



Making Languages Count GCSE Speaking Exam Training

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- Gives formal recognition to a skill that is often undervalued by the mainstream school, by employers and by the children themselves
- Has value for their mainstream school
- Counts towards the E-Bacc and Progress 8 target once student is in Y11
- Motivates students, especially when taken 'early'
- Can prompt school staff to re-evaluate a child's educational potential
- Communities have their language and heritage recognised
- Teaches valuable exam skills that transfer to other subject areas, including (and especially) MFL
- Raises self-esteem and gains peer recognition
- At A Level counts as UCAS points for University applications



Know your specification

- Find the webpage for your language online (e.g. google AQA Polish GCSE or Persian GCSE Pearson Edexcel)
- Find the specification
- Each specification has appendices which lists the vocabulary and grammar required
- Each specification outlines the topics and how each exam works
- Each GCSE exam has four elements, reading, writing, listening and speaking



Languages GCSEs are graded from 1-9
(9 being the highest mark)

For GCSE languages students must be entered for all their language exams (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as either a higher candidate or a foundation candidate



The Role of the Expert Speaker

You are there to enable the student to demonstrate their language skills as fully as possible

Your role includes ensuring the rules are followed precisely and that the student has the best possible opportunity to show their range and use of the language

Keeping the student calm and relaxed is also important!

You are not required to mark the exam in any way – you are a facilitator



3 Parts

- 1) Role Play
- 2) Photo Card / Picture Card Discussion
- 3) General Conversation

They must be done in this order



Total exam time

7-9 minutes Foundation

10-12 minutes Higher

+ 12 minutes Preparation Time!

1. Role play (15 marks)
2. Photo Card (15 marks)
3. A general conversation (30 marks) 3-5 mins for Foundation Tier and 5-7 mins for Higher Tier

Both parts of the General Conversation must have equal time



Total exam time

7-9 minutes Foundation

10-12 minutes Higher

+ 12 minutes Preparation Time!



1. Role play (10 marks) 1- 1.5 mins(F) 2-2.5 mins (H)

2. Picture based discussion (24 marks) 2.5-3 mins (F) 3-3.5 mins (H)

3. A general conversation (36 marks) 3.5-4 mins for Foundation Tier and 5-6 mins for Higher Tier

Both parts of the General Conversation must have equal time

Preparation Time

12 minutes in a room with an invigilator

15 minutes if the student requires extra time (25%)

There should not be any target language on the walls

No dictionary allowed

Student can write their notes down but not on the cards they are given. **For Edexcel up to only one side of A4.**

Student can only prepare for Task 1 (role play) and Task 2 (photo card / picture based discussion)



Role Play



Role play (15 marks) – translated from AQA French resources

You are speaking about voluntary work to a French friend

- Your voluntary work – where and when
- The last time – one activity
- ? The importance of voluntary work
- Working in a team – one advantage
- !



Role play (10 marks) - translated from Edexcel French resources

You are speaking to a friend the cinema

- Cinema – how often
- Adventure films – your opinion
- !
- ? Tickets - prices
- ? Plans for after the film



Photo card/Picture based task



Photo card (15 marks) – Example below translated from AQA French resources

- 1) What is in the photo?
- 2) What do you think about traffic in your town..? Why...?
- 3) How would you change public transport in your region?

- 4) ! Your family, what have they done recently to help the environment?
- 5) ! Are plastic bags a problem? Why? Why not?



Picture based discussion (24 marks) – Example below translated from Edexcel French resources

- 1) Describe the photo
- 2) Holidays in the countryside – your opinion
- 3) An interesting holiday that you have been on
- 4) Where are you going on holiday in the future?
- 5) ! – Do you prefer to go on holiday with friends or with your family?



General Conversation (30 marks)

Edexcel Only

*****The student can have up to one minute to introduce their chosen theme*****

50% on the candidate's chosen theme

50% on the second theme from the randomised list

AQA Only

*****The student must ask you a question if they forget, you need to prompt them!*****



3 Overall Themes

- 1) Identity and Culture
- 2) Local, national, international, global areas of interest
- 3) Current and Future Study and Employment



Me, my family and friends

Technology in everyday life

Free time activities

Customs and Festivals

Home, town, neighbourhood,
region

Healthy and unhealthy living + Charity
and voluntary work

Poverty and homelessness +
environment

Holidays and Travel

School and Subjects + Life at School
and College

University or work?

Choice of Career

5 Overall Themes

- 1) Identity and Culture
- 2) Local, area, travel, holiday
- 3) School
- 4) Future aspirations study and
work
- 5) and global dimension



Who am I?
Daily Life
Cultural Life

Holidays

Travel and tourist transactions

Town, region and country

What school is like
School activities

Using languages beyond the classroom
Ambitions
Work

Bringing the world together Environmental Issues

ALL EXAM BOARDS

The test is recorded and the recording sent to the exam board

A script needs to be read on the recording – in English

There is **sometimes** paperwork to complete for each test
(Edexcel)

The recording is continuous for each candidate – the recording is **never** stopped between different sections of the exam

In an emergency, such as a fire alarm or sudden illness, follow the individual school's guidance.



