



Speaking Mark Schemes

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Introduction

The Skills for English Speaking Tests are available at CEFR levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2.

The Speaking Test mark schemes in this document provide users with both the criteria that are used by trained and qualified markers to assess speaking performance at each of the CEFR levels as well as the descriptors for each criterion. These schemes can be used by both teachers and test takers to evaluate their own speaking performance when preparing to take the Skills for English Speaking Tests.

These mark schemes can be used alongside the Skills for English Practice Tests available on the [Skills for English website](#) or when using the Skills for English published practice tests.

Note that the Skills for English markers undergo a thorough process of training and qualification and have been trained to use the mark schemes to a very high standard.

A1 Speaking Mark Scheme

	Relevance and Appropriacy of response	Accuracy of response (grammar and vocabulary)	Clarity and Pronunciation
Marks			
5 and 4	Responses are appropriate and relevant to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.	Can produce short responses on familiar topics with reasonable accuracy. Can use a basic repertoire of words, phrases and formulaic language to good effect. May attempt to use basic subordinate structures with some success. Can link words with basic linking words to good effect. Errors and incorrect word choice, although evident, do not significantly impede communication.	Speaks slowly, with noticeable pauses & frequent repetition / self-correction. Mispronunciations occur but do not significantly impede communication. Much of discourse should be comprehensible.
3 and 2	Responses are generally related to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate may self-correct or change their responses though these may not always relate directly to the questions/task. Where candidate responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions/task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.	Can produce short responses on familiar topics, using a very basic repertoire of words and phrases. Uses basic sentence forms, simple formulaic language and/or memorised sentence patterns. Can link sentences with basic linking words like 'and' and 'then'. Frequent errors may lead to misunderstanding.	Mispronunciations of individual words or sounds reduce clarity. Inappropriate word/sentence stress, poor rhythm and strong L1 interference may reduce clarity & cause some strain for the listener. Some attempt to vary intonation.
1	Responses are related to the questions and the Part 3 task in a very limited or inappropriate way.	Very limited success attempting basic sentence forms or formulaic language. Can only produce words in isolation rather than at sentence level. Frequent errors impede communication significantly.	Mispronunciations are very frequent and cause significant difficulty for the listener. Very limited variation in intonation.
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.		

A2 Speaking Mark Scheme

	Relevance and Appropriacy of response	Accuracy of response (grammar and vocabulary)	Clarity and Pronunciation
Marks			
5 and 4	The candidate's responses are appropriate and relevant to the questions and the Part 3 task.	Simple structures are largely accurate. Reasonable range of everyday lexis within familiar topic areas. Can convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics.	Mispronunciations may reduce clarity at times but do not cause significant comprehension difficulties. Inappropriate word/sentence stress, irregular rhythm and L1 interference is present but response is generally clear enough to be understood.
3 And 2	Candidate's responses are generally related to the questions and the Part 3 task. Where candidate's responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions/task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.	Uses simple sentence forms with reasonable accuracy. Can talk about familiar topics with some flexibility. There may be frequent word choice errors, some of which impede communication.	Mispronunciations reduce clarity at times and can cause some comprehension difficulties. Inappropriate word/sentence stress, irregular rhythm and noticeable L1 interference is present and may cause some strain for the listener.
1	Candidate's responses are not appropriately related to the questions/task.	Limited success with basic sentence forms. Insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics. Frequent word choice errors which impede communication.	Mispronunciations are frequent and cause significant difficulty for the listener. Limited variation in intonation which causes strain for the listener.
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.		

