

Example candidate response – low

Role play: Card 5

Role play Question 1

Conduct of the test

A clear introduction to the context and a clearly expressed question following the exact wording of the script as per the requirement.

Candidate response

The time is communicated, however briefly. Leaving at 11 in the evening might seem an unusual time to leave but benefit of the doubt is given because the addition of PM is an additional detail of time.

Mark awarded = 2 out of 2

Role play Question 2

Conduct of the test

Correct accurate repetition of the question by the teacher/examiner, exactly as it is printed on the script.

Candidate response

The question is misunderstood by the candidate after the repetition, and the set question is not addressed.

Mark awarded = 0 out of 2

Role play Question 3

Conduct of the test

Correct following of the guidance to pause after the first part of the question, wait for an answer, and then ask the second part of the question.

Candidate response

Both parts of the question have answers that are partly communicated, so the meaning is ambiguous. Both responses use tense incorrectly. The second response conveys an appropriate emotion to explain why, but the last word in the development of the idea is also unclear.

Mark awarded = 1 out of 2

Role play Question 4

Conduct of the test

The questioning is appropriate. The teacher/examiner does respond to the candidate's response simply by stating 'OK'.

Candidate response

The candidate does include a verb in her response ('go') which is expected in these last three role play questions, but as this is not correctly used, the response cannot achieve full marks.

Mark awarded = 1 out of 2

Role play Question 5

Conduct of the test

The candidate asks for a repeat of the second part of the question. The teacher/examiner does not repeat the wording of this question exactly as it was given.

Candidate response

For the first part of the question the candidate does not use a sentence structure but gives a simple, factual response. As we are not testing knowledge, we have given benefit of the doubt to the country rather than city name. The question asks for more than one city, but as this would be another name, the candidate has not had her marks reduced for that. In the second part, the candidate uses a complete sentence, but misunderstands the use of the word 'like' and responds using the wrong tense. Overall, partial information is communicated.

Mark awarded = 1 out of 2

Total mark awarded for the Role play = 5 out of 10

Topic conversation 1: Topic 2 – Travel and transport

Topic conversation 1 Question 1

Conduct of the test

Appropriate introduction and questioning. The candidate answers the question incorrectly, and so then the teacher/examiner repeats the question exactly as it is printed. However, he only offers a slight pause before moving on to the next question.

Candidate response

The candidate responds using a sentence but does not understand the question. There is no evidence provided, even after the question is repeated. The start of the response can be understood with some effort.

Topic conversation 1 Question 2

Conduct of the test

When the candidate indicates uncertainty about the question, the teacher/examiner then appropriately repeats the question exactly as it is printed. He could have encouraged her to give a fuller response, using for example, 'Tell me more about...'.

Candidate response

The candidate's request for clarification is difficult to hear. She gives a brief, factual answer but does not use a complete sentence. The timing is perhaps unrealistic, unless she is at a boarding school.

Topic conversation 1 Question 3

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner does not give sufficient thinking time after his first question. Rather than repeating the question exactly, he incorrectly moves straight on to asking the alternative question. For the second part of his question, he also uses 'trip' from the alternative question which does not follow on from the idea of 'journey' asked previously. Appropriately he prompts the candidate to include what she dislikes. He then encourages a fuller response by getting her to think about a specific place.

Candidate response

The candidate gives brief responses as well as attempting sentences. The responses are suitably relevant. She states a couple of very simple things she likes and begins to answer about her dislikes once she has been encouraged to focus on this part of the question. The structures are limited and show lack of control of the past tense, though accurate use of the plural form of 'to be'. Vocabulary is limited to simple and repetitive choices ('like', 'didn't like'). There is some hesitation and a lack of clarity of a word in her final response.

Topic conversation 1 Question 4

Conduct of the test

Correct following of the guidance to pause after the first part of the question, wait for an answer, and then ask the second part of the question. The teacher/examiner clarifies the point given by the candidate as a closed question.

Candidate response

The responses are brief and appropriate. A very simple opinion is conveyed using a simple sentence in the present tense.

Topic conversation 1 Question 5

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner inappropriately rephrases the question, introducing the idea of a 'problem'. This question is partially inappropriately rephrased twice.

Candidate response

The candidate attempts a relevant reason, although she has difficulty in replying. She finds it challenging to expand further upon the reason. There is a lack of control of structures, though she does attempt subordination using 'when' and uses a topic specific noun 'route'. There is some hesitation, and it is difficult to hear her request for the question to be repeated.

Further questions: The alternative question is inappropriately used here as a further question to extend the timing of the test. It is acceptable to repeat the alternative question which happens here. The teacher/examiner then asks a further question about travel in the future. However, before the candidate is given thinking time, he inappropriately rephrases the question and uses more challenging vocabulary ('transportation' rather than 'travel'). This question is closed and is not followed up with an open question.

