



## **Assessing Speaking Performance – Level C1**

### Examiners and speaking assessment in the CAE exam

Speaking tests are conducted by trained examiners. The quality assurance of Speaking Examiners (SEs) is managed by Team Leaders (TLs) who are in turn responsible to a Professional Support Leader (PSL), who is the professional representative of University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) for the Speaking tests in a given country or region.

All of the examiners (PSLs, TLs and SEs) must prove each year, through a certification process, that they are competent to assess. In addition, they are regularly monitored during live testing sessions.

Although candidates take the test in pairs or groups of three, throughout the test they are assessed on their individual performance and not in relation to each other. They are awarded marks by two examiners: an *assessor* and an *interlocutor*.

The *interlocutor* awards a mark for the performance as a whole, using the Global Achievement scale.

The *assessor* awards marks for five individual criteria:

- Grammatical Resource
- Lexical Resource
- Discourse Management
- Pronunciation
- Interactive Communication.

### How can I use the Assessment Scales?

Examiners use the C1 Level Assessment Scales to decide which marks to give candidates taking the CAE Speaking test. Using the scales yourself during classroom speaking practice tasks will help you to:

- analyse your students' strengths and weaknesses when they do CAE Speaking tasks
- form an impression of how ready your students are to take the Speaking test.

### The Assessment Scales

The CAE Assessment Scales are divided into six bands from 0 to 5, with 0 being the lowest and 5 the highest. Descriptors for each criterion are provided for bands 1, 3 and 5 and indicate what a candidate is expected to demonstrate at each band. CAE is at Level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and the descriptors for band 3 and above generally indicate performance of at least C1 level.



## Assessing Speaking Performance – Level C1

C1	Grammatical Resource	Lexical Resource	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintains control of a wide range of grammatical forms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar and unfamiliar topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produces extended stretches of language with ease and with very little hesitation.</li> <li>Contributions are relevant, coherent and varied.</li> <li>Uses a wide range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is intelligible.</li> <li>Phonological features are used effectively to convey and enhance meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interacts with ease, linking contributions to those of other speakers.</li> <li>Widens the scope of the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.</li> </ul>
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>				
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar and unfamiliar topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation.</li> <li>Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of ideas.</li> <li>Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is intelligible.</li> <li>Intonation is appropriate.</li> <li>Sentence and word stress is accurately placed.</li> <li>Individual sounds are articulated clearly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers.</li> <li>Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.</li> </ul>
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>				
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views, but only when talking about familiar topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation.</li> <li>Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition.</li> <li>Uses a range of cohesive devices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is intelligible.</li> <li>Intonation is generally appropriate.</li> <li>Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed.</li> <li>Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiates and responds appropriately.</li> <li>Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.</li> </ul>
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>				

As you look through the scales, it may help to highlight words which make one band different from another. Always remember that Level C1 is generally described as ‘Good operational command of the spoken language’.

For example, under Grammatical Resource, the beginning of the first descriptor at Band 3 is the same as at Band 1 – *Shows a good degree of control....* However, Band 3 applies the notion of control to *a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms*, whereas at Band 1 the control is limited to the use of *simple grammatical forms* combined with *attempts at some complex grammatical forms*. At Band 5, the control needs to be maintained across a *wide range of grammatical forms*.