



Cambridge O Level

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

1158/03

Paper 3 Speaking Assessment J

October/November 2025

TEACHER'S/EXAMINER'S NOTES

Approximately 15 minutes



The information in this document is confidential and must NOT reach candidates either directly or indirectly.

INSTRUCTIONS

- This booklet contains:
 - (a) administrative guidance on conducting the tests
 - (b) marking criteria
 - (c) copy of the Speaking assessment card with notes for the teacher/examiner.

This document has **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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PREPARATION IN ADVANCE OF THE SPEAKING TESTS

- Centres must ensure well in advance of the tests that a suitably quiet room is available, and that recording equipment is in good order.
- Centres receive a set of Speaking Assessment cards with this set of Teacher's/Examiner's Notes. These cards **must not be opened** until one working day before the test. Both the cards and the notes must remain confidential and must be kept in a secure place by the centre until the end of the examination period.

ON THE DAY OF THE SPEAKING TESTS

- All tests must be recorded in full throughout. The recording must not be paused or stopped at any point during the test.
- The Speaking test must be conducted in English throughout.
- The Speaking tests must take place in a suitable examination room under exam conditions. Adequate supervision must be provided to ensure that candidates leaving the examination room do not communicate with those waiting to enter.
- No other person should be present during the Speaking test, with the exception of another teacher/examiner, moderator or representative of Cambridge International.
- The examiner, and not the candidate, selects one of the Speaking Assessment cards before the candidate enters the examination room.
- Candidates cannot bring any notes into the examination room. They are not allowed to consult dictionaries or make any written notes.
- Candidates are allowed to ask for clarification if necessary at any point during the test.
- The examiner should be positioned so that he or she is facing the candidate with a table or desk in between. The examiner must not allow candidates to see notes made by the examiner.

RECORDING THE TESTS

Before the start of the Speaking test session, centres must make sure their recording equipment is in good working order by testing the equipment in the room where the Speaking tests will take place. Check audibility levels to avoid adjusting the volume during the Speaking test and ensure there is no extraneous noise in the examination room. Checks for audibility should continue throughout the Speaking test session.

Once the Speaking test has begun, the recording must run without interruption. Each recording should begin with a clear statement by the examiner as follows:

Examiner name: [e.g.] *Ms Z Abced*

Candidate number: [e.g.] *0021*

Candidate name: [e.g.] *Abdi Zachariah*

Date: [e.g.] *1 October 2025*.

At the end of the recording the examiner should state clearly 'end of recording'.

Before the recordings are submitted, spot checks must be made to ensure that every candidate is clearly audible. Each track should be renamed, giving the candidate number and name, rather than 'track 1', 'track 2', etc. A separate audio track is required for each candidate.

CONDUCTING THE SPEAKING TEST

Refer to the Speaking Assessment on pages 10–11 for details of the test. The Speaking tests should proceed as follows:

Task	Duration	Task focus
Introduction	Approximately 1 minute	Start the recording. State your name, the candidate's number and name, and the date. Welcome the candidate and read out the examiner script. This part is <u>not</u> assessed.
Warm-up	Approximately 1–2 minutes	Use the warm-up to put the candidate at ease by conducting a short conversation using the questions provided. This part is <u>not</u> assessed.
Part 1: Interview	Approximately 2–3 minutes	Tell the candidate the topic for this part by reading out the examiner script. Conduct a short interview with the candidate by asking the questions provided on this topic. This part is assessed.
Part 2: Short talk	Approximately 3–4 minutes, including 1 minute of preparation time	<u>Preparation period for short talk</u> Read out the examiner script and give the Speaking Assessment card to the candidate. The candidate has up to 1 minute to read the card and prepare for the talk. Candidates are not allowed to make any written notes. <u>Short talk</u> The candidate talks on their own about the topic on the card. The candidate can keep the card until the end of the short talk. This part is assessed.
Part 3: Discussion	Approximately 3–4 minutes	Read out the examiner script and conduct a discussion using the questions related to the topic in Part 2. This part is assessed.

