice
Describing habits and routines
Describing past experiences and storytelling
Describing people
Describing places
Describing things
Invitations
Obligations and necessity
Present continuous for arrangements
Requests
Suggestions

› Discourse markers

Linkers: sequential – past time

› Grammar forms

Adverbs of frequency
Articles
Basic determiners (e.g. *any, some, a lot of*)
Comparative and superlatives
Conditionals: zero and first
Future time: *will, going to*
have to
Imperatives (+/-)
Modals: *can/could*
Modals: obligation & necessity
Modals: possibility – *may/might*
Must/mustn't
Nouns: countable and uncountable – *much/many*
Past continuous
Past simple
Phrasal verbs, common
Possessives: 's / s'
Prepositions of time: *on/at/in*
Prepositional phrases (place, time & movement)
Present continuous
Present continuous for the future (arrangements)
Present perfect
Present simple
should
used to
Verb forms



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