



# Teaching Tips

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## From Cambridge Examiners

Reading and Use of English

Writing

Listening

Speaking

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# Reading and Use of English

## Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English

- 1 Your students should be encouraged to read a wide range of texts both in class and at home so that they build up a broad vocabulary and become familiar with the many uses of different structures. This should enable them to deal with a range of lexical items and grammatical structures in a variety of text types. Classroom reading can include a range of reading texts from coursebooks and reading-skills books at this level as well as articles available on the internet and current articles from newspapers and magazines on topics of interest.
- 2 When studying for the paper, it will be useful for your students to refer to dictionaries and grammar books. However, they should also develop strategies for operating independently of reference books by, for example, guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context, as they are not permitted to take dictionaries into the exam with them.
- 3 Students should develop an efficient personal system for recording the new vocabulary they learn. They should record as much detail as possible.
- 4 Encourage your students to plan their time carefully and not spend too long on any one part of the test. They should try to make sure that they have a few minutes at the end of the test to check through their answers. They can do the various parts of the test in any order, but it may be better to do them in the order of the question paper so as to avoid the possibility of putting answers in the wrong sections of the answer sheet.

### Parts 1 – 4

- 1 The texts in Parts 1, 2 and 3 all have titles. Encourage your students to pay attention to each title as it will indicate the main theme of the text.
- 2 Encourage your students to read through each text (Parts 1, 2 and 3) carefully before beginning to answer the questions so that they have a clear idea of what it is about.
- 3 In Parts 2 and 4, there may be more than one permissible answer for a question. However, students should only give one answer for each question. If they give two answers, and one of them is incorrect, they will not be given a mark. If they want to change an answer, they should rub it out.
- 4 Each Use of English part has an example towards the beginning. Students should get used to reading these to help them understand what they have to do. Remind them that in the examination they must not write the answer to the example on their answer sheet.
- 5 Sometimes candidates may decide that the answer they have written is wrong and wish to change it. If this happens in Part 1, they will need to rub out the mark they have made and mark a different lozenge. In parts 2, 3 and 4, they should clearly rub out the word or words and replace them. They should not try altering the word itself as this will make it unclear. They should not put the word in brackets as it will appear to be an alternative.
- 6 Make your students aware that correct spelling is essential in Parts 2, 3 and 4.
- 7 Remind your students that handwriting should be clear so that it can be read easily by the markers.

- 8 Give your students practice in completing the answer sheet. When writing their answers on the answer sheet, they must be careful to make sure that they put the answer by the appropriate question number. This is especially important if they leave some questions unanswered. They must also be sure to write in capital letters in Parts 2, 3 and 4.

## Parts 5 – 7

- 1 With coursebook texts, encourage your students to focus on any pre-reading questions. These stimulate interest in the topic covered by the text and train your students in valuable prediction techniques.
- 2 Some coursebooks include questions which are to be answered while reading a text. These will help your students to work their way through the text and interpret the meaning of more complex passages. The questions will also involve them in using different reading strategies. It is useful to encourage your students to be aware of alternative ways of dealing with texts so they can decide which ones suit them best.
- 3 It is helpful to introduce a programme of reading at home. As part of the homework assignments, a weekly reading scheme could be started. Your students could be asked to provide verbal or written reviews of the texts they have read. These could include graded readers, unabridged short stories or novels, non-fiction, newspaper or magazine articles, etc. Where possible, encourage your students to follow up on their hobbies and interests by reading magazines about sport, cars, fashion, etc. in English. If relevant magazines are not available locally, you may be able to access them on the internet. Reading up about hobbies etc. could also lead to written articles for a class project, or short talks.
- 4 Make sure your students are familiar with the format of the reading tasks. Train them to read carefully the instructions on the front page of the question paper and at the start of each task. The instructions give a brief context for each text and remind candidates what they have to do.
- 5 Show your students how to fill in the answer sheet and give them practice in doing this in a times exercise. Explain to them that they can transfer their answers after each task or at the end of the paper.
- 6 When your students are familiar with the different task types, discuss with them which part(s) take them longer to complete. Following this discussion, you could work out with them possible timings for each task. Remind them that each task is worth approximately equal marks. The outcome of the discussion will also help you to decide which task types to concentrate on in future classes and where assistance is needed with developing particular reading skills.

