

B2 SPEAKING

› **TEACHER GUIDE**

The purpose of the Teacher Guide

This guide is for teachers preparing learners for the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools B2 Speaking test. It offers valuable insights, strategies and practical tips to help learners strengthen their speaking skills and build their confidence. It also supports you in addressing common challenges learners may encounter and helping them enhance their existing abilities.

It features a range of practice activities drawn from the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools B2 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 B2 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

Speaking in a second language is a valuable skill, but it comes with a variety of challenges that can affect communication and confidence. Learners often struggle with pronunciation, limited vocabulary and unfamiliar grammar rules, which can make it harder to express ideas clearly. Issues with fluency, anxiety, cultural differences and listening comprehension further complicate matters, especially in real-time conversations. Understanding these obstacles is the first step towards overcoming them and becoming a more confident, effective speaker.

KEY CHALLENGES OF SPEAKING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE



Pronunciation and accent

Pronunciation in a second language often involves sounds that don't exist in a learner's native language. This can make it difficult to pronounce certain words clearly, resulting in misunderstandings. Stress, rhythm and intonation patterns may also differ, and an unfamiliar accent can make learners feel self-conscious or less credible in conversation. Overcoming this challenge requires active listening, imitation and often targeted pronunciation practice.



Limited vocabulary

A small or overly academic vocabulary can limit one's ability to express nuanced ideas or emotions. Learners may rely on basic words or 'safe' phrases, leading to repetitive or vague speech. This limits spontaneity and fluency in conversation. In real-world interactions, unfamiliar words may cause hesitation, frustration or communication breakdown. Building vocabulary through reading, listening and usage in context is essential to overcome this barrier.



Grammar and sentence structure

Mastering grammar in a second language is not just about memorising rules – it involves internalising them so they can be used naturally in speech. Errors in verb tense, word order or agreement can obscure meaning or make speech sound unnatural. Some grammatical concepts might not exist in a learner's first language, making them harder to grasp. Thinking about grammar while speaking also slows fluency and reduces confidence. Practice and immersion are key to making grammar automatic.



Fluency and hesitation

Fluency is not just about speaking quickly – it's about speaking smoothly, with natural pauses and minimal hesitation. Many learners pause often to search for the right word or correct themselves mid-sentence. This can disrupt the flow of conversation and make interactions feel stilted. Frequent hesitation may also cause speakers to feel they're not making progress. Improving fluency involves consistent practice, especially in real-time conversations where feedback is immediate.



Confidence and anxiety

Fear of making mistakes, being judged or not being understood can lead to language anxiety. This is particularly common in speaking situations, especially when interacting with native speakers or in formal settings. Such anxiety can lead to avoidance behaviours – like speaking very little or not at all – which slows progress. Building confidence often means accepting mistakes as part of learning, practising regularly in low-pressure environments, and gradually increasing exposure to more challenging situations.



Cultural nuances

Language is deeply tied to culture. Even when grammar and vocabulary are correct, a speaker may sound unnatural if they miss cultural cues such as tone, politeness conventions or body language. Idioms, humour, sarcasm and indirect communication styles can be especially hard to master. Misunderstanding these elements can lead to awkward or inappropriate responses. Learning about the culture alongside the language – through media, interaction and observation – can greatly improve communicative competence.



Listening comprehension

Speaking well depends partly on understanding what others say. If a learner struggles to catch spoken language – especially when it's fast, informal or accented – they may miss key points or fail to respond appropriately. This can make conversations feel intimidating or discouraging. Developing listening skills requires exposure to diverse speakers, real-life conversations and various forms of audio content (like podcasts or films), as well as practising strategies like listening for gist or key words.



Global Speaking skills at B2 level

At B2 level, learners can:



understand standard speech spoken at a natural pace and follow complex arguments provided the topic is reasonably familiar



grasp the main points of long speeches and comprehend most TV programmes and films in a standard dialect

B2 Proficiency Scales

The B2 Proficiency Scales outline the speaking skills learners should be able to demonstrate at B2 level, as defined by the CEFR.

At B2 level, learners can:

- **give a clear, well-developed description or presentation** supported by relevant and significant details.
- **communicate ideas, advice and complex information reliably**, on a wide range of subjects related to their interests.
- **refer in detail** to the personal significance of events/experiences.
- **explain the advantages and disadvantages** of a topical issue when given options (e.g. city vs countryside).
- **expand and support a point of view** at some length with a series of arguments, ideas and relevant examples.
- **share clear steps** about how to carry out a procedure.
- **answer a number of follow-up questions** after a prepared presentation with some fluency and spontaneity, and without posing any strain for either party.



