



- Speaking Exam Review
- Global Achievement
- Assessment Criteria
- Using the Descriptors
- Classroom Activities & Top Tips



Speaking Exam Review

What are the four parts of the B2 Speaking exam?

What do candidates have to do in each part?

What aspects of speaking are being assessed at in the Speaking Exam?

How are these graded?



Speaking Exam Review

The B2 First and B2 First for Schools Speaking test consists of four parts and lasts about 14 minutes for a pair or 20 minutes for a group of three.

Part	Task type and interaction	Focus
1	A conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate (2 minutes for pairs or 3 minutes for groups of three)	The focus is on general interactional and social language
2	In turn, the candidates are given a pair of photographs to talk about. Each candidate talks for 1 minute about their photos, then the other candidate gives a 30-second response to a question about the photos.	The focus is on organising a larger unit of discourse; comparing, describing and expressing opinions
3	A conversation between the candidates. The candidates are given spoken instructions with written phrases, which are used in a 2 minute discussion task and a 1 minute decision-making task.	The focus is on sustaining an interaction; exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.
4	A 4-minute discussion on topics related to the task in Part 3. Groups of 3 have a 6-minute discussion.	The focus is on expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing and speculating

What aspects of speaking are being assessed at in the Speaking Exam?

- Global Achievement
- Grammatical & Vocabulary
- Discourse Management
- Pronunciation
- Interactive Communication

How are these graded?

Examiners give a mark between 0 and 5 (Bands) for each of these areas based on detailed descriptors.

We will look at these descriptors in more detail.



Global Achievement

Have a look at the Assessment Scale descriptors for Global Achievement.

1	2	3
Band	Actual descriptor	Simplified explanation
5	Handles communication on a range of familiar topics, with very little hesitation. Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent.	Can understand and speak about the topics and the tasks in the test with very little hesitation.
		Uses the right kinds of language to express themselves and what they say is generally well organised.
3	Handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation. Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence, and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.	Can talk about the topics and tasks in the test with some hesitation.
		Can speak at length but sometimes it might not be well organised or there may be some inaccurate language
1	Handles communication in everyday situations, despite hesitation. Constructs longer utterances but is not able to use complex language except in well-rehearsed utterances.	Can talk about the topics and tasks in the test with hesitation.
		Can say more than yes/no or a very short answer but can only use complex language that has been prepared in advance.

Underline the differences between a Bands 1, 3 and 5.

Top Tips

- Give learners a variety of speaking tasks, don't just practise exam tasks. Speaking tasks with a clear purpose offer more support than a general 'talk about' task. This also gives learners a reason to listen and respond which are essential skills for the Speaking test.
- Use activities with different interaction patterns such as pairs, threes, small groups and speaking to the whole class.
- Give learners preparation time before a speaking task. Give them time to think about what they want to say and what language they could use, as this allows them to upgrade and improve their speaking skills.
- Give your learners opportunities to listen to as much English as possible and a variety of accents. Accents from different varieties of English from around the world are acceptable.



Assessment Criteria

Underline the differences in each category.

B2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of ideas. Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is intelligible. Intonation is appropriate. Sentence and word stress is accurately placed. Individual sounds are articulated clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a range of familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition. Uses a range of cohesive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. Contributions are mostly relevant, despite some repetition. Uses basic cohesive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>			

Top Tips

- Use the tables.
Get familiar with what is expected at B2 level by having the tables with criteria in this guide on hand when you're listening to students speaking.
- Focus on a couple of criteria at a time.
You might choose to focus more on one or two criteria in a particular speaking activity. For example, you could focus on Interactive Communication and Grammar and Vocabulary in a practice collaborative task.
- Vary feedback.
Make sure you give feedback on all the different criteria, not just Grammar and Vocabulary. Learners need to know how they are performing in all areas so that they can do their best in the speaking examination.
- Give balanced feedback.
As well as giving specific suggestions on how to improve, highlight examples of good language for their level. You can also identify where more complex language could be used and provide specific examples.



Using the Descriptors

How would you grade these contributions? Why?

Grammar & Vocabulary

- And visiting the doctor is less important because you only go if you would need to.
- Going to the gym is important. You can stay fit and healthy.
- I think eating regularly is important because if you didn't, you would feel tired and maybe feel unhealthy.