The total duration of the Speaking test, from the beginning of the introduction to the end of Part 3, should be 10–15 minutes and recorded in full.

Additional instructions on conducting Part 2 of the test

If the candidate has not started speaking after approximately 15 seconds, prompt the candidate by reading the following script:

Examiner script: *Are you ready to start talking about the points on the card?*

If the candidate has still not responded after another 5 seconds, prompt the candidate again by reading the following:

Examiner script: *Would you like to tell me about the options on the card?*

If the candidate still does not start, move on to Part 3 of the test by saying the following:

Examiner script: *Thank you. Can I have the card back, please? Now let's move on to Part 3 of the test.*

If the candidate has started speaking but then appears to be unable to continue, ask the following before moving on to Part 3 of the test:

Examiner script: *Is there anything else you would like to say? Thank you. Can I have the card back, please? Now let's move on to Part 3 of the test.*

Additional instructions on conducting Part 1 and Part 3 of the test

To elicit further discussion before moving on to another question, use any of the following:

Examiner script:

- *Can you tell me more about ...?*
- *Can you tell me why ...?*
- *Can you explain what you mean ...?*
- *Can you give me any examples of ...?*

If the candidate has very little to say in response to a question after being prompted, move on to the next one.

General advice

- 1 To conduct Speaking tests effectively:
 - try to put candidates at their ease from the beginning (smiling as they enter the room, indicating where they should sit) while maintaining a clear sense that the Speaking test is being conducted in a formal examination situation
 - be sensitive to candidates' circumstances when selecting the card. If you become aware during the warm-up that a topic may be inappropriate for the candidate in question, consider selecting another card
 - show interest in candidates' responses
 - encourage candidates to develop their responses by using additional questions.

Please avoid:

- distracting candidates
- interrupting with your own views or correcting mistakes
- showing impatience or too much surprise
- giving the impression that there are 'right' answers to questions or that the test is a test of knowledge
- indicating how well the candidate has performed by using phrases such as 'well done' or 'that was very good'.

2 Please consider the following when marking:

Be objective. Do not allow any knowledge of a candidate's personality and attributes to influence objective assessment. For example, knowledge that a candidate is very conscientious should not be taken into account when assessing his or her Speaking test. If the candidate's performance is affected because he or she faces difficult circumstances or personal problems at the time of the test, this should be dealt with by an exams officer via special considerations procedures. Examiners must not make any separate allowance themselves.

Be positive. Marking the test should be seen as giving credit for what candidates can do, not penalising them for what they cannot do. This does not mean that matters of inaccuracy in, for example, grammar and pronunciation are to be overlooked, but is a reminder that a Speaking test is intended to credit positive achievement. Remember that it is not necessary for a candidate to be of first language speaker standard to be given maximum marks within any single category.

Be consistent. It is important that the marking criteria are applied in the same way for all the candidates at the centre so that a reliable rank order for the centre is obtained.

AFTER COMPLETING ALL THE SPEAKING TESTS AT THE CENTRE

- If using more than one examiner, internal moderation must be carried out by the centre so that a common standard is applied to all candidates. Further guidance on carrying out internal moderation at the centre is available in the *Cambridge Handbook* and on the Cambridge International website.
- Refer to the *Cambridge Handbook* for detailed instructions on submitting marks and recordings. You should keep a copy of each Speaking test. If any of the recordings submitted to Cambridge International is inaudible or faulty in any way, you may be asked to provide a replacement.

MARKING CRITERIA

The marking criteria must be applied consistently to all three parts of the test, resulting in an overall mark for each of the four criteria.