THEMES - Questions

ACTIVITY

Imagine you are advising someone else about how to write a good question....

Write down three pieces of advice you would give them



ASKING QUESTIONS

- Avoid asking closed questions i.e. ones that invite yes/no answers
- Ask why, where, how, when and tell me / tell me more about...questions
- Ask about past, present and future
- If the candidate can't answer, then rephrase the question but not more than once – move on to a different question instead
- Have standard questions prepared in advance, for each topic area, in the target language
- Be prepared to think up new questions in the test
- High marks are given when it sounds like a conversation or discussion, rather than an interview
- Avoid talking too much yourself – you are encouraging the candidate to do the talking



THEMES

ACTIVITY

Now try to write three questions for one of the sub themes, perhaps each one is in a different tense?



THEMES

For the general conversation you will need to discuss two different themes (you don't have to cover all the sub topics within each theme)

To get the highest marks students need to use a range of tenses and more complex structures

ACTIVITY

Looking at the three questions you wrote in the previous activity what do you think would be a complex answer to one of your questions?



Complex responses – how to get the highest marks

Family topic

How many people are there in your family?

Complex answer

My family is very big and I've always liked having such a big family. In my family there are six people. There are my parents and my sisters who are twins. Also I have one brother. Actually, I have a lot of relatives which consist of cousins, uncles and aunties. So, therefore there are too many to count!



Complex responses – how to get the highest marks

Family topic

What are the advantages of having a big family?

Complex answer

An advantage is that you can get help from many people. For example my brother helps me with my homework when I ask him. Also to be honest it's very entertaining and I'm glad I'm not an only child. On the other hand, a disadvantage is that it can be very annoying when you want some quiet time and sometimes they steal my things which I don't like at all.



The Most Common Mistakes – Examiners

ACTIVITY

In pairs or groups write down the three most common mistakes you think examiners make when conducting speaking exams



The Most Common Mistakes – Examiners

- Examiners speak for longer than the student
- Examiners have poor time keeping
- Examiners correct a student or help them with a word
- Examiners ask closed questions
- Examiners forget to start the recording properly
- ****AQA**** - Examiners forget to make sure the student asks them a question during the general conversation



What the Exam Board said – Examiners

Role Play

- Examiners didn't read out the scenario
- Examiners didn't stick to the script
- Examiners asked supplementary questions

The Role Play is about communication answers need to be short and relevant, if the examiners asks a question that is not on the script = 0 marks

Also if the student starts answering the wrong question you can interrupt them and ask them the question again



What the Exam Board said – Examiners

Photo card / Picture based discussion

- Examiners didn't stick to the script
- Examiners asked supplementary questions
- Examiners didn't allow students to develop their answers

The Photo card is about narrative and description and then giving opinions, questions will ask them to use different tenses.

To access the highest marks students need to develop 3 of the 5 answers. 3 clear pieces of information for each answer.

Timing!

Examiners will stop marking the photocard after 2 minutes for foundation and 3 minutes for higher



What the Exam Board said – Examiners

General Conversation

- Examiners didn't allow equal time for both themes (**two** marks deducted if this happens!)
- Examiners didn't allow the most able to develop their answers sufficiently
- Examiners didn't listen to the what the student said and respond to this
- Don't need to cover every topic within the theme

The Conversation is about conveying information and spontaneity!



Timing!

Examiners will stop marking after the total amount of time for the general conversation

The Most Common Mistakes – Students

National Consortium for Languages Education



ACTIVITY

In pairs or groups write down the three most common mistakes you think students make when taking speaking exams



The Most Common Mistakes – Students

- Students get confused and speak in English at the beginning of the recording
- Students use dialect
- Students substitute words with English ones or anglicise words
- Students are not prepared!!
- Students don't understand the question (be careful here you must stick to the script for the role play and photo card / picture based discussion)



What the exam board said – Students

Role Play

- Didn't read the scenario properly for the role play
- Found ? much more difficult than the !

Photo card / Picture based discussion

- Students that did best had prepared 3 sentences for each bullet point

General Conversation

- Tried to speak for more than 1 minute to introduce their chosen theme (Edexcel)



Using the equipment

In pairs or threes, practise recording a short interview in English in the language of your choice

Use the script provided for your exam board (either AQA or Edexcel) make sure you start the recording by providing the information on the script in English



Challenges

It should all go smoothly BUT...

- Students get nervous – you should try to meet them for a quick chat before the test so they can hear your voice
- Some students can be very quick (especially when nervous) so have plenty of questions that provoke long answers
- Some students might be fluent but they can forget to use a range of tenses etc. change your questions to suit your candidate
- Make sure you have a list of questions for each theme in your language
- Avoid colloquial/slang phrases and dialect – this is an issue with particular languages



Thank you for your time





ευχαριστώ Gracias 谢谢 Danke

Diolch **Fa'afetai**

Dziękuję Bedankt

Kiitos **Merci**

Paldies Tak skal du have

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