# The seven parts of the Reading and Use of English paper

## Reading and Use of English Part 1: Multiple-choice cloze

*In this part there is an emphasis on vocabulary and grammar.*

Part 1 consists of a text in which there are eight gaps (plus one gap as an example). Each gap represents a missing word or phrase. The text is followed by eight sets of four words or phrases, each set corresponding to a gap. Candidates have to choose which one of the four words or phrases in the set fills the gap correctly.

Candidates are required to draw on their lexical knowledge and understanding of the text in order to fill the gaps. Some questions test at a phrasal level, such as collocations and set phrases. Other questions test meaning at sentence level or beyond, with more processing of the text required. A lexico-grammatical element may be involved, such as when candidates have to choose the option which fits correctly with a following preposition or verb form.

## Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 1

- 1 Remind your students that different types of words are tested in this part. Sometimes it is necessary to choose between words with a similar meaning, e.g. choosing 'leaking' rather than 'spilling', 'pouring' or 'flowing' to fill the gap in 'The roof of our tent was...'. At other times it will be necessary not simply to know the meaning but also to know which word is correct because of the preposition, adverb or verb form which follows, e.g. choosing 'interested' rather than 'keen', 'enthusiastic' or 'eager' to fill the gap in 'You may be... in applying for this job'.
- 2 Give your students practice in recognising the differences in meaning between similar words, e.g. 'cut' and 'tear'. They should try to learn whole phrases as well as individual words in context, and they should be aware that knowing the grammatical patterns and collocations of words is as important as knowing their meaning.
- 3 This part of the paper also tests collocations, such as 'to pay attention to', and linking phrases such as 'even if'. Phrasal verbs are also tested here. They may be tested in three different ways: the whole of the phrasal verb, e.g. 'keep on', just the verb itself, e.g. 'keep', or just the preposition or adverb which follows the verb, e.g. 'on'. Thus, some questions test at a phrasal level, while others test meaning at sentence level or beyond, with more processing of the text required.
- 4 Remind your students to make sure the answer they choose fits into the sentence. They should not choose their answer simply after reading the words which come from before the gap; they need to read the words which follow as well. It is sometimes the case that a preposition or adverb which follows a gap determines which of the options is correct.
- 5 Get your students used to reading all the options for any question before deciding which one fills the gap correctly, and remind them that they should never choose more than one option as the answer.

- 6 Make your students aware that it is important that the mark they make in the lozenge on the answer sheet for each answer is firm and clear and done in pencil

## *Reading and Use of English Part 2: Open cloze*

*In this part, there is an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary*

Part 2 consists of a text in which there are eight gaps (plus one gap as an example). Candidates are required to draw on their knowledge of the structure of the language and understanding of the text in order to fill the gaps. In this part, as there are no sets of words from which to choose the answers; candidates have to think of a word which will fill the gap correctly.

The focus of the gapped words is either grammatical, such as articles, auxiliaries, prepositions, pronouns, verb tenses and forms, or lexico-grammatical, such as phrasal verbs, linkers and words within fixed phrases. The answer will always be a single word. In some cases, there may be more than one possible answer and this is allowed for in the mark scheme.

The absence or misuse of punctuation is ignored, although spelling, as in all the Use of English parts of the paper, must be correct.

## **Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 2**

- 1 As in Part 1, candidates need to read the words which follow the gap as well as those which come before it. Tell your students that they should make sure that if they are filling the gap with a verb, it agrees with its subject.
- 2 Remind students to keep in mind a sense of the whole text.
- 3 Make your students aware that they must use only one word to fill each of the gaps. They should never use abbreviations (e.g. 'sthg' for 'something'), and (with the exception of can't = cannot) they should not fill any of the gaps with a contraction (e.g. didn't, he'll), as these count as two words.

## Reading and Use of English Part 3: Word formation

*In this part, there is an emphasis on vocabulary.*

Part 3 consists of a text containing eight gaps (plus one gap as an example). At the end of some of the lines, and separated from the text, there is a stem word in capital letters. Candidates need to form an appropriate word from given stem words to fill each gap.