Getting to know the ESOL for Schools B2 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 13 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 and express opinions and ideas	Spell their surname and give their country of origin, then answer up to 5 questions about themselves (e.g. family, studies, free time)	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 and opinions, and cooperate to reach an agreement or decision	Have a short discussion to plan, arrange or decide something using a written prompt	
4	Present a topic (narrating, describing, communicating ideas and expressing opinions)	Prepare a talk on a topic provided by the Interlocutor, then speak for two minutes 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.

THE B2 SPEAKING MARKSCHEME

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 at each level. 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 B2 ESOL for Schools Speaking test, please refer to the 'Assessing Speaking Performance' handbook on our website.

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	Task Fulfilment and Coherence	Accuracy and Range of Grammar	Accuracy and Range of Vocabulary	Pronunciation, Intonation and Fluency
3	• Tasks are fulfilled with ease and confidence • Turn taking is spontaneous and natural • Contributions are fully relevant and detailed • Significant points are appropriately highlighted with supporting detail • Discourse is clear and coherent and produced in an appropriate style with a wide range of • B2 level cohesive devices	• A wide range of B2 level grammar is used • There is a consistently high level of accuracy and control • Occasional errors may occur, but are often corrected	• A wide range of B2 level vocabulary is used to deal with the tasks • Choice of vocabulary is generally appropriate and effective	• Pronunciation is clear and natural • Intonation is used to convey meaning effectively • The flow of language is maintained effectively • No evident hesitations
2	• Tasks are fulfilled with relative ease • Turn taking is naturally handled • Contributions are mostly relevant • Intended message is clearly communicated. • Misunderstandings are rare • Discourse is mostly clear and coherent with use of B2 level cohesive devices	• A good range of B2 level grammar is used • There is a good level of accuracy and control • Some errors may occur, but the message is always communicated	• A sufficient range of vocabulary is used to deal with the B2 tasks • Choice of vocabulary is generally appropriate and effective • Some vocabulary errors occur, but do not impede communication	• Pronunciation is reasonably clear and easily understood • Stress and intonation patterns are appropriately used to help convey meaning • The flow of language is generally maintained despite some hesitation • No undue strain on the listener
1	• Tasks remain largely unfulfilled • Interaction is only maintained with the support of the interlocutor • Little natural turn taking takes place • Contributions lack relevance • Intended message is only communicated with difficulty • Ideas are linked together simply and may be difficult to follow	• Range of grammar is too limited to deal with the B2 level tasks • Frequent errors are noticeable, and may impede communication	• Range of vocabulary is too limited to deal with the B2 level tasks • Vocabulary errors may make the message difficult to follow	• Unclear pronunciation leads to undue strain on the listener • Inappropriate stress and intonation patterns impede communication • Frequent hesitations are evident, with repetition and attempts to repair language
0	• The tasks are unfulfilled and intended message is not successfully communicated • Ideas are difficult to follow and not linked together into connected speech • OR insufficient sample of language to assess	• Inadequate range of grammar • Frequent errors impede communication • OR insufficient sample of language to assess	• Lacks the vocabulary to deal with the B2 level tasks • The message is obscured by vocabulary errors • OR insufficient sample of language to assess	• Unclear pronunciation and/or intonation prevents clear understanding • Frequent hesitation places strain on the listener • OR insufficient sample of language to assess



Helping learners prepare for the ESOL for Schools B2 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 B2 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 B2 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.

- › Ensure learners 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, ideas and opinions.
- › 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 B2 topics: www.languagecert.org).
- › Teach and practise simple language for expressing likes, dislikes and preferences.
- › Advise learners to avoid giving rehearsed answers to anticipated questions, as this will help them to sound more natural.
- › 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.

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 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 and your ideas. *(Choose up to five questions, one from each of the different topic areas, as time allows. Name the topic; e.g. 'Now, Television.')*

Topics

Television

- How much television do you watch in a week?
- What kinds of programmes do you like and dislike?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of watching television?
- In your opinion, what are a parent's responsibilities regarding television?

Friendship

- What qualities do you look for in a good friend?
- Would you prefer a wide circle of friends or just a few close friends? (Why?)
- How can friends help you in times of difficulty?
- Can you tell me about ways friends have helped you?