Discourse Management

- The first one to discuss is probably about school rules since they impact on us the most.
- I see the least important one is school rules as I don't see them helping with the students' happiness.
- I don't like rules because they are boring.

Pronunciation

- It wouldn't be the best idea giving them money.
- As a young person, I would love to have a lot of money to buy clothes and things.
- It depends on their behaviour and how they treat money, and stuff like that.

Interactive Communication

- Let's start with this one. I don't think it would be popular as it is too noisy. What do you think?

Yes, that's a good point because ...

- I think the nightclub would attract a lot of people, and you?

Yes, I agree.

- Shall we talk about the nightclub? The price might be an issue.

I take your point, it could be too expensive. And from what you said before, I think we can rule out this one because of the noise.



Answer Key

	Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
Grammar & Vocabulary	Going to the gym is important. You can stay fit and healthy.	And visiting the doctor is less important because you only go if you would need to.	I think eating regularly is important because if you didn't, you would feel tired and maybe feel unhealthy.
Discourse Management	I don't like rules <i>because</i> they are boring.	I see the least important <i>one</i> is school rules <i>as</i> I don't see <i>them</i> helping with the students' happiness.	<i>The first one</i> to discuss is probably about school rules <i>since they</i> impact on us the most.
Pronunciation	It <u>wouldn't</u> be the best idea giving <u>them</u> money.	It depends on their <u>behaviour</u> and how they <u>treat</u> money, and stuff like that.	As a <u>young</u> person, I would <u>love</u> to have a lot of money to buy <u>clothes</u> and things.
Interactive Communication	I think the nightclub would attract a lot of people, and you? Yes, I agree.	Let's start with this one. I don't think it would be popular as it is too noisy. What do you think? Yes, that's a good point because ...	Shall we talk about the nightclub? The price might be an issue. I take your point, it could be too expensive. And from what you said before, I think we can rule out this one because of the noise.



Classroom Activities & Top Tips

Activity 1 Complex Grammatical Forms

- To raise awareness of complex grammatical forms
- To provide practice of controlling a range of grammatical forms

Turn these simple sentences into more complex grammatical forms.

Simple	Complex
I have a friend. She works in a hospital.	
I arrived home. I felt exhausted.	
I enjoy travelling because I meet new people.	
The city is expensive. I like living there.	
Maybe she missed the train.	
Online classes are easier than classroom lessons.	

Top Tips

- Regularly review new Grammar and Vocabulary.
Learners need frequent practice of new language to be able to incorporate it into their speaking naturally and comfortably.
- Challenge learners to widen their range of language when they're speaking.
Some learners might prefer to 'play it safe' and use simple language they know well.
- Praise learners for good language use. Feedback on correct responses or what learners have done well is just as important as telling them what they got wrong.
- Avoid interrupting learners when they are speaking unless there is a complete breakdown in communication.
- Encourage learners to become aware of and correct their own errors.
Monitor activities, making notes and provide delayed feedback to learner errors



TASK 2 Cohesive Devices & Discourse Markers

- To raise awareness of cohesive devices and discourse markers
- To practice organizing ideas

Think of **three differences** between the pairs of topics below.

Put your ideas into a logical order using the following template:

- Firstly..., however...
- Secondly..., while...
- Last but not least..., whereas...

Topics

Dogs	Cats
Superman	Batman
Playing sports	Playing computer games
Going to the cinema	Watching movies at home
Holidays at the beach	Holidays in a city
Meeting your friends	Chatting online

While listening to your partner, see if you have anything in common.

Top Tips

- Make sure you include speaking activities with a fluency focus as these often help with the sub-skills within Discourse Management.
- Crossover with other skills: in a writing lesson where you might focus on language to help organise text, add in a short speaking task using the same topic and phrases.
- Analyse listening scripts and reading texts to raise learners' awareness of how these words help to organise text.
- Focus on meaning: use sorting activities to help learners categorise cohesive devices with similar meanings.
- Provide feedback on how well they extend and organise their answers or whether their answers were relevant to the task and topic. It can be tempting to focus on language accuracy, but by doing this, it helps learners understand that there is more to speaking than grammar and vocabulary.



TASK 3 **Noticing Sentence Stress & Drilling**

- To raise awareness of natural sounding sentence stress
- To practice producing natural sounding sentence stress

When do we use these proverbs?

- The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a cake.
- Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

Underline the sentence stress on each proverb.

What parts of speech are the stressed words?

What parts of speech are not stressed?

Choose the correct option:

- We use long vowel sounds and sentence stress when saying *content words / grammar words*.

Top Tips

- Pronunciation is often not clear from the spelling, so make sure you model the correct pronunciation of new words or phrases and get learners to repeat (drill).
- Include activities to help your learners notice pronunciation features as well as practise them.
- Don't forget to use the pronunciation activities in your coursebook. It can be tempting to skip these when you're short of time but paying regular attention to different aspects of pronunciation will help your learners over time.
- Include features of pronunciation (such as stress) when teaching new language - for example, underlining sentence stress or using circles to indicate syllables and word stress.

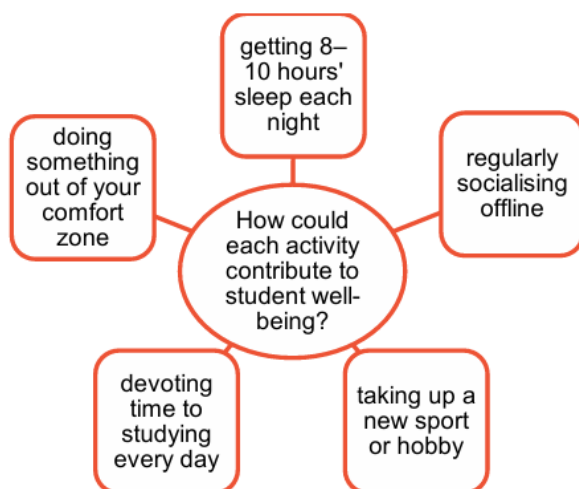


TASK 4 **Categorization Task / Observation Task**

- To raise awareness of initiating and responding in a conversation
- To practice initiating and responding in a conversation

Here is a typical Speaking B2 Part 3 task:

Examiner: Now I'd like you to talk about something together for about 2 minutes. Imagine you are planning an article on student well-being for a school magazine. How could each of these activities contribute to student well-being?



Look at the Model answer on the next page and complete the table.

Now do the task. Try to use as many of the expressions as possible.

Top Tips

- Encourage your learners to start discussions and to respond to what other learners have to say. Teach them useful phrases to do this such as: *Let's start with...* *What do think about this one?* *Shall we move on to...* *I'm not sure I agree with you on that* etc.
- Use lots of pair and small group activities to encourage participation
- Use speaking tasks with a clear purpose or goal so learners have to work together to reach an outcome.
- Get to know your learners' interests and include these topics in speaking activities. These will be more likely to generate conversation and discussion.
- In classroom activities, make one learner in each group responsible for ensuring that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. This helps to understand the importance of turn-taking.



Model answer

Candidate 1: Shall we start with *getting 8 to 10 hours' sleep?*

Candidate 2: Yes, sure. I think it seems a lot, don't you?

Candidate 1: Yes, I know what you mean but I think it *is* good for our well-being to try and get that much sleep. I read somewhere that it's important for your brain function and it makes you less prone to illness too.

Candidate 2: Oh, really? I should probably get more sleep then. I find it easy to sleep in but not so easy to go to bed early. **What do you think about** regularly socialising offline?

Candidate 1: I meet up with my friends offline more than online. I definitely think it's good to get out in the fresh air and do some kind of activity or sport together. It can make you feel a lot more energised than sitting around the house all day.

A friend and I recently took up climbing – it's challenging so you feel like you really achieved something and it's also good for physical fitness too.

Candidate 2: Yes, that sounds great – I prefer that sort of activity too. **But I would also say that** online socialising is also good for well-being – it's a great way to keep in touch with friends and family who don't live nearby.

Candidate 1: Yes, that's a good point. Shall we look at this one now. Do you think it's important to study every day?

Candidate 2: Hmm ... I'm not sure about every day. In my opinion, you need to take a break sometimes to recharge your batteries. It's not very good for your posture to sit at your desk for too long either.

Candidate 1: Yes, I hadn't thought of that. Sometimes it's hard though when you are also trying not to fall behind with all of your homework.

Look at the expressions in **bold**. Write the phrases each speaker uses under these headings:

Moving the conversation on	Agreeing / Disagreeing	Asking for an opinion