The focus of this task is primarily lexical, though an understanding of structure is also required. It tests the candidates' knowledge of how prefixes, suffixes, internal changes and compounds are used in forming words. Candidates may be required to demonstrate understanding of the text beyond sentence level.

### Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 3

- 1 Students should be made aware of the range of words which can be formed from the same stem word, e.g. 'compete', 'competition', 'competitor', 'competitive', 'competitively', and the negative forms of these words, e.g. 'uncompetitive'. In the examination when they see the 'stem word' at the end of a line, they must not automatically write a related word which they know well as their answer. They need to read the surrounding sentence to decide what the missing word is.
- 2 Sometimes the missing word will need to be in the plural, and sometimes it will need to be in a negative form. The sense of the text around the gap will help candidates decide if it is necessary to put the word in the plural or to make it negative.
- 3 Make your students aware that answers will not always need only prefixes or suffixes to be added to a word; sometimes internal changes will need to be made (e.g. 'long' to 'length').
- 4 Remind your students that each stem word applies only to the gap on the same line. They must not try to form a word from that stem word in any other line. In every case the stem word will have to be changed.

## Reading and Use of English Part 4: Key word transformation

*In this part there is an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary.*

Part 4 consists of six questions (plus an example). Each question contains three parts: a lead-in sentence, a key word, and a second sentence of which only the beginning and end are given. Candidates have to fill the gap in the second sentence so that the completed sentence is similar in meaning to the lead-in sentence. The gap must be filled with between two and five words, one of which must be the key word. The key word must not be changed in any way.

In this part of the paper the focus is both lexical and grammatical and a range of structures is tested. The ability to express a message in a different ways shows flexibility and resource in the use of language.

The mark scheme splits the answer into two parts and candidates gain one mark for each part which is correct.

### Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 4

- 1 In preparing for this part of the paper, give your students practice in paraphrasing. This might include rewriting sentences from texts, saying things again 'in other words', as well as working on lexical synonyms and grammatical transformations. In the examination, they must make sure that the answer makes the second sentence mean, as far as possible, the same as the lead-in sentence.
- 2 Remind your students that the answer must consist of two, three, four or five words. If candidates write more than five words they will not be awarded the marks.
- 3 Remind your students that they must use the key word in their answer and they must not change it in any way. If they do not use it or if they alter it, they will not be awarded the marks.
- 4 Make sure your students pay careful attention to any verb in the final part of the second sentence as it will often indicate whether to use a singular or plural noun in the answer.
- 5 Remind your students that when writing their answers, they should not write the whole or part of the second sentence; they should write the words that are needed to fill the gap, including the key word.
- 6 When they are counting the words, students should remember that, as in Part 2, they must count contracted words (with the exception of 'can't' = 'cannot') as the full form (e.g. 'didn't' = 2 words 'did not').



## Reading and Use of English Part 5: Multiple choice

*In this part, there is an emphasis on detailed understanding of a text, including the expression of opinion, attitude, purpose, main idea, detail, tone, implication and gist.*

Part 5 consists of a text, followed by six 4-option multiple-choice questions which test the understanding of content and text organisation. The text may be taken from, for example, a modern novel or an article. Questions may focus on the main ideas or details in the text, and on the attitudes or opinions expressed. Candidates may also be asked to deduce the meaning of a word or phrase and to demonstrate understanding of references, such as pronouns, within the text. Additionally, questions may focus on the tone of the text or the writer's purpose, as well as the use of exemplification or comparison. These questions may require candidates to infer the meaning from clues in the text, a skill which is an essential part of reading ability.

The 4 option multiple-choice questions are presented in the same order as the information in the text so that candidates can follow the development of the writer's ideas as they work through the questions. The final question may require candidates to interpret an aspect of the text as a whole.

### Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 5

- 1 Train your students to read through the text before looking at the questions. As three out of the four options are incorrect, there is no point in trying to absorb them all before tackling the text.
- 2 Get your students to read each question carefully so that they have some idea of what they need to look for.
- 3 Warn your students about the risks of 'word spotting', that is assuming that an option must be correct simply because it contains a word that is also in the text. Students need to check that the meaning of an option is reflected in the text, not that one word is the same in both.
- 4 When the questions take the form of incomplete sentences, encourage your students to read both parts of the sentence carefully. They need to check that the whole sentence matches what is written in the text and not just the phrase in option A, B, C or D.
- 5 Make sure your students read texts in which opinions, ideas and attitudes are expressed, such as interviews with actors or musicians in which they explain their interests and what they believe helped them to become successful, or extracts from novels which focus on characters' feelings.

## Reading and Use of English Part 6: Gapped text

*In this part, there is an emphasis on text structure, cohesion and coherence, and candidates' ability to follow the development of a long text.*

Part 6 consists of one text, for example an extract from a magazine, from which six sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text, together with a seventh sentence which does not fit in any of the gaps. Candidates are required to decide from where in the text each sentence has been removed. Each sentence may be used only once, and there is one sentence that candidates do not need to use. The task tests understanding of how texts are structured.

Rather than concentrating on individual sentences, candidates need to be able to follow the development of ideas, opinions and events through the text as a whole, using their understanding of text coherence and cohesion devices. This task is particularly effective in helping to distinguish between stronger and weaker candidates at this level.

### Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 6

- 1 Train your students to read through the text with gaps in it first so that they gain an overall idea of the structure of the text and the development of the writer's ideas, before starting to do the task.
- 2 When your students are selecting a sentence to fill a gap, make sure that they look carefully at the information before and after the gap. Candidates sometimes make the wrong choices by selecting options which seem to fit the text before the gap, and neglecting to check that the text after the gap follows on logically.
- 3 Give your students plenty of practice in recognising a wide range of linguistic devices which mark the logical and cohesive development of a text, for example words and phrases indicating time periods, cause and effect, exemplification, contrasting arguments, repetition, concordance of tenses, pronouns, etc. This will help them to make the correct choice between two possible sentences which seem rather similar at first sight.
- 4 As in Part 5, it is important to discourage your students from relying on 'word spotting'. That is assuming that if the same word, name, date, etc. appears in the surrounding text and one of the options, then that is automatically the right sentence to fill the gap. Train them to check all the other linguistic clues carefully before making their final decision.

## Reading and Use of English Part 7 Multiple matching

*In this part, there is an emphasis on locating specific information and detail, and recognising opinion and attitude, in one long text or a group of short texts.*

Part 7 consists of one long text or up to six shorter texts, preceded by ten questions. Candidates are required to locate the specific information which matches the questions. To do this, they need to understand detail, attitude or opinion in the question and locate a section of text where that idea is expressed, discounting ideas in other sections which may appear similar but which do not reflect the whole of the question accurately. Some of the options may be correct for more than one question.

### Teaching tips for Reading and Use of English Part 7

- 1 Your students will need practice in skimming and scanning texts quickly for specific information in order to prepare for this task. Once they have done this, it may be helpful to divide the class into teams and encourage them to 'race' against each other. Points should be deducted for incorrect answers, to emphasise the need for accuracy as well as speed.
- 2 In class, ask your students to tell you why a particular part of the text matches a question. This will help them to check their choices carefully. Once again, discourage them from choosing an answer on the basis of similar vocabulary alone.
- 3 Give your students plenty of opportunity to read book and film reviews or articles in which a number of different people express their thoughts about their hobbies, etc. You could also ask students, either as a pair or group activity in class, or as a homework assignment, to devise their own Part 7 task, based on texts you provide or ones that they find for themselves. Writing challenging questions for their classmates to try will help the students understand what clues they will need to look for when tackling a real Part 7 task.

