



Speaking Part 1: interview

Overview: A sequence of activities to raise awareness of the purpose of Part 1 of the First Speaking test and to enhance fluency and accuracy.

Part of exam: First Speaking (Paper 4) Part 1

Language/Skills Practised: giving information about yourself; expressing your opinion; social conversation; familiar topics; responding to questions on various topics

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Time: 45–60 minutes (can be split after step 6)

Preparation

1. Copy the worksheet and cut it into separate sections.
2. You may find it useful to look at the Cambridge ESOL website for examples of the questions used in the Speaking Test Part 1. Try this link:

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/first/exam-format/>

Procedure

1. Ask students what they know about the Speaking Test Part 1. Establish that the purpose of this part of the test is to see how well candidates can share personal and social information.
2. Give an example of the type of topic they might be asked about ('House and Home'). Provide or elicit some typical questions e.g. What sort of house or flat do you live in? or Can you tell us something about the area where you live?
3. Dictate the following headings to the class and ask the students to work in pairs and write down at least one question for each heading:
 - Daily Life
 - Personal Experiences
 - Languages
 - Travel
 - Leisure and Entertainment

4. When they have all written one question for each heading, put them into pairs. They then ask and answer each other's questions.
5. Ask them to write down the 'script' of their mini interviews, with the questions and answers they used.
6. They should now pass these scripts around, and as they receive another pair's script, they should read it and make any corrections or improvements or add their own answer with new information. Then they pass it on again and the process is repeated, until every pair has got their script back, with various corrections and comments on it.
7. Ask the pairs to read out any comments or corrections that they are not sure about and conduct a class discussion, encouraging peer feedback.
8. Tell students that in the test they won't have to make up questions – that's the examiner job – but this kind of preparation will help to improve their fluency and confidence for the test. Also, of course, in real life, conversation involves asking as well as answering questions.
9. Hand out the worksheet, asking students to look at Exercise 1. They work in pairs to put the words into the correct order to make questions. Check the answers as a class.
10. Now they should look at the possible answers to the Exercise 1 questions in Exercise 2. Ask them to match them up, and then check the answers.
11. In Exercise 2, point out that all the answers could be improved in some way. Ask students to discuss in pairs how and why the answers could be improved, then write their own improved versions. When they have finished, discuss their ideas as a class.
12. Ask them to do Exercise 3 together. Go through the answers. Remind students that the issue of accuracy relates to both grammar and vocabulary (as well as pronunciation, though that is not the main focus of this exercise.)



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13. Conclusion: you have looked at ways of asking and answering questions appropriately and accurately in social situations with relevance for the First Speaking Test Part 1.

KEY

Exercise 1

- 1 What kind of books do you generally read?
- 2 What do you think were the most useful things you learnt at school?
- 3 What's the most interesting journey you've ever been on?
- 4 Do you and your parents enjoy the same TV programmes?
- 5 Are there many different things to do in the evening where you live?

Exercise 2

- a 4
- b 3
- c 1
- d 5
- e 2

Possible improved answers for exercise 1 questions

- 1c I often read books about the history of science. (Current answer misses the 'generally' in the question.)
- 2e I think I learnt the value of team spirit, of working together; and also the importance of

timekeeping. (Current answer is abrupt and could seem rude.)

3b It depends on what you mean by interesting. (Current answer is too long and complicated.)

4a We enjoy watching old films, but we don't have any other tastes in common. (Current answer is too short and informal.)

5d Yes, there's quite a range of places to go to. (Current answer is too formal, and says little.)

Exercise 3

1 My school was **like** quite small, just a village school really. (In answering a question such as *What was your school like?*, the *like* should not be repeated.)

2 I **always spend** my holidays in the mountains with my family. (adverb word order)

3 The public transport system in my country runs very **efficiently**. (adverb)

4 I **have been learning** English since I was about eight years old. **OR** I **started learning** English when I was about eight years old. (one or the other)

5 The best place to go in my town, **at** least in the summer, is probably the park. (Word missing)



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1 Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

1. books read kind of do you what generally?
2. useful think what learnt school do you the most things were you at?
3. interesting on what's most journey you've the been ever?
4. and the parents programmes do enjoy same TV you your?
5. many the you different there things to do are in evening where live?

2 Match answers a–e below to a question in 1.

- a. Old films, yes; anything else, no.
- b. Well, this question very much depends on what is meant by the use of the adjective 'interesting', at least within this particular context.
- c. Last week I read a book about the history of science.
- d. Yes, indeed, I believe it would be correct to assume this.
- e. Team spirit, timekeeping.

3 Correct the mistake in each answer 1–5.

1. My school was like quite small, just a village school really.
2. I spend always my holidays in the mountains with my family.
3. The public transport system in my country runs very efficient.
4. I have been started learning English when I was about eight years old.
5. The best place to go in my town, least in the summer, is probably the park.