

Cambridge ESOL

Speaking assessment

Glossary of terms

1. GENERAL

Conveying basic meaning	Conveying basic meaning: the ability of candidates to get their message across to their listeners, despite possible inaccuracies in the structure and/or delivery of the message.
Situations and topics	<p>Conveying basic meaning: the ability of candidates to get their message across to their listeners, despite possible inaccuracies in the structure and/or delivery of the message.</p> <p>Everyday situations: situations that candidates come across in their everyday lives, e.g. having a meal, asking for information, shopping, going out with friends or family, travelling to school or work, taking part in leisure activities. A KET task that requires candidates to exchange details about a store's opening hours exemplifies an everyday situation.</p> <p>Familiar topics: topics about which candidates can be expected to have some knowledge or personal experience. FCE tasks that require candidates to talk about what people like to do on holiday, or what it is like to do different jobs, exemplify familiar topics.</p> <p>Unfamiliar topics: topics which candidates would not be expected to have much personal experience of. CAE tasks that require candidates to speculate about whether people in the world today only care about themselves, or the kinds of problems that having a lot of money can cause, exemplify unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Abstract topics: topics which include ideas rather than concrete situations or events. CPE tasks that require candidates to discuss how far the development of our civilisation has been affected by chance discoveries or events, or the impact of writing on society, exemplify abstract topics.</p>
Utterance	Utterance: people generally write in sentences and they speak in utterances. An utterance may be as short as a word or phrase, or a longer stretch of language.

2. GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

Appropriacy of vocabulary	Appropriacy of vocabulary: the use of words and phrases that fit the context of the given task. For example, in the utterance <i>I'm very sensible to noise</i> , the word <i>sensible</i> is inappropriate as the word should be <i>sensitive</i> . Another example would be <i>Today's big snow makes getting around the city difficult</i> . The phrase <i>getting around</i> is well suited to this situation. However, <i>big snow</i> is inappropriate as <i>big</i> and <i>snow</i> are not used together. <i>Heavy snow</i> would be appropriate.
Flexibility	Flexibility: the ability of candidates to adapt the language they use in order to give emphasis, to differentiate according to the context, and to eliminate ambiguity. Examples of this would be reformulating and paraphrasing ideas.
Grammatical control	<p>Grammatical control: the ability to consistently use grammar accurately and appropriately to convey intended meaning.</p> <p>Where language specifications are provided at lower levels (as in KET and PET), candidates may have control of only the simplest exponents of the listed forms.</p> <p>Attempts at control: sporadic and inconsistent use of accurate and appropriate grammatical forms. For example, the inconsistent use of one form in terms of structure or meaning, the production of one part of a complex form incorrectly or the use of some complex forms correctly and some incorrectly.</p> <p>Spoken language often involves false starts, incomplete utterances, ellipsis and reformulation. Where communication is achieved, such features are not penalised.</p>
Grammatical forms	<p>Simple grammatical forms: words, phrases, basic tenses and simple clauses.</p> <p>Complex grammatical forms: longer and more complex utterances, e.g. noun clauses, relative and adverb clauses, subordination, passive forms, infinitives, verb patterns, modal forms and tense contrasts.</p>
Range	Range: the variety of words and grammatical forms a candidate uses. At higher levels, candidates will make increasing use of a greater variety of words, fixed phrases, collocations and grammatical forms.

3. DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT

Coherence and cohesion	Coherence and cohesion are difficult to separate in discourse. Broadly speaking, coherence refers to a clear and logical stretch of speech which can be easily followed by a listener. Cohesion refers to a stretch of speech which is unified and structurally organised.
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Coherence and cohesion	<p>Coherence and cohesion can be achieved in a variety of ways, including with the use of cohesive devices, related vocabulary, grammar and discourse markers.</p> <p>Cohesive devices: words or phrases which indicate relationships between utterances, e.g. addition (<i>and, in addition, moreover</i>); consequence (<i>so, therefore, as a result</i>); order of information (<i>first, second, next, finally</i>).</p> <p>At higher levels, candidates should be able to provide cohesion not just with basic cohesive devices (e.g. <i>and, but, or, then, finally</i>) but also with more sophisticated devices (e.g. <i>therefore, moreover, as a result, in addition, however, on the other hand</i>).</p> <p>Related vocabulary: the use of several items from the same lexical set, e.g. <i>train, station, platform, carriage</i>; or <i>study, learn, revise</i>.</p> <p>Grammatical devices: essentially the use of reference pronouns (e.g. <i>it, this, one</i>) and articles (e.g. <i>There are two women in the picture. The one on the right ...</i>).</p> <p>Discourse markers: words or phrases which are primarily used in spoken language to add meaning to the interaction, e.g. <i>you know, you see, actually, basically, I mean, well, anyway, like</i>.</p>
Extent/extended stretches of language	Extent/extended stretches of language: the amount of language produced by a candidate which should be appropriate to the task. Long turn tasks require longer stretches of language, whereas tasks which involve discussion or answering questions could require shorter and extended responses.
Relevance	Relevance: a contribution that is related to the task and not about something completely different.
Repetition	Repetition: repeating the same idea instead of introducing new ideas to develop the topic.

4. PRONUNCIATION

Intelligible	Intelligible: a contribution which can generally be understood by a non-EFL/ESOL specialist, even if the speaker has a strong or unfamiliar accent.
Phonological features	<p>Phonological features include the pronunciation of individual sounds, word and sentence stress, and intonation.</p> <p>Individual sounds are:</p> <p>Pronounced vowels, e.g. the /æ/ in <i>cat</i> or the /e/ in <i>bed</i></p> <p>Diphthongs, when two vowels are rolled together to produce one sound, e.g. the /əʊ/ in <i>host</i> or the /eɪ/ in <i>hate</i></p> <p>Consonants, e.g. the /k/ in <i>cut</i> or the /f/ in <i>fish</i>.</p> <p>Stress: the emphasis laid on a syllable or word. Words of two or more syllables have one syllable which stands out from the rest because it is pronounced more loudly and clearly, and is longer than the others, e.g. imPORtant. Word stress can also distinguish between words, e.g. proTEST vs PROtest. In sentences, stress can be used to indicate important meaning, e.g. <i>WHY is that one important?</i> versus <i>Why is THAT one important?</i></p> <p>Intonation: the way the voice rises and falls, e.g. to convey the speaker's mood, to support meaning or to indicate new information.</p>

5. INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Development of the interaction	Development of the interaction: actively developing the conversation, e.g. by saying more than the minimum in response to the written or visual stimulus, or to something the other candidate/interlocutor has said, or by proactively involving the other candidate with a suggestion or question about further developing the topic (e.g. <i>What about bringing a camera for the holiday?</i> or <i>Why's that?</i>).
Initiating and Responding	<p>Initiating: starting a new turn by introducing a new idea or a new development of the current topic.</p> <p>Responding: replying or reacting to what the other candidate or the interlocutor has said.</p>
Prompting and Supporting	<p>Prompting: instances when the interlocutor repeats, or uses a backup prompt or gesture in order to get the candidate to respond or make a further contribution.</p> <p>Supporting: instances when one candidate helps another candidate, e.g. by providing a word they are looking for during a discussion activity, or helping them develop an idea.</p>
Turn and Simple exchange	<p>Turn: everything a person says before someone else speaks.</p> <p>Simple exchange: a brief interaction which typically involves two turns in the form of an initiation and a response, e.g. question-answer, suggestion-agreement.</p>