Leisure facilities

- What leisure facilities do you and your friends use?
- What kinds of leisure facilities are there in your town?
- What leisure facilities are popular with older people?
- If you were responsible, what leisure facilities would you build in your area?

Public transport

- Why do you think some people pay lots of money to fly first class?
- What's the best thing about public transport where you live?
- If you had a lot of money, how would you travel?
- What would improve public transport for you in your area?

(continued)

Sample taken from B2 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 initial questions, how many questions will the Interlocutor ask you? *(answer: up to five questions)*
- › What kind of questions will they be? *(answer: questions asking about personal information and opinions)*
- › Will all questions be on the same topic? *(answer: no, each question will be on a different topic)*

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge and prediction skills and provides practice for the Part 1 task.

Step 1

Tell the class that one of the topics likely to appear in the test is 'television'. Ask learners to look at the questions about television in Part 1 of the practice paper and to think of other questions they might be asked on this topic (take some brief notes as you will need them for the next step of the task). Ensure the questions learners suggest are different from those in the practice paper.

(example questions:

- *Do you like watching television? Why? How often do you watch television?*
- *How much television do you watch every day?*
- *Are you happy with the programmes on TV?*
- *What's your favourite programme / TV channel? Why?*
- *Who do you usually watch TV with? Why?)*

Step 2

Now go through the notes you made in Step 1 and ask the class questions more or less similar to those learners have just suggested. For further language practice, you might want to add your own questions as well as ask the same question to two or more learners.

Step 3

Ask the class the four questions about television from the practice paper and monitor their responses. Note their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. tenses, prepositions, word order) and plan remedial work for the next lesson if needed.

Note: Remind learners that in the actual test, they will only be asked one question per topic. The aim is to give short, accurate and clear responses, as the Interlocutor will immediately move on to a new question on a different topic.

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. Organise a topic carousel

Prepare sets of flashcards on different common topic areas, e.g. food, hobbies, school, holidays, music, technology, family (flashcards can include words/phrases to support learners throughout the activity). Divide the class in half and arrange them in two concentric circles with learners facing each other in pairs. Give all the pairs a flashcard on the same topic and have them ask each other one question related to that topic, encouraging natural follow-up questions. After two minutes, rotate one of the circles so that learners get a new partner and repeat with a new topic. You could record their conversations for later feedback on grammar, fluency and vocabulary.

This activity helps learners build confidence in speaking spontaneously by recycling topic-related vocabulary and practising strategies they can use in longer speaking tasks.

2. Take the hot seat

Have learners prepare up to five different personal questions on different topics, as the Interlocutor would. Then ask them to take turns asking you their questions (if time is short, ask for volunteers.) Model clear, appropriate answers, and include occasional mistakes – deliberate or real – to see if they spot the errors. Afterwards, reflect as a class on what made your answers effective or not.

Learners are often curious about their teacher, so this activity helps to increase their engagement and motivation, while also giving them insight into how test-style questioning works.

3. Set an error hunt

Write four or five example answers for typical Part 1 questions on the board, some with deliberate grammar or vocabulary mistakes. In pairs, learners identify and correct the mistakes, then think of (or briefly note down) possible questions that could go with each answer. They then do a role-play, asking each other their questions and responding using their improved answers.

This activity helps learners to identify and correct language mistakes, practise accurate responses, and build confidence in using Part 1 speaking skills.

4. Lead a show-and-tell activity

Learners bring a bag from home containing two or three small objects (or they can use pictures online). One by one, learners show their items to the rest of the class and talk about them. Classmates ask one or two follow-up questions, as in Part 1 of the test.

This activity connects personal expression to language production and can therefore make speaking more meaningful.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING PART 2: TAKING PART IN ROLE-PLAYS

Learners will be asked to take part in two or three 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 test taker.
- › Have learners practise the language functions likely to be needed in this part of the test (e.g. expressing views, offering an apology, responding to a request).
- › Remind learners that they should think about who they are speaking to and ensure their responses are appropriate in terms of style, language and tone (as the Interlocutor will assume a variety of roles, e.g. a friend, a head teacher, a manager).
- › 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.

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 new neighbour. I start.
Hello. My name's _____. I've just moved in next door.
- We're friends. You don't really want to go to our friend's party tonight. I start.
Come on, we'll be late if we don't go soon.
- We're in a queue in a cafeteria. I start.
Excuse me, have we met before?
- We're classmates. I start.
Did you hear that our teacher is retiring at the end of the school year? What shall we do?