# Writing

## Teaching tips for Writing

- 1 Candidates write most effectively when they choose tasks and topics suited to their interests and experience. When preparing students for the examination, it is important to ensure they are familiar with the paper and the range of task types and topics so that they can identify those which are most accessible to them.
- 2 Train your students to read the questions carefully, underlining the most important parts. They then need to make a plan, referring closely to the question and looking for opportunities to develop their ideas and show their range of language.
- 3 The time allowed for the Writing paper (1 hour 20 minutes) is designed to be sufficient for candidates to make brief plans and then write two answers. Any corrections they need to make should be clear so that the examiner can follow and mark what they have written.
- 4 Your students need to think carefully about who the target reader is for each task and try to write in an appropriate style and tone.
- 5 Linking ideas effectively is something your students will need guidance on. Using a variety of linking words is important, as is ensuring that the flow of ideas in the writing is logical and easy for the reader to follow.
- 6 Your students should be encouraged to use a range of complex language. If, in doing so, they make mistakes, the examiner will always give credit for the complex language attempted as long as the mistakes do not impede communication.
- 7 Counting words wastes time in an examination and leads to clumsy alterations to what a candidate has already written. Students need practice in writing tasks within the word limit so that they can estimate when they have written enough.
- 8 Make sure your students have practice in answering questions without the use of dictionaries. Dictionaries are not allowed in the examination.
- 9 Make sure your students are aware of the importance of spelling and punctuation. Although spelling errors and faulty punctuation are not specifically penalised, they can sometimes impede communication. (N.B. American usage and spelling are acceptable.) Remind them of the importance of checking their work.
- 10 Each question on the Writing paper carries equal marks so your students should practise planning the time they spend on each question carefully.
- 11 Remind your students that they must write their answers in the answer booklet.
- 12 It is important to write clearly so that their answers are easy to read. However, it is not important if candidates write in upper or lower case, or if their writing is joined up or not.

## The two parts of the Writing paper

Candidates are asked to write 140 – 190 words for both Part 1 and Part 2.

Writing approximately the right number of words is an integral part of task achievement. If significantly fewer words are written, this is likely to mean that the task has not been successfully completed, whereas overlong pieces of writing may involve irrelevance, repetition of ideas, poor organisation and have a negative effect on the target reader.

### *Writing Part 1: Compulsory task*

#### Task type and focus

Writing an essay giving opinion and providing reasons for the opinion.

In Part 1, the task will be in the form of an essay question with prompts. The range of functions tested will include agreeing or disagreeing with a statement, giving opinions on a question, giving information or explanations, comparing and contrasting ideas and opinions, exemplifying, giving reasons and drawing conclusions. Candidates are required to write a discursive essay in grammatically correct English, using a neutral or formal register.

#### Format

The input for Part 1 may be up to 120 words, including the rubric. The rubric will set the scene and topic for the essay. The essay may take the form of a direct question or statement, which candidates are asked to give their opinions about. The essay will have two given prompts which supply ideas clearly linked to the question or statement. Candidates must address both prompts and also introduce a third distinct idea of their own. This third idea is in addition to any overall conclusions. Candidates need to ensure that all the content of their essay is clear and easy to follow. Effective organisation and cohesion are important features of a successful essay. A range of structures will be required to communicate ideas and opinions, along with the use of appropriate vocabulary.

### Teaching tips for Writing Part 1

- 1 It's vital that candidates read the rubric, essay question and prompts very carefully in order to understand what they are expected to do. Successful essays address the question or statement in a clear or logical way. It's important that candidates keep to the focus of the topic in question and that all their ideas and opinions are relevant to the question.
- 2 Students need to become experienced at discussing the advantages and disadvantages of aspects of all kinds of topics at B2 level. Being able to support an opinion with reasons and examples is another skill required when writing an effective essay. The two given prompts help to guide and develop the essay and clearly relate to the question or statement. Candidates also need to think of a third idea of their own which is distinct from the two given prompts. Brainstorming ideas for different topics will be very useful practice for this. If any of the three essay prompts is missed out, then the target reader will not be fully informed and the candidate will be penalised.
- 3 In order to hold the reader's attention successfully, candidates need to express their ideas in a clear and logical way, making sure that the development of the essay is smooth and easy to follow. Varying the length of sentences, using direct and indirect questions and

using a variety of structures and vocabulary may all help to communicate ideas more effectively.

