

Speaking reference

What to expect in the exam

The Speaking paper is Paper 5.

- It lasts approximately 14 minutes.
- You do the Speaking paper in pairs. (Certain test centres may allow you to take the test with a friend, otherwise you will be partnered with a stranger).
- There are two examiners in the room; one gives you instructions and asks you questions, the other listens but does not speak.
- You may do the Speaking paper on a different day from the other parts of the exam.
- The Speaking paper has four parts.

Part 1

Part 1 is a conversation between the examiner and each candidate and lasts two minutes. You are asked questions about yourself, your family, your hobbies and interests, your studies or your work, your likes and dislikes. Questions may also be about your past experiences and your future plans.

You studied and practised Part 1 in Units 1, 5 and 10.

How to do Part 1

- 1 **Don't** prepare detailed answers before you go to the exam and **don't** memorise answers to possible questions: examiners will recognise this *and not mark you for these*.
- 2 Do make sure that you know the vocabulary you need to talk about your studies, your job, your family, your town and your free-time activities.
- 3 Listen to the examiner's questions carefully.
- 4 Look confidently at the examiner and perhaps smile a little when you answer the questions.
- 5 Answer the questions openly and, when appropriate, answer with extra details, or a reason.
- 6 Be ready to offer extra information about yourself and try to speak fluently and confidently.

- 1 Read the advice and the example questions (1–9). Then match the answers on page 195 (a–i) with the questions.

Advice and example questions

- 1 Don't just answer the question – give some extra details if you can.

Question: *Where are you from?b....*

- 2 You can offer several ideas or answers to the same question.

Question: *What do young people do in their free time in your town?*

- 3 Avoid giving simple Yes/No answers which end the conversation.

Question: *Do you like doing sports?*

- 4 A question which starts, 'Tell us a little about ...' gives you an opportunity to say quite a lot.

Question: *Tell us a little about your family.*

- 5 When you speak about things you like or enjoy, sound enthusiastic. Be ready to use past tenses and time adverbs.

Question: *Tell us about something you really enjoyed doing recently.*

- 6 Be ready to talk about the future and use different tenses to do so.

Question: *What job would you like to do in the future?*

- 7 If you don't understand or don't hear the question, ask the examiner to repeat it.

Question: *Which do you prefer: reading books or watching TV?*

- 8 When appropriate, use a range of grammar and vocabulary. The examiners want to hear how well you can speak English.

Question: *Do you enjoy travelling?*

- 9 When appropriate, give reasons for your answers.

Question: *Tell me about a place you'd like to visit.*

Good answers

- a I'd really like to visit Venice. I've seen photos of it and I've read about it, but it must be an amazing place to actually be in and explore. I'd really like to go there at carnival time because it looks such a colourful festival.
- b I'm from Ostrava. It's a large industrial town in the east of the Czech Republic, not far from the Polish border. It's a good place to live, especially in spring and summer.
- c Yes, I do, especially ones which are competitive like basketball or tennis, because I like to win. Actually, I play in my school basketball team and at the moment we're at the top of our regional league.
- d Sorry, could you say that again, please?
- e They go to the cinema, they go out with friends, they go clubbing. You know, basically, they do the normal things which I think young people do everywhere.
- f Well, two weeks ago we had what in England I think is called a half-term holiday, so I went skiing with two of my friends in the mountains. It was great because we stayed in a hostel with other young people, the weather and the snow were excellent, so the skiing was great and we had a lot of fun meeting other young people when we weren't skiing. It was awesome, especially because it was the first time we'd been skiing without our families.
- g Well, I've always liked beautiful buildings and I've always been interested in how they're designed to both look beautiful and be very functional, so I'm hoping to study architecture at university and become an architect. I think the combination of a very technical subject with the chance to be very creative would suit me perfectly.
- h Well, there's just my mother, my father and myself, so I'm an only child. Both my parents have full-time jobs: my mother's a lawyer and my father manages a restaurant.
- i Yes, I love it. I get a real thrill from visiting new and unusual places and from meeting new people and trying to understand or integrate a little bit into their cultures. I think also it's important for me to get away from my daily routine from time to time because it helps broaden the mind. I wish I could travel more.