B1 Speaking Mark Scheme

	Relevance and Appropriacy of Response	Grammar: Accuracy and Range	Vocabulary: Accuracy and Range	Clarity and Pronunciation	Coherence and Structure
Marks					
6 and 5	<p>Candidate's responses are relevant and appropriate to address the questions and the Part 3 task at B1. The candidate may provide further detail to add to their response or to develop ideas.</p> <p>The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.</p>	<p>Secure control of simple structures and more routine expressions. Complex structures are attempted with limited success, leading to occasional comprehension problems.</p>	<p>Range of vocabulary is wide enough to address the questions and the Part 3 task comprehensively. Control is mostly secure, and meaning is clear, despite some inappropriacies.</p> <p>Limited flexibility within more complex topic areas. Paraphrasing attempts are successful within a limited scope.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is generally clear. Candidate's delivery is mostly effective. Intonation and stress patterns are generally appropriate. There is some L1 interference, but this does not impede communication in general, although occasional clarification may be required.</p>	<p>Can maintain fluency in simple speech but repetition / self-correction can slow down more complex communication.</p> <p>Linking is appropriate and mostly accurate although there may be over-use of certain discourse markers.</p>
4 and 3	<p>Candidate's responses are generally relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate addresses the majority of the questions and the task although may not add further detail to their response.</p>	<p>Generally routine expressions are accurate when dealing with everyday topics, though there may be errors. These may at times impede communication.</p> <p>Can use a limited range of complex structures, but</p>	<p>Range of vocabulary is sufficient to address questions and the Part 3 task.</p> <p>Lexis adequate within familiar topic areas. More complex vocabulary is rarely attempted and where it is,</p>	<p>Pronunciation is generally clear when speaking about familiar topics. Candidate's use of stress and intonation patterns is not always consistent. There may be some L1 interference which may impede communication at times. Hesitation and</p>	<p>Usually maintains reasonable fluency in simple speech but some repetition / self-correction/hesitation is still present.</p> <p>Can link sentences using a limited range of basic discourse markers.</p>

	<p>Candidate may self-correct to ensure response is addressing the questions/task though not always successfully.</p> <p>Where candidate's responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions/task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>	<p>these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension difficulties.</p>	<p>errors tend to impede comprehension.</p>	<p>repetition strategies may intrude.</p>	
<p>2 and 1</p>	<p>Candidate's responses do not always relate to the questions and the Part 3 task. Candidate may misunderstand the questions/task or may digress from the topic.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Accuracy on simple formulaic expressions is achieved intermittently. Errors are common and impede communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Range of vocabulary used is limited and simple. Control is inconsistent even when speaking about familiar topics.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is clear only in very familiar formulaic expressions. Stress and intonation patterns may be faulty or missing and there is strong L1 interference which causes some strain for the listener.</p> <p>Hesitation and pauses are overlong and intrude.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Candidate utterances may be sequenced but there is limited or no evidence of linking.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.				

B2 Speaking Mark Scheme

	Relevance and Appropriacy of response	Grammar Accuracy and Range	Vocabulary Accuracy and Range	Clarity and Pronunciation	Coherence and Structure
Marks					
6 and 5	<p>Candidate's responses are focused, relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate addresses all questions and the task appropriately and may provide further detail to add to their response or to develop ideas.</p> <p>The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.</p>	<p>Candidate displays sound grammatical control, using a mix of simple and complex structures with relative ease. Any minor errors with more complex structures do not cause comprehension difficulties.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates a wide range of vocabulary, can produce appropriate collocations and can paraphrase to avoid repetition. Accuracy is generally high and any incorrect word choice does not impede communication.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is accurate and intelligible throughout with only minor occasional errors. Candidate's use of stress and intonation patterns are appropriate and there is minimal L1 interference which has no impact on communication.</p>	<p>Can speak at length with minimal loss of coherence, although there may be occasional self-correction or hesitation.</p> <p>Uses a range of discourse markers mostly appropriately and flexibly.</p>
4 and 3	<p>Candidate's responses are generally relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate addresses the majority of the questions and the task although may not add</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates good control of routine and familiar expressions but accuracy may be compromised when</p>	<p>Range of vocabulary is narrower than the top Band with a limited flexibility within more complex topic areas. Paraphrasing</p>	<p>Some mispronunciations of individual words or sounds reduce clarity. Inappropriate word/sentence stress, poor rhythm and/or L1 interference may reduce</p>	<p>Able to speak for extended periods but some hesitation/self-correction impedes fluency at times. Handles communication in</p>

