

Exploring Skills for English Tests

Speaking Part 2: B1 to B2

Format of the task

There are three parts to the Speaking tests. **Part 1** of the Speaking test is NOT assessed but allows the candidates to familiarise themselves with the tests and the system.

In Part 2, candidates hear questions on two topics related to personal and everyday life. There are five questions per topic, 10 questions in total in Part 2.

Candidates hear each question and are given 20 seconds to give each answer. The topics and the language of the questions are accessible and appropriate to the level of the candidates.

Topics include work, society, culture, hopes and aspirations.

Skills/functions being assessed

In Part 2 of the Speaking tests, candidates are assessed on their ability to talk about themselves using a good level of English. Questions will focus on aspects of life, work, culture, opinions and plans.

- Describing hopes and dreams
- Describing various aspects of daily life, such as work or study plan
- Giving detailed descriptions of people, places and issues
- Talking about a variety of topics and ideas
- Discuss their opinions

Tips for teachers

Provide candidates with:

- plenty of opportunities to practise talking about themselves, their work/studies and to express opinions, hopes and dreams
- a variety of vocabulary and phrases needed to talk about their life, leisure time, work, studies, social and cultural ideas etc.
- practice in talking about concrete and abstract ideas
- opportunities for practising discussions and expressing opinions
- practise opportunities for students to expand on their responses where appropriate and relevant

Tips for learners

- Learn words and phrases needed to talk about your life: work, studies, things that happen around you both socially and culturally
- Practise discussing your thoughts and feelings on topics, describe your hopes and dreams, giving and explaining your opinions
- Try to answer the questions fully and expand on information and ideas
- Remember, you will have time to speak your answer and a counter will tell you how much time you have left

Sample Speaking Part 2 Task

The extract below is an example of the type of recording and questions a candidate may encounter in Part 1.

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your leisure time and hobbies.

1. Tell me about what you like to do in your leisure time.
2. Explain the benefits of having a hobby or leisure activity for young people.
3. Tell me about a leisure activity you would like to try in the future. Why would you like to try this activity?
4. How important is it for retired people to have a hobby or leisure activity?
5. Do you think some types of leisure activity such as mountain climbing should be banned? Why/Why not?

The first 1 or 2 questions are generally factual in nature.

Sometimes there may be a follow-up question asking for more information.

Questions 4 and 5 will be more open and ask for your opinion on a broader issue.

Sample Speaking Part 2 Response

1. In my leisure time I like to go swimming with my friends and then go for a coffee.

When the question asks for factual information, the answer may be short.

2. Sometimes it is good to think of something other than studies or work. I think it also helps to relieve stress. Some activities can also keep you fit and healthy.

It's good to provide more information where possible, as here in answers 2 and 3.

3. I have always wanted to go skiing, it is not something I have been able to do yet but hopefully I could go next year. It always looks exciting on TV and I love snow.

Here the 1st sentence gives an opinion and the following sentences give reasons and provide an explanation.

4. I think leisure activities and hobbies are essential for people who have retired. They may feel lonely after giving up work and colleagues, and it means that they can develop a new interest and meet new people.

5. Some hobbies like mountain climbing or bungee jumping can be very dangerous. You hear about people who have been hurt or died on the news. I think perhaps some of these activities should be regulated so that only people who have had some training can do these with an experienced guide for example.

Where there is a follow-up question, make sure that you answer both the first question and the follow-up question. Don't be afraid to give your opinion.

Note: this sample task is for guidance purposes only. For examples of level-specific listening tasks, please refer to the Skills for English Practice Tests available through the Skills for English website: <https://skillsforenglish.com/language-learning/>