C: (Responds.)

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

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

B

- I work at the amusement park ticket booth. You've lost your entry ticket. You start.
- We are friends. You bought tickets for the cinema tonight. Tell me where and when to meet. You start.
- I am your teacher. You have just arrived very late at school. You start.
- We are classmates doing a science project together. You don't think we can finish it on time. 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 B2 Speaking Part 2 practice paper

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

- › What are you required to do in Part 2? (answer: role-play some situations)
- › How many situations will you be asked to role-play? (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 turns are you expected to produce? (answer: around two turns per role-play)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity aims to reactivate learners' prior knowledge of language functions 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. for apologising, interrupting or thanking someone.

Step 2

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

- › What would you say if you had to introduce yourself to a stranger?
(example answers:
Hello / Hi / Hey, I'm ...
My name is ... but you can call me ...
May I / Let me introduce myself.
I'd like to introduce myself. I'm ...)
- › What would you say if you had to decline an invitation?
(example answers:
Thank you for the invitation, but I'm not available ...
It's very kind of you, but unfortunately I'm unable to ...
I really can't (right now), but I'd gladly ...
I'm sorry, I'm afraid I can't ...)
- › What would you say if you were wondering about whether you have met someone in the past?
(example answers:
Sorry! / Excuse me! I think we've met before, haven't we?
May I ask you something – have we met before?
I've been meaning to ask you – have we met before?
Excuse me but you look familiar! I can't figure out where we met but ...)
- › What would you say if you heard some shocking news?
(example answers:
I can't believe it! It can't be true!
I can't believe my ears!
I'm really disappointed. What shall we do?
I'm finding it hard to believe ...
I never expected something like this would happen.)

Step 3

To review functions related to Part B, ask the class these questions:

- › What would you say if you lost something you needed to enter a building (e.g. a museum or a library)?

(example answers:

Excuse me, I think I've lost ...

Silly me! I'm afraid I've lost ...

You may not believe me but I've lost ...

Excuse me! I just want to let you know that I've lost ...

I'm so sorry, but I can't find ...)

- › What would you say to a friend if you wanted to suggest meeting him/her somewhere at a given time?

(example answers:

Let's meet ...

Shall we meet ...?

How about meeting ... ? / What about meeting ...?

What if we met ...?)

- › What would you formally say if you wanted to apologise for being late?

(example answers:

I'm really/terribly sorry for being late!

Please forgive me for being late!

I apologise for being late! / I can't apologise enough for being late!

My apologies / Pardon me for being late!)

- › What would you say if something you were planning to do with someone couldn't be completed by a deadline?

(example answers:

Sorry to disappoint you, but I don't think it can be done (by then).

I wish we could complete it but it's just impossible!

Just forget it! No way, it's impossible! / It's out of the question!

It just won't work! We won't finish it (by then)!)

Step 4

Put learners in pairs and have them perform the role-plays from the practice paper in front of the class. Monitor learners and make a note of their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. question formation, tenses, prepositions, word order) and, if needed, plan remedial work for the next lesson.

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. Set a dialogue remix task

Write two or three short dialogues relating to different situations on paper (two or three lines each). Cut them into strips and mix them up. In pairs, learners reconstruct the dialogues and perform them. They then write their own versions of the exchanges using different vocabulary or emotions. To extend the activity, give learners dialogues with mistakes in them and ask them to fix the errors.

This activity helps learners develop vocabulary and grammatical accuracy and build confidence in performing short role-plays.

2. Use pictures to prompt dialogues

Show the class a picture of a place (e.g. a hospital, bus stop, classroom or cinema) and ask, 'What could go wrong here?' Elicit ideas from the class. Then ask, 'What would you say if it happened?' Invite a volunteer to perform a role-play with you based on one of the class's imagined scenarios, for example, 'You're at the cinema and you realise you've left your phone at home with the ticket on it'. Then ask one or two more volunteers to act out another role-play based on a different imagined scenario.

The open-ended nature of the prompt ('What could go wrong here?') encourages learners to think creatively and react quickly, just as they must in the test. Pictures also provide contextual clues, which make the task more engaging and accessible, especially for visual learners. This reduces the pressure on learners and can help trigger relevant vocabulary and language structures.