Part 2

In Part 2, you work alone.

- The examiner gives you two photos on the same topic to speak about.
- He/She asks you to speak for one minute, compare the photos and answer a question about the topic of the two photos.
- The question is also printed above the photos.
- When your partner speaks about his/her photos, you should listen carefully. After your partner has finished, the examiner asks you a short question about the topic of your partner's photos.

Part 2 takes four minutes in total including the examiner's instructions, each candidate's one-minute answer and the short questions.

You studied and practised Part 2 in Units 2, 6, 9, 11 and 13.

How to do Part 2

- 1 Talk about the general ideas the photos show. Don't try to describe them in detail.
- 2 Compare the ideas the two photos show in relation to the question: the question is printed with the photos, so keep it in mind for everything you say.
- 3 When you are not sure what is happening in a photo, speculate (*She seems to be ...*, *He might be ...* – see **Speculating** on page 196 and in Unit 9).
- 4 When you compare the photos, you can say what is similar about them as well as what is different.
- 5 Give a balanced answer, so:
 - spend about the same amount of time on each photo
 - spend some time comparing the photos, but perhaps more time answering the question (see Unit 13).
- 6 Support your answer to the question with reasons.
- 7 Use some of the strategies you have practised in this book; for example, instead of talking about one photo and then the other, you could compare both of them at the same time (see Unit 6).
- 8 Speak for the complete minute, i.e. keep speaking until the examiner says 'Thank you'.
- 9 When it's your partner's turn to talk about the photos, listen but don't say anything yourself. You will be asked a question at the end. You should answer it quite briefly in a couple of sentences.

What is enjoyable about communicating in these ways?



Referring to the photos

- In the first photo, a girl is ...
- In the second photo, there are two oldish people who are ...
- The first photo shows ...

Comparing the photos

- In the first photo, there's a girl who looks as if she's chatting on the internet or sending an email, **whereas/ while** in the second photo two oldish people are sitting together on a park bench and gossiping or telling each other stories.
- I think that while the first photo shows that you can have a good time communicating electronically with your friends all over the world, the second photo shows that traditional forms of communication with friends are best because you're face to face and can laugh together and look into each other's eyes and hold hands.
- I think the girl might be talking to a friend about school work, which is always more fun than doing school work on your own, or she may be gossiping about her teachers. **On the other hand**, the old people are probably talking about their grandchildren and having a laugh about things their grandchildren do, or they could be talking about things they did when they were younger.
- **In both photos**, the people are probably communicating with friends, and that's usually fun. **However, in the first photo**, the girl may feel a little distant from her friends, which is a pity, **whereas in the second photo** the two people clearly have a close, warm relationship.

Speculating

- In the first photo, I can see a girl who **looks as if** she's chatting on the Internet **whereas/ while** in the second photo two old people are sitting together on a park bench and gossiping.
- While the girl seems to be concentrating hard, **perhaps** because she's writing, the old people seem to be relaxed and enjoying themselves. I think this is because they're together and can see each other.
- I **think** the girl **might** be talking to a friend about school work or boyfriends. **On the other hand**, the old people are **probably** talking about their grandchildren, or they **could be** talking about things they did when they were younger.

→ page 184 Language reference: Modal verbs – expressing certainty and possibility

→ page 182 Language reference: *look, seem and appear*

Part 3

In Part 3, you work with the other candidate.

This part of the Speaking paper is divided into two parts.

In the first part, which takes two minutes:

- The examiner gives you a page with a question and five prompts.
- You have 15 seconds to consider the options before you start speaking.
- You should discuss each of the options in turn.

In the second part, the examiner asks you to summarise your thoughts, for example by choosing the option that is best and saying why. You have one minute for this.

You studied and practised Part 3 in Units 3, 7, 12 and 14.

