

Top Tips

FCE Speaking Part One- Speaking About Yourself

Tip 1 This part of the exam is mainly there to relax the students and start them talking about an easy and pleasant topic - themselves. It is important for the final mark but the real challenge is to be relaxed and sociable. Also, there are not separate marks for the separate sections, so if they start slowly they can make up for it later on.

Tip 2 Examiners usually ask questions to one candidate for one minute, and then switch to the other(s). The non-talking candidate should listen attentively. If they can prove they have been doing so by referring to their partner's answers when speaking, all the better.

Tip 3 The topics that will usually be covered are family, work and education, home town, leisure and future plans.

Tip 4 You can practise the various topics by brainstorming language for that topic area onto a spider diagram on the board and then getting students to ask each other questions for a few minutes using the vocab. Alternatively, they can prepare mini-presentations on, for example, their hobbies.

Tip 5 There will also often be a mix of past, present and future forms used. Speaking practice on all these will obviously be useful.

Tip 6 Any 'getting to know you' activities are good for this part of the exam, which makes for a useful, fun first lesson. If you can slip in some diagnostic work on their language, even better (see Lesson Plan for an example of this).

Tip 7 The examiner generally starts each topic with a simple question (even Yes/ No) and then moves onto more in depth ones. Generally, if the students relax and react naturally, they should have no problems- so there's no need to respond to 'Do you have a big family?' with a five minute speech!