Even after the repetition of the alternative question, the candidate is unable to explain why it is a good idea for people to walk more often. Her words are pronounced sufficiently to be understood, but there are noticeable fillers. In response to the second area of questioning, there is nothing to make a judgement on for quality of language, due to the style of the teacher/examiner's questioning.

Topic conversation 2: Topic 5 – People and places

Topic conversation 2 Question 1

Conduct of the test

Appropriate introduction and correct formulation of the question as given on the script. However, he should have repeated the question to encourage an appropriate focus on 'where?'.

Candidate response

The response is not wholly relevant to the question as she answers 'who' she sees rather than 'where' she goes. An appropriate sentence is used.

Topic conversation 2 Question 2

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner appropriately corrects himself at the start of the question. However, he could have encouraged the candidate to give a fuller response, by using an opening phrase such as 'Tell me more about...'.

Candidate response

The response is relevant but very brief. There is limited evidence for assessment of quality of language. The final word 'here' is understood with some effort.

Topic conversation 2 Question 3

Conduct of the test

Correct following of the guidance to pause after the first part of the question, wait for an answer, and then ask the second part of the question. The teacher/examiner appropriately tries to encourage her to develop her answer.

Candidate response

The responses provide very simple content, and a simple opinion is expressed. There is reliance on the verb 'to see' and on the present rather than the past tense, but she does use some simple qualifiers ('a lot of' and 'very'). Her words are pronounced sufficiently to be understood, but there are noticeable fillers.

Topic conversation 2 Question 4

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner should have repeated the question to ensure the 'how many?' part of the question is answered. For the second part, he encourages a more developed response by breaking the question in to two parts.

Candidate response

The candidate answers the first part of the question by listing languages, but she does not specifically provide a number. An answer is attempted to the second part, with no specific content other than to help at work, even when the question is repeated. There is a lack of control of sentences, leading to noticeable fillers, despite clear pronunciation of words.

Topic conversation 2 Question 5

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner does not repeat the first part of the question, but inappropriately moves on to the alternative question. The teacher/examiner then checks understanding of the candidate's response, phrasing it as a question, but in doing so introduces the word 'alone'. He then appropriately encourages her to develop the idea.

Candidate response

The candidate responds to the alternative question here. She gives a simple explanation but has difficulty developing it further. She uses a simple sentence in the future tense accurately, but then uses a confusing construction which uses tense inaccurately.

Further questions: It is appropriate to ask two further questions on your choice on the same topic, when the topic conversation lasts less than 3½ minutes, but the teacher/examiner, perhaps in trying to support the candidate, asks many questions around two topic areas – what is good or bad about making friends from other countries and something vague about a place the candidate would like to visit.

For the first area of questioning, there is nothing specifically to judge in terms of the quality of language other than the idiom 'of course'. There is more evidence in the second area of questioning. She uses 'want to' to express intention but pronunciation towards the end of the sentence affects communication.

Mark awarded for Communication for Topic conversation 1 and 2 = 6 out of 15

Mark awarded for Quality of language for Topic conversation 1 and 2 = 6 out of 15

Total mark awarded for the Topic conversations = 12 out of 30

Whole test

How the teacher/examiner performance could improve

In the role play, the teacher/examiner could interact more in response to the candidate, as is indicated in the script. By offering light, brief responses between questions and maintaining the given role, this helps to sustain the candidate's awareness of their role. Also, he should make sure that he used the exact wording of the question when repeating it, as rewording could potentially cause more confusion for the candidate. Further, if the teacher/examiner introduced new vocabulary in their question which was subsequently used by the candidate, use of this vocabulary could not be credited.

In the topic conversations, the teacher/examiner would benefit the candidate by always giving her sufficient thinking time. He should repeat the question when it is not answered or the response is irrelevant, rather than moving straight on to the alternative question. He should always use the questions exactly as printed rather than rephrasing and introducing new vocabulary which cannot be credited if used by the candidate. In more accessible questions, he could have encouraged the candidate to develop her responses further. Any extension questions should be open rather than closed to encourage an expanded response. They should introduce a new idea rather than rephrase what the candidate has said and should also be targeted at the correct level for the candidate in terms of tense, vocabulary and ideas that may be generated.

How the candidate performance could improve

Role play – The candidate particularly needs to understand what is required by the use of the question 'How?' and understand that words can have more than one meaning (here she misunderstands 'like'). She needs to improve her understanding of the tense used in the question, and then respond using the correct tense.

Topic conversations: Communication – Responses to questions are attempted by the candidate, but she needs to ensure she answers the focus of the question and should try to offer different information or ideas. She also needs to consider ways to develop the content, such as using simple opinions or examples, or giving simple reasons or explanations.

Topic conversations: Quality of language – The candidate should always aim to use complete sentences. She needs to use more structures and vocabulary that are beyond very simple, and to express herself with less ambiguity, repetition and inaccuracy. She should aim to be less hesitant in her delivery, though the pronunciation of individual words is mostly understandable, unless typically at the end of a sentence.

Total mark awarded for the speaking test = 17 out of 40