How to do Part 3

For the first part:

- 1 Listen carefully to the question, which is also printed next to the options to help you. It will be in a mind map with the question in the middle of the page and the prompts around it.
- 2 You have 15 seconds to think about the task before you start speaking:

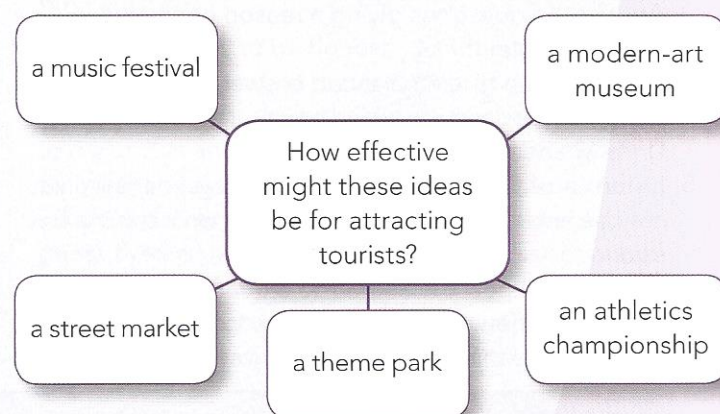
Think about:

- the options and how you can express them in your own words and discuss their relative merits in relation to the question
 - how you can start the discussion, perhaps with a suggestion and a reason for your idea.
- 3 To start the conversation, you can give a brief opinion about one of the options or make a suggestion and ask your partner what he/she thinks.
 - 4 When you discuss, deal with each option in turn.
 - 5 When your partner says something, react to his/her ideas. Listen carefully to what he/she is saying. Try to make the discussion like a natural conversation. Don't try to dominate the conversation.
 - 6 Keep the discussion moving by saying things like *What about this option? What do you think? or Shall we move on to the next option?*
 - 7 Don't spend too long talking about one particular option.
 - 8 Continue your discussion until the examiner says 'Thank you'.

For the second part:

- 1 Don't discuss each option again, but discuss the options which seem most reasonable to you.
- 2 Try to reach a decision, but remember that it's not essential to agree.
- 3 Remember you should discuss the question for a minute, so if you agree with your partner's first idea, say so, but suggest discussing other options (see Unit 3).
- 4 Continue your discussion until the examiner says 'Thank you'.

Example task: First part



Example task : Second part

Involving your partner

- What do you think?
- Do you agree?
- What about (a music festival)?
- I think ... What about you?

Keeping the discussion moving

- What about (a theme park)? What do you think?
- Let's move on to the next option.
- Shall we move on to the next option?

Part 4

In Part 4, you continue to work together.

- The examiner asks both of you questions about your opinions connected with the topic you discussed in Part 3.
- You may be asked the same question as your partner, if you agree with your partner's answer, or a completely different question.

Part 4 lasts about four minutes.

You studied and practised Part 4 in Units 4, 8, 12 and 14.

- What things should people try to find out before visiting a country? (Why?)
- How important is it for tourists to respect the culture of the country they are visiting?

Introducing an opinion and giving a reason

- I think ...
- Well, in my opinion, ... because ...
- I feel ...
- I'm not sure. I think ...
- No, I don't think so ...

How to do Part 4

- 1 Listen carefully to the questions. If you don't understand a question, don't feel afraid to ask the examiner to repeat (*Sorry could you say that again, please?*). You won't lose any marks asking them to repeat.
- 2 Give general answers to questions.
- 3 Answer the questions giving a reason or an explanation or an example.
- 4 You can try to give a balanced answer, i.e. express two points of view and say which one you agree with (see Units 12 and 14).
- 5 Listen carefully to what your partner says, because you may be asked to give your opinion on what he/she has said.
- 6 If you don't know the answer to a question, don't just say *I don't know*. Say *I don't know a lot about this subject, but I think ...* and then give some ideas.

Introducing an explanation

- I mean ...
- You see ...

Giving an example

- For example ...
- For instance ...
- ... such as ...

Speaking in general

- In general, ...
- Generally, ...
- As a rule, ...
- ... tend to ...

Example questions

- Some places attract large numbers of tourists. What problems are caused by having too many tourists?
- What can people learn by going as tourists to other places?
- Do you think it's better for people to spend their holidays in their own country or travel to other countries? Why?
- What are the advantages of living in another country instead of just going as a tourist? What's the main advantage?