	<p>further detail to their response. The candidate may self-correct to ensure their response is addressing the questions/task. This may not always be fully successful.</p> <p>Where candidate's responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions and the Part 3 task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>	<p>attempting more complex constructions.</p>	<p>attempts are successful within a more limited scope.</p> <p>Accuracy is achieved on more common expressions and topics.</p>	<p>clarity and cause strain for the listener.</p> <p>Some attempt to vary intonation.</p>	<p>familiar topic areas with relative ease</p> <p>Some effective use of discourse markers, although these may lack flexibility and range.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>and</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Candidate's responses do not always relate directly to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate may misunderstand the questions/task or may digress from the topic.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Grammatical accuracy is achieved intermittently on mostly simple utterances. More complex structures are not attempted and where they are, errors impede communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Can talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but with very limited lexical range and flexibility. There may be frequent word choice errors, some of which impede comprehension.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is clear only in very familiar formulaic expressions. Stress and intonation patterns may be faulty or missing and there is significant L1 interference. Hesitation and pauses are overlong and intrude.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Links basic sentences with simple discourse markers. Repetition / self-correction slows down more complex communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.				

C1 Speaking Mark Scheme

	Relevance and Appropriacy of response	Grammar: Accuracy and Range	Vocabulary: Accuracy and Range	Clarity and Pronunciation	Coherence and Structure
Marks					
6 and 5	<p>Candidate's responses are focused, relevant and appropriate to the questions and Part 3 task. Candidate addresses all questions/task appropriately elaborating on their response, highlighting significant points and providing examples.</p> <p>The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments always achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.</p>	<p>Candidate uses a wide range of complex structures with precision and a high level of control.</p> <p>Usually produces error-free sentences, with any slips being extremely rare and often unnoticeable. Minimal self-correction.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates a very wide range of lexical knowledge, can use idiomatic expressions and technical/specialised language with ease, can paraphrase and use synonyms with little hesitation and does this with few errors.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is accurate and controlled throughout with few errors. L1 interference may be present but has minimal impact on delivery.</p> <p>There may be minor and very occasional lapses in stress, rhythm or intonation which do not affect comprehension. Can vary intonation to express shades of meaning.</p>	<p>Speaks fluently and at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence. Easy to understand throughout.</p> <p>Uses a range of discourse markers flexibly and appropriately.</p>
4 and 3	<p>Candidate's responses are generally focused, relevant and appropriate to the questions and Part 3 task.</p> <p>The candidate addresses the majority of the questions and the task and may expand on</p>	<p>Candidate uses a range of complex structures with confidence and some flexibility Can frequently produce error-free sentences although some minor slips may occasionally occur when attempting more complex</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates a wide range of lexical knowledge.</p> <p>Can use idiomatic expressions and technical/specialised language, although</p>	<p>Pronunciation is clear and controlled although they may be occasional errors. Candidate's use of stress and intonation patterns is not always consistent. L1 interference may be noticeable There may be</p>	<p>Candidate's responses are consistently well-structured and coherent. Can speak at length but may occasionally lose coherence when dealing with conceptually difficult subjects. Can use a variety of</p>