- 4 Essays should be well-organised and coherent. Students need practice in planning an essay effectively. The correct use of linking words and phrases (e.g., *but*, *so*, *however*, *on the other hand*, etc), the appropriate use of cohesive devices (e.g., using pronouns for referencing) and the use of paragraphs to guide the reader, are all aspects of organisation which should be practised and developed.
- 5 To produce a successful essay, candidates need to be familiar with a range of structures which can be used when comparing, contrasting, agreeing, disagreeing, explaining, informing and giving opinions with reasons or examples. The different ways of opening a discussion and reaching a conclusion should also be explored and practised. Exposure to a range of vocabulary used to discuss current issues and aspects of life is also very important.

## Writing Part 2: Article, email/letter, report, review

### Task format

The input for these three tasks is considerably less than in Part 1. Each writing task in Part 2 has a context, a purpose for writing and a target reader specified in no more than 70 words.

Attention to every element in the question is essential for effective task achievement and candidates should consider carefully what level of formality is appropriate to the task.

### Task type and focus

In Part 2, candidates have a choice of tasks. The questions are general questions, based on a range of topics, such as health and fitness, sport, music and so on. The tasks may include any of the following task types: an article, an informal or formal letter or email, a report, a review, a story.

As with Part 1, candidates are expected to show that they are aware of the kind of writing required to accomplish a task, and must be able to demonstrate appropriate use of one or more of the following functions: describing, explaining, reporting, giving information, suggesting, recommending, persuading.

The different task types are intended to provide guidance for the candidates, so they can put together and develop their ideas on a topic, with a purpose for writing and a target reader in mind.

### Teaching tips for Writing Part 2

- 1 Part 2 will always have three different tasks.
- 2 The tasks in Part 2 give candidates a chance to show their range of language. In class, student should be encouraged to use a variety of grammatical structures and explore the use of new vocabulary and expressions.
- 3 Since there is always a choice of task types in Part 2, students should avoid a particular task type if it is unsuited to their interests or experience.
- 4 Each word in the instructions is important to the task. Students should, therefore, be advised to avoid a question if they are unsure of what is required as their answer may not be wholly relevant.

## *Task types in the Writing paper*

**An article** is usually written for an English-language magazine or newsletter, and the reader is assumed to have similar interests to the writer. The main purpose is to interest and engage the reader, so there should be some opinion or comment.

### **Teaching tip for writing articles**

A successful article interests and engages the reader. Descriptions, examples and anecdotes are often appropriate, and effective answers will be lively and include some colourful use of language. A personal angle usually works well, and a catchy title will attract attention. The use of direct and indirect questions also adds colour, and students should be taught how to use these. Looking at examples from English language magazines should help.

**An informal email or letter** is written in response to the situation outlined in the input information. Candidates can expect to write to, for example, an English-speaking friend or colleague.

### **Teaching tips for writing informal emails or letters**

Students should be taught to use appropriately informal language consistently throughout an informal letter/email. They will be required to describe, express opinion and give information, and should use an appropriate range of informal linking expressions. It is important that they realise that while a brief general opening paragraph is appropriate, the majority of their letter should be devoted to dealing with the specific task outlined.

Students should be aware that in informal email or letter tasks, they will be expected to write grammatically correct sentences with accurate spelling and punctuation in a style suited to the situation and target reader. The abbreviated language used in text messages will not be considered appropriate for the task.

**A formal letter or email** is written in response to the situation outlined in the question.

Letters in the Writing paper will require a response which is consistently appropriate in register and tone for the specified target reader. Candidates can expect to be asked to write letters to, for example, an English-speaking friend or colleague, a potential employer, a college principal, or a magazine editor.

### **Teaching tips for writing formal letters or emails**

Formal letters and emails may be written to an individual or to an organisation. The purpose may be, for example, to apply for part-time vacation work, or a study or scholarship opportunity. Students should be taught the appropriate expressions to begin and end a formal letter, but they also need to work on a range of functions, including describing skills and experience, expressing enthusiasm, and persuading.



**A report** is usually written for a superior (e.g., a teacher) or a peer group (e.g., members of an English club). Candidates are expected to give some factual information and make suggestions or recommendations. A report should be clearly organised and may include headings.

### Teaching tips for writing reports

