

# **EXAMPLES OF SPEAKING PERFORMANCES AT CEF LEVELS A2 TO C2**

**(Taken from Cambridge ESOL's Main Suite  
exams)**

## **MARKS AND COMMENTARIES**

**BEN: LEVEL C1/C1+  
ALISER: LEVEL C2**

# Foreword

This document accompanies the recorded speaking performances of Ben (CEF level C1/C1+) and Aliser (CEF level C2). The two candidates are taking a Cambridge ESOL Certificate in Proficiency of English test. This speaking test performance was originally recorded for examiner training purposes, and is here used to provide speaking exemplars of CEF levels. The speaking exemplars used here are an additional resource (to the existing one on the Council's website) that Cambridge ESOL would like to share with other language testing and teaching professionals.

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Further information on the content and exams exemplified in these sample tests is available in the Exam Handbooks, reports, and past papers, which can be obtained via the Cambridge ESOL website, <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/>

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## Ben (Level C1/C1+) and Aliser (Level C2)

Ben (from China) and Aliser (from Latvia) are taking a CPE exam. At CPE candidates are required to carry out three tasks, which are outlined below.

Part	Response format
1	<i>Interview</i> Part 1 gives candidates the opportunity to show their ability to use general interactional and social language. The interlocutor asks each candidate a series of questions, starting with general information about themselves and moving on to more open questions requiring speculation or an opinion. The interlocutor encourages the candidates to give information about themselves and to express personal opinions.
2	<i>Collaborative task</i> In Part 2, candidates are given the opportunity to show their range of language (speculating, evaluating, giving opinions, eliciting, negotiating etc) and their ability to manage a discussion. Following an initial question which focuses their reaction to aspects of one or more pictures, the candidates are given visual and spoken prompts, which are used in a decision-making task.
3	<i>Individual long turn followed by discussion</i> In Part 3, candidates are given the opportunity to speak for 2 minutes without interruption. Each candidate in turn is given a written question to respond to. This is followed by the interlocutor asking a series of further questions, which allows the candidates to engage in a discussion to explore further the topics of the long turns.

### Ben: Level C1/C1+

Ben contributes to the interaction all through the test, but cannot be said to show the spontaneity and fluency required at C2. He also struggles with coherence and accuracy, where his performance does not always reach the standard required for C2. Overall, he is at the C1/C1+ level.

#### Range (C1):

Ben has command of some precise and colloquial language (*"coping quite well here", "get along very well", "although I disagree with her, I see where she's coming from"*), but at times he seems to struggle to find the precise language he needs to express finer shades of meaning (*"it's very nice to have friends when you're travelling."* *"If you don't wear, like, the same clothes as them you might feel that you are left abo....left out."*). The filler "like" seems to be used when Ben can't find the exact word he needs to describe precise meaning.

#### Accuracy (C1):

There is a considerable amount of accurate language, (*"stopping us from showing off, in a way...[ .... ] ...it shows us we are the same as others"*), but Ben does not have the consistent control required for C2, and demonstrates a C1 level of accuracy, making a few errors (*"you can help out each other", "it brings unique into our school", "when I was young, I used to like computer games a lot, but then now as I grow older I found computer games not as exciting as it used to be"*).

#### Fluency (C1/C1+):

Although Ben plays a full part in the interaction, his contributions could not be said to demonstrate the spontaneous, natural flow which is a feature of C2 command of language. His contributions demonstrate a C1/C1+ level. For example, a conceptually difficult topic hinders fluency (*"Art can ...um...give some...can draw people's attention to..er.. one particular person's emotions, or what they feel about certain aspects, that they cannot express simply in words. I think um.. that's ones of the major beauty of art. It can...it's like a language in a way, it's communicating to other people, and different people will see this message differently."*

*I think that's very important.*”). The expression of ideas and supposition is not always effortless (*“those two are relatives, maybe .... um ...[ .... ] yeah, a daughter and a father and they are having a very....um...I think a very ...they are enjoying a nice conversation... and I think....”*).

**Interaction (C1+):**

Ben generally responds appropriately, but not effortlessly. For example in the first joint task, he tends to let Aliser take over at times, echoing her or agreeing with her (*“yeah”*) rather than developing the discussion, and does not always interact with ease in this section. He passes the questions on art and uniforms to Aliser to answer first, but then responds effectively. On cars, at the end of the test, he again passes the question to Aliser using body language, and doesn't intervene even when she stops and looks at him, but only when the interlocutor asks him directly.

**Coherence (C1):**

Ben seems to be struggling for coherence in his long turn on fashion, although he starts with effective use of a rhetorical question (*“Is it simply just what people wear, is this, like, fashion?”*). Although he structures his talk, he does not make full use of connectors and cohesive devices, meaning his talk lacks C2 level of coherence (*“what you wear gives other people a feeling of what you're like, so if you wear some dark clothes like I am here wearing, so might give the people opinion that um ... I I am a uh...how I say...I'm quite formal in a way, or I'm very mature in a way, whereas people who wear like like say multicoloured clothes, like very bright red or bright yellow clothes, people think that they're very happy? And I think that different clothes, again, it's a bit like art in a way. It gives people the message of how you feel and what your emotion is towards different things.”*). He is in real difficulty with coherence when answering the question on uniforms in Part 4. There is perhaps over use of the filler *“like”*, and a lack of other cohesive devices.

**Aliser: Level C2**

Aliser expresses herself spontaneously and very fluently throughout the test; she uses extensive linguistic resources to structure her turns well and communicate with ease, demonstrating a strong C2 performance.

**Range (C2):**

Aliser's language is very natural, using colloquial expressions and complex constructions (*“Quite competitive, to a certain extent [ .... ] if I know there's no way we can achieve the goal, I'll just... give in”, “it might even bring you closer”, “togetherness in a family is really important as well, which I think might appeal to the readers”, “get together and express their opinions”, “industrialised, deforestation...”, “the everlasting question”, “just a bunch of squiggles”, “on the dark side”, “personally I wouldn't approach Goths.”*). She is able to adjust register *“different stuff...er...things.”*

**Accuracy (C2):**

Aliser produces a generally extremely accurate performance at C2 (*“as you gradually grow up and your inner world changes, so do your tastes, for example when I was little I liked Harry Potter. I think now I'd enjoy more serious books”* , *“without art, life would be more boring, just more dull, I think”* “ *We wouldn't know about famous painters...”*). There are a very few slips: *“said a joke”* “*a good relationship between each other”, “manifestation”, “frescs”*).

**Fluency (C2):**

Aliser demonstrates the spontaneous, natural flow associated with C2 on a wide range of topics, both in short and long turns. She easily overcomes any linguistic difficulties she may have.

**Interaction (C2):**

Aliser uses language very skilfully to discuss the issues, weaving her ideas into her partner's comments. She supports her partner by supplying the words he seems to be hesitating over (*“it looks like a daughter and a father, or something.”*), but her desire to move the discussion on means she interrupts him (about togetherness and teamwork, and at the end of Part 2), finishing his sentences for him, and talking over him. However, her skill puts her clearly into the C2 band here.

**Coherence (C2):**

Aliser speaks coherently all though the test, making effective use of a wide range of cohesive devices (*“as a matter of fact”, “first of all because....., ....as well., but also..... , ...in various ways, ....”*). She uses

rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions and repetition to enhance coherence (*"the beautiful portraits, the beautiful landscapes..."*, *"some people say this ....., some people say that..."*). Her talk on art loses some coherence at the end, but she is still well within the C2 band.