Cambridge English: Advanced Glossary

Answer Sheet	the form on which candidates record their responses.
Assessor	the Speaking test examiner who assigns a score to a candidate's performance, using analytical criteria to do so.
Closure Techniques	techniques used to draw a conversation to a close, e.g. 'That's all'.
Cloze Test	a type of gap-filling task in which whole words have been removed from a text and which candidates must replace.
Coherence	language which is coherent is well planned and clear, and all the parts or ideas fit well so that they form a united whole.
Collaborative Task	the opportunity in the Speaking test for the candidates to engage in a discussion and work together towards a negotiated outcome of the task set.
Collocation	this term describes the likelihood of two words going together, e.g. a good job, a wonderful occasion.
Comprehension Questions	short questions testing information selection, linking and sentence construction.
Content Points	the points contained in the <i>Cambridge English: Advanced</i> Paper 2 Part 1 compulsory question, which must be included in the response.
Conversational Fillers	a word or sound filling a pause in an utterance or conversation, e.g. 'er', 'you know'.
Discourse	written or spoken communication.
Discrete Sentences	sentences not connected by context or meaning.
Gap-Filling Item	any type of item which requires the candidate to insert some written material – letters, numbers, single words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs – into spaces in the text. The response may be supplied by the candidate or selected from a set of options.
Gist	the central theme or meaning of the text.
Impeding Error	an error which prevents the reader from understanding the word or phrase.
Input Material	the text and notes, sometimes supported by illustrations or diagrams, which candidates have to base their answers on in the <i>Cambridge English: Advanced</i> Paper 2 Part 2 compulsory question.
Interlocutor	the Speaking test examiner who conducts the test and makes a global assessment of each candidate's performance.
Item	each testing point in a test which is given a separate mark or marks.
Key	the correct answer to an item.
Lexical	adjective from lexis, meaning to do with vocabulary.
Long Turn	the opportunity in the Speaking test for a candidate to talk uninterrupted for a period of time, enabling them to produce an extended piece of discourse.
Lozenge	the space on the answer sheet which candidates must fill in to indicate their answer to a multiple-choice question.
Multiple Choice	a task where candidates are given a set of several possible answers of which only one is correct.
Multiple Matching	a task in which a number of questions or sentence completion items, generally based on a reading text, are set. The responses are provided in the form of a bank of words or phrases, each of which can be used an unlimited number of times.
Neutral Style:	a writing style with no specific features of formality or informality.

Opening and Closing Formulae	the expressions, either formal or informal, that are usually used to open and close letters, e.g. 'Dear Maria ... With best wishes from ...', or 'Dear Mr Dakari ... Yours sincerely ...'.
Options	the individual words in the set of possible answers for a multiple-choice item.
Paraphrase	to give the meaning of something using different words.
Phrasal Verb	a verb which takes on a new meaning when followed by a certain preposition or adverb (e.g. 'get away', 'take up').
Pretesting	a stage in the development of test materials at which items are tried out with representative samples from the target population in order to determine their difficulty.
Referencing	the technique of using 'referents'.
Referent	a word or term that refers to another person, place, etc.
Register	the tone of a piece of writing. The register should be appropriate for the task and target reader, e.g. a letter of application is written in formal register.
Report Layout	the way in which a report should be presented. At <i>Cambridge English: Advanced</i> level a report in Paper 2 Part 2 should be clearly organised into paragraphs/sections and may include headings.
Rhetorical/ Stylistic Devices	techniques used in a text to achieve a particular effect.
Sentence Transformations	a task where a lead-in sentence is followed by a prompt and a gapped sentence, which must be completed.
Stem Word	the word at the end of each line in <i>Cambridge English: Advanced</i> Paper 3 Part 3 which is the basis for the word that has to be formed.
Style	a property of a text which may be neutral, formal, informal, etc.
Summary Task	a task which requires candidates to summarise in a specific number of words information from two texts.
Target Reader	the intended recipient of a piece of writing. It is important to ensure that the effect of a written task on a target reader is a positive one.

Acronyms

ALTE	The Association of Language Testers in Europe.
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference.
EFL	English as a Foreign Language.
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages.
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.