3. Practise sentence stress with functional language

Write a sentence that uses functional language on the board, e.g. 'I'm really sorry for being late!' Learners copy it onto a piece of paper or into their notebooks and underline the stressed words. Say the sentence with the class, modelling proper intonation and expression. This activity could be extended by repeating the sentence with different emotions (e.g. angry, sad, nervous, etc.).

Pronunciation is a key part of helping learners perform better in the Part 2 task, especially since it enhances clarity and confidence in short exchanges.

4. Show learners how to say it

Say a model phrase related to an everyday language function, e.g. 'Sorry to bother you, but I think I lost my ticket.' Learners repeat it with the same intonation, stress and rhythm. Then, ask learners to replace part of the phrase (e.g. what was lost) with something different (e.g. an ID badge instead of a ticket). Go round the class ensuring learners refer to a different item each time.

This activity helps learners to practise everyday language functions, focusing on accurate pronunciation, stress and intonation, while adapting phrases to different situations.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING PART 3: RESPONDING TO A WRITTEN PROMPT

Learners will be asked to discuss a given topic with the Interlocutor. They will be provided with a written prompt related to the topic. They will have 20 seconds to prepare.

- › To prepare for this task, review with learners the functional language they will need (e.g. how to make suggestions, express agreement/disagreement, emphasise a point, justify an opinion).
- › Remind learners to produce more language than the given prompt, e.g. sharing their opinion about them rather than just repeating them, and encourage them to justify their opinions instead of just stating them.
- › In the task, learners should make good use of their preparation time to think about what they're going to say.
- › 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.

PART 3 (3 minutes)

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

We are planning to go on holiday with some friends. Let's talk about what kind of holiday we want 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

The Interlocutor's Task Sheet is displayed on a tablet screen. It has a title 'Holiday Plans' and a list of six items, each with an icon and a text field:

- Time: first two weeks in August
- Location: coastal resort
- Transport: hire car
- Accommodation: self-catering apartment
- Activities: swimming, sunbathing
- Reserve through: internet

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

The Candidate's Task Sheet for Part Three is displayed on a tablet screen. It has a title 'Holiday Plans' and a list of six items, each with an icon and a text field:

- Time: first two weeks in June
- Location: mountains
- Transport: hire car
- Accommodation: family hotel
- Activities: walking, photography
- Reserve through: internet

Sample taken from B2 Speaking Part 3 practice paper

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

- › What are you required to do in Part 3? *(answer: discuss something with the Interlocutor)*
- › What will the Interlocutor give you for this part of the test? *(answer: a task sheet)*
- › What will there be on the task sheet? *(answer: a written prompt, i.e. ideas you can use in the discussion)*
- › Will the Interlocutor have a task sheet similar to yours? *(answer: no, some ideas in the written prompt will be different)*
- › Will you be allowed to look at the Interlocutor's task sheet? *(answer: no)*
- › Will you be given any preparation time? *(answer: yes, you will be given 20 seconds to prepare)*

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity engages learners with the topic by eliciting their personal opinion and provides practice for the Part 3 task.

Step 1

Tell learners to imagine they are discussing plans with their family or friends for a holiday. Ask them the following questions as part of a class discussion:

Where would you prefer to go on holiday – a coastal resort or a location in the mountains?

Why?

(possible talking points:

A coastal resort: more young people around, greater variety of activities likely, nightlife, etc.

A location in the mountains: close to nature, fresh air, more relaxing, more peaceful, etc.)

What kind of accommodation would you choose: a self-catering apartment or a hotel?

Why?

(possible talking points:

A self-catering apartment: cheaper, feeling of being at home, more privacy, having your own food, etc.

A hotel: no need to tidy/clean the room, extra facilities available (e.g. sports facilities), variety of meals, etc.)

Which activities would you choose (if you had no other options): swimming and sunbathing or walking and photography?

(possible talking points:

Swimming and sunbathing: ideal to keep fit, fun, relaxing, etc.

Walking and photography: being close to nature, relaxing, capturing feelings and beautiful moments, etc.)

Would you go in April or August?

Why?

(possible talking points:

In April: quieter/less crowded, cheaper/lower prices, cooler temperatures, etc.

In August: livelier, more entertainment options, more opportunities to meet people and make friends, higher temperatures, etc.)

Would you use the internet to book your holiday?

Why (not)?

(possible talking points:

Yes, because it's easier/cheaper/quicker, etc.

No, because it can be dangerous, you may lose your money, etc.)

Note learners' answers on the board so that they can refer to them when doing the rest of the test activity.

Step 2

Ask learners to read the Part 3 task and ensure they know what to do. Put learners in pairs and tell them they are going to do a role-play with one of them acting as the Interlocutor and the other as the test taker. Give each learner an Interlocutor task sheet or test taker task sheet, depending on their role. Before pairs begin, you could demonstrate the task with a volunteer so that everyone knows what they are expected to do. Give learners a few minutes to practise their role-plays.

Step 3

Choose pairs to do their role-plays in front of the class, setting a time limit of one or two minutes for each pair. Monitor learners as they perform, making mental or written notes about their strengths and weaknesses and, if needed, plan remedial work for the next lesson.

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. Stage a mock speaking task with peer evaluation

Put learners in groups of three. Each learner takes on a different role within their group – Learner A acts as the Interlocutor, guiding the task as in the actual test. Learner B takes the role of the test taker, performing Part 3 of the Speaking test. Learner C acts as an observer, using a checklist to evaluate the test taker's performance. The observer should focus on key performance indicators:

- › Did the candidate use a variety of linking words?
- › Did they actively ask for their partner's opinion?
- › Did they help reach a clear conclusion?

For a more detailed evaluation, you can expand the checklist to include criteria like use of opinion language, grammatical range and flexibility, effective time management and turn-taking.

Monitor groups as they work and make mental or brief written notes on their performance to identify areas for remedial work in the next lesson.

This activity helps learners become more aware of the expectations in Part 3 and allows them to reflect on both their own and their peers' performance.

2. Help learners plan for the unexpected

Put learners in pairs and give each pair a planning task to complete together. After they have planned the task, introduce a 'twist' (i.e. an unexpected or abstract challenge) that forces learners to rethink their ideas collaboratively and agree on a revised plan.

Examples:

- › Task: Plan a school fundraiser → Twist: A key speaker cancels at the last minute.
- › Task: Organise a youth festival → Twist: It starts raining, and all activities were planned for outdoors.
- › Task: Choose a community project → Twist: Funding is suddenly reduced by 50%.

This activity encourages the use of language for polite disagreement, speculation and compromise (e.g. 'What if we ...?', 'That's a good point, but maybe we should ...'). It also helps learners develop fluency and respond spontaneously under pressure, as required in Part 3 of the test.

3. Set a sentence refinement task

Give learners some simple example answers, such as 'I think we should choose the gym because it's good for your health' or 'It's cheaper, so it's better.' Their task is to refine these sentences so that they sound more fluent and precise.

Put learners in pairs and ask them to discuss how they could improve the sentences. Encourage the use of clear strategies, such as hedging ('It might be a good idea to choose the gym because ...'), collocations ('a cost-effective choice', 'long-term benefits'), conditionals ('If we want something sustainable, then the gym could be ideal'), and diplomatic language ('This may not be perfect, but it is a practical option'). Provide one or two examples for guidance, e.g.:

- › Original sentence: 'It's cheaper, so it's better.'
- › Refined sentence 1: 'While it may be less expensive, it also provides good value for money.'
- › Refined sentence 2: 'It might not be the most exciting choice, but it is certainly practical and affordable.'

After pairs have worked on improving a few sentences, ask them to share their responses with the class and discuss which strategies helped.

This activity helps learners develop flexible, nuanced language and make their speaking responses more natural and sophisticated, especially for Part 3 of the test.

4. Enhance speaking activities with music

To add variety to speaking practice, incorporate short instrumental music clips or ambient sounds related to a specific setting (e.g. a café, a park). Music can help learners mentally transport themselves to the scenario, enhancing their emotional engagement and focus. This sensory input encourages learners to adjust their tone, pace and language use appropriately. When used strategically, music can also reduce anxiety, boost motivation, and ultimately improve fluency and confidence in real-life speaking situations.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR SPEAKING PART 4: TALKING ABOUT A TOPIC AND ANSWERING FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

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

- › To prepare for this task, have learners practise presenting their ideas clearly and in a logical order, using sequencing words such as 'First of all', 'Then' and 'Finally'. They should also practise phrases for expressing opinions, ideas and feelings (e.g. 'I think', 'In my opinion').
- › In the task, 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/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 this part, begin by allowing learners to speak for less than a minute. Then gradually increase their speaking time as they become more confident.
- › Learners often focus excessively on their mistakes. To counter this, encourage them to give each other compliments after each individual talk, focusing on areas such as content, pronunciation or confidence. This fosters a supportive environment, boosts self-esteem and reduces anxiety related to speaking. Additionally, hearing peers' strengths enables learners to learn new strategies and language, enhancing their overall speaking skills.
- › 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.

PART 4 (3 minutes including follow-up questions)

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

Topics

A A sports event you would like to go to

B Your favourite holiday place

C Your life before you started school

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

A sports event you would like to go to

- Who would you like to go to the sports event with?
- Do you prefer to watch sports live or on TV? (Why?)
- What new sport would you like to try?
- Are there any sports you really don't like watching? (Why?)

Your favourite holiday place

- What would it be like to live in that place all the time?
- Do you think that place will change in the future? (Why?)
- Which other places would you like to visit?
- What kind of holiday place would you **not** enjoy? (Why?)

Your life before you started school

- Have you got photos from the time before you started school?
- Do you think children start school at the right age?
- How did you feel about starting school?
- What things can children learn better at home than at school?

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

Sample taken from B2 Speaking Part 4 practice paper

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

- › What are you required to do in Part 4? *(answer: talk about a topic chosen by the Interlocutor)*
- › How long are you expected to talk? *(answer: two minutes)*
- › Will you be given any preparation time? *(answer: yes, 30 seconds)*
- › Will you be allowed to make notes *(answer: yes, you will be given blank paper and a pen/pencil to make notes)*
- › Will the Interlocutor participate in your talk? *(answer: no, you will talk on your own for two minutes)*
- › What will happen after your talk? *(answer: the Interlocutor will ask a few follow-up questions)*
- › Will the follow-up questions be related to the topic? *(answer: yes, all of them will be related to the topic)*

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity reactivates learners' prior linguistic and world knowledge and provides practice for the Part 4 task.

Step 1

Tell the class that the lesson will focus on the topic of 'Important inventions', specifically 'The computer'. Draw the table below on the board and have learners copy it into their notebooks. Ask learners to complete the table with brief notes giving their reasons why they think the computer is an important invention.

Why the computer is an important invention

Step 2

Elicit all arguments in favour of the computer and add them to your table on the board. Ask learners to record all the points as they will need to refer to them in the task that follows.

Why the computer is an important invention
- Can perform a wide variety of tasks - Can perform tasks in seconds (what humans would achieve in days!) - Can perform calculations that are 100% accurate - Can give access to vast amounts of information and resources - Can store large amounts of data - Can organise and present complex information very neatly - Can be a great source of entertainment - Can be used to keep everyone connected, etc.

Step 3

Ask learners to imagine that they are taking their Speaking test and that the Interlocutor asks them 'Why is the computer an important invention?' Give them enough time to decide which arguments from the table they will use and in which order, and to briefly rehearse their response. Remind learners that their response should be no longer than two minutes.

Step 4

When their preparation time is up, ask a few volunteers to share their response with the rest of the class. Observe learners' talks and make a note of any strengths and weaknesses (e.g. tenses, prepositions, word order) and plan any remedial work for the next lesson if needed.

Step 5

After each talk, ask the related follow-up questions about important inventions from the practice paper.

Step 6

Finish the lesson by reminding learners that this part of the test is the most challenging, and that they should aim at providing a fairly detailed and extended response to showcase the richness/depth of their language skills.

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.

1.1 Create 'What if ... ?' scenarios

Provide learners with a scenario, e.g. 'What if cars disappeared tomorrow?' or 'What if everyone worked from home?'. They have 30 seconds to note down their ideas and plan a talk. Give volunteers two minutes to present their talk to the rest of the class. Their peers follow up with questions about possible consequences, personal opinions or alternatives.

This activity is good for practising speculation, conditionals and expanding ideas.

2. Run a timed, structured speaking activity

Give learners a template for a two-minute talk (e.g. Introduction – 20 seconds, Point 1 – 40 seconds, Point 2 – 40 seconds, Conclusion – 20 seconds) and have them use the template to plan a short talk on a familiar topic. Encourage them to jot down bullet points or key words for each section to keep their ideas focused and concise. Emphasise that this structure helps to organise thoughts logically and ensures they cover all necessary parts of a clear presentation, improving coherence and listener understanding.

Learners should practise delivering their talk aloud at home, using a timer (e.g. stopwatch or phone) to monitor their pacing. Then ask volunteers to give their talk in class and observe them, making a note of any strengths and weaknesses (e.g. tenses, prepositions, word order). Plan remedial work for the next lesson if needed.

This activity practises organising ideas and delivering a well-structured talk within a set time while encouraging a steady, natural pace – essential skills for Part 4 of the test.

3. Set a peer review task

Put learners in pairs and assign the class a topic, e.g. 'My best summer holiday' or 'My favourite film'. In pairs, learners take turns giving a two-minute talk on the topic while their partner notes down strengths and areas for improvement related to both language and presentation (voice volume, eye contact, body language, etc.).

This activity develops constructive peer feedback skills and self-awareness.



B2 General Speaking Tips

These tips provide useful strategies for tackling the different B2 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.

- › Remind learners to use 'fillers' (e.g. 'Well', 'You know', 'I mean', 'Let me think') to avoid long pauses and hesitation. Fillers will help them to provide more fluent responses.

- › Practise a few interaction skills with learners, e.g. how to take turns, how to add extra information and how to politely disagree, so that they can interact with the Interlocutor more effectively.

- › Divide your class into pairs and get learners to practise both asking and responding to questions that are similar to the ones in the tasks.

- › Foster a supportive atmosphere in class where learners feel comfortable speaking.

- › Encourage learners to record themselves so that they can review their own language use and presentation style (e.g. use of filler words, posture, eye contact, whether they're speaking too fast). Taking an active role in evaluating their own performance supports learner independence and long-term progress. Learners can set personal targets based on their self-observation (e.g. 'I need to pause more' or 'I want to use more connectors next time'), making their practice more focused and intentional.

- › Have learners practise the task in pairs or with you, using the free practice papers on the LANGUAGECERT website. You can also show them the mock test videos on the website so that they know what to expect on Test Day.

Visit **www.languagecert.org**

Ensuring learners are ready for the ESOL for Schools B2 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 are you required to do in Part 1? *(answer: communicate personal information, including spelling your surname and saying where you are from, and express opinions and ideas)*
- › How many questions will the Interlocutor ask you in Part 1? *(answer: up to five questions)*
- › What are you required to do in Part 2? *(answer: role-play two or more situations with the Interlocutor)*
- › What are you required to do in Part 3? *(answer: hold a short discussion with the Interlocutor to plan, arrange or decide something, using a written prompt)*
- › What are you required to do in Part 4? *(answer: talk for two minutes on a topic chosen by the Interlocutor and answer follow-up questions)*
- › How much preparation time will you have in Part 4? *(answer: 30 seconds)*
- › Are test takers assessed in pairs? *(answer: no, all test takers are assessed individually)*
- › What is the overall duration of the test? *(answer: 13 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 B2 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 and pre-recorded webinars

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

Further information

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

Appendix

Appendix: Essential language structures and functions for B2

At B2 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

Describing places
Describing past experiences and storytelling
Describing feelings, emotions and attitudes
Expressing opinions

› Discourse functions

Initiating and closing a conversation
Checking understanding (from both a speaker's and a listener's point of view)
Managing interaction (interrupting, changing topic, resuming, or continuing)

› Discourse markers

Linkers: sequential – past time
Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast, etc.
Markers to structure informal spoken discourse
Contrasting opinions (on the one hand ...)

› Questions

Wh- questions in the past
Complex question tags

› Grammar forms

Past continuous
used to
would expressing habit in the past
Past perfect
Future
Future time: will & going to (prediction)
Present perfect
Past simple
Present perfect continuous
Conditionals: zero, first, second and third

Passives

Reported speech (range of tenses)

Modals: might, may, will, probably
(possibility)

Modals: must / can't (deduction)

Modals: must / have to, ought to, need to
(obligation and necessity)

Modals: should have, might have, etc. (past)

Articles: with countable and uncountable
nouns

Determiners

Broad range (e.g. all the, most, both)

Adjectives

Adverbial phrases of time, place and
frequency, including word order

Adjectives vs adverbs

Adverbial phrases of degree/extent,
probability

Comparative and superlative forms of
adverbs

Intensifiers

Broader range of intensifiers (e.g. too, so,
enough)

Wide range (e.g. extremely, much too)

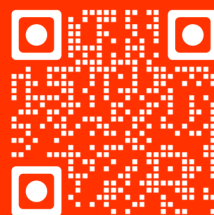
› Pragmatic awareness

Colloquial language

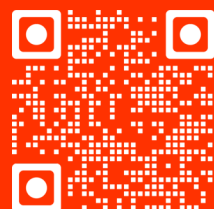
Lexico-grammatical features

Phrasal verbs

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