Level	Grammar	Vocabulary	Development	Pronunciation	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of simple and complex structures used structures are used mostly accurately; errors are rare and do not impede understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a wide range of vocabulary used precisely to discuss a variety of ideas, facts and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses are relevant and consistently well developed communication is maintained with ease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pronunciation is clear intonation is frequently used effectively to convey intended meaning 	9–10
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of simple structures used; complex structures are attempted simple structures are used mostly accurately; errors often occur when attempting to use more complex structures but these do not impede understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a sufficient range of vocabulary used appropriately to discuss a variety of ideas, facts and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses are relevant and mostly developed communication is maintained with occasional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pronunciation is mostly clear; inaccuracies do not impede communication intonation is sometimes used effectively to convey intended meaning 	7–8
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of simple structures used; complex structures occasionally attempted simple structures may not be used accurately; errors may impede understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of vocabulary used mostly appropriately to discuss simple ideas, facts and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses are relevant with attempts at development communication is maintained but with frequent support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pronunciation is mostly clear; inaccuracies occasionally impede communication intonation is rarely used effectively to convey intended meaning 	5–6
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limited range of only simple structures used structures rarely used accurately; errors frequently impede understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limited range of vocabulary used to discuss basic facts and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses are mostly relevant but limited communication may not always be maintained even with frequent support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pronunciation is frequently unclear; inaccuracies often impede communication intonation is not used effectively to convey intended meaning 	3–4
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> response limited to widely spaced single words or short phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient vocabulary to convey the most basic facts and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responses are brief and infrequent communication is not achieved even with frequent support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pronunciation is unclear and impedes communication intonation is not a feature 	1–2
0	No creditable response.	No creditable response.	No creditable response.	No creditable response.	0

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SPEAKING ASSESSMENT J

Introduction (approximately 1 minute)

Start the recording. State your name, the candidate's number and name, and the date. Welcome the candidate and read the following script:

Examiner script: *First, we will start with a short warm-up where I will ask you some questions to find out more about you. This part is not assessed. After the warm-up there are three assessed parts to the test: an interview, a short talk and a discussion.*

Warm-up (1–2 minutes)

Use the following questions to find out more about the candidate.

- How did you meet your best friend?
- What subject do you most enjoy at school?
- What is your favourite sport?

Part 1 Interview (2–3 minutes)

Read the following script to the candidate and ask the questions listed below in the order given. Allow the candidate to respond to each question as fully as they can before you move on to the next one.

Examiner script: *The first assessed part of the test is an interview. I am going to ask you some questions about **your country**. Try to say as much as you can for each question. Before we start, do you have any questions?*

Your country

- Can you tell me about places that people like to visit in your country, and why?
- Can you tell me about a trip that you took in your country, and what happened?
- Do you think that people prefer going on holiday abroad rather than visiting places in their own country? Why? Why not?

Part 2 Short talk (3–4 minutes)

Read the following script and then give the candidate the card **A healthy lifestyle**.

Examiner script: *The second assessed part of the test is a short talk. I will give you a card and you will have one minute to read it and think about what you want to say. You should talk about the points on the card. You can't make any written notes, but you can ask me if there is anything you do not understand. You may keep the card until the end of the short talk. Here is your card.*

A healthy lifestyle

You and your friends have decided to change your lifestyles to be healthier. You are considering the following options:

- eating more fruit and vegetables
- doing more exercise.

Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Say which option you would prefer, and why.

Allow one minute for preparation and then ask the candidate to start the short talk.

Examiner script: *You now have up to two minutes to talk about the topic on the card. I will stop you after two minutes, but do not worry if you have not finished your talk. Would you like to start?*

After two minutes, thank the candidate and collect the card. Then move on to Part 3 of the test.

Examiner script: *Thank you. Can I have the card back, please? Now let's move on to Part 3 of the test.*

Part 3 Discussion (3–4 minutes)

Select questions as appropriate to develop a discussion based on the short talk in Part 2. Avoid asking questions on aspects the candidate has already talked about. If the candidate responds at length, it may not be necessary to use all the questions.

Examiner script: *Now I am going to ask you a few questions related to the topic you have just talked about. This part of the test will last approximately three minutes. Before we start, do you have any questions?*

- Do you think that it was easier to keep fit in the past? Why? Why not?
- Is working as a professional sports person a good job? Why? Why not?
- Fast food tastes much better than home-cooked food. What is your opinion?
- How can we stop wasting food? What do you think?

Examiner script: *Thank you. This is the end of the test. End of recording.*

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