	<p>their responses although this may not be done consistently.</p> <p>The candidate may self-correct to ensure their response is addressing the questions/task. This may not always be fully successful.</p> <p>Where candidate's responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions/task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>	<p>structures. These errors do not impede communication.</p>	<p>occasional errors and slips may still persist.</p> <p>Can paraphrase and use synonyms to good effect but some hesitation and errors occur when dealing with more complex topics.</p> <p>Occasional errors and slips do not impede the flow.</p>	<p>occasional lapses in stress, rhythm and intonation but these do not cause comprehension difficulties.</p>	<p>cohesive devices appropriately, although there may be minor occasional slips when attempting less common structures, which do not impede communication.</p>
2 and 1	<p>Candidate's responses do not always relate to the questions and Part 3 task. The candidate may digress or go off topic.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Grammatical accuracy is achieved intermittently on more straightforward utterances. More complex structures are rarely attempted and where they are, errors may impede communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Accuracy in simple straightforward expressions is achieved but more complex vocabulary and expressions are often faulty. Errors can impede communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>There may be mixed control, with mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reducing clarity.</p> <p>Stress and intonation patterns may be faulty or missing and L1 interference may be significant. There are several instances of hesitation which affect quality of communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Candidate's responses are generally coherent, however only a limited range of cohesive devices are used.</p> <p>Errors in cohesion may be noticeable and impede fluency.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.				

C2 Speaking Mark Scheme

	Relevance and Appropriacy of response	Grammar Accuracy and Range	Vocabulary Accuracy and Range	Clarity and Pronunciation	Coherence and Structure
Marks					
6 and 5	<p>Candidate's responses are focused, relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate addresses all questions/task appropriately, fluently and flexibly, elaborating on their response, highlighting significant points and providing examples.</p> <p>The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.</p>	<p>Candidate displays a comprehensive mastery of complex grammatical structures. Errors are absent, barring very occasional slips which are almost unnoticeable.</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language. Use of vocabulary is precise and sophisticated with no/minimal slips. The candidate uses idiomatic and colloquial language with ease.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is accurate and highly controlled throughout. Stress, rhythm and intonation are used precisely to convey shades of meaning. L1 interference may be present but this in no way impedes communication.</p>	<p>Candidate's response is expertly structured, clear and smoothly flowing with gaps in fluency absent or very rare. Candidate's use of cohesive devices is wide-ranging and sophisticated with few slips.</p>
	<p>Candidate's responses are generally focused, relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. Candidate addresses the majority of the questions and the task</p>	<p>Candidate has a consistently high level of control over all aspects of grammar even when presenting complex</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates solid control of a wide range of language, including collocation, some less common vocabulary, idiomatic and colloquial</p>	<p>Pronunciation is accurate and controlled with minimal L1 interference. Occasional minor errors do not impede communication. Use of</p>	<p>Candidate's response is well-structured and coherent although there are occasional slips which do not affect comprehension. A range of cohesive devices are used</p>

<p>4 and 3</p>	<p>appropriately expanding on their responses though this may not always be done consistently well.</p> <p>Candidate may self-correct to ensure response is addressing the questions/task. This may not always be fully successful.</p> <p>Where candidate's responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions/task a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>	<p>ideas. Errors are few in number and minor.</p>	<p>expression. Although use of vocabulary is sophisticated, there may be occasional lapses in precision. These are minimal and do not impede communication.</p>	<p>stress and intonation patterns is consistent.</p>	<p>highly appropriately, although these may occasionally lack breadth and precision.</p>
<p>2 and 1</p>	<p>Candidate's responses do not always relate to the questions and the Part 3 task. Candidate may digress or go off topic, and elaboration of their response may be limited.</p> <p>Where candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Grammatical accuracy is achieved on more straightforward responses. More sophisticated structures expected are not attempted and where they are, errors impede communication.</p> <p>Where candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Accuracy in simple straightforward expressions is achieved but more complex vocabulary and expressions are sometimes faulty.</p> <p>Where candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is generally clear. Stress and intonation patterns may be faulty at times and L1 interference is significant. There are several instances of hesitation which affect quality of communication.</p> <p>Where candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Candidate's responses are well-structured although a limited range of cohesive devices are used and there may be some repetition. There are errors in cohesion which may at times impede communication.</p> <p>Where candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>
<p>0</p>	<p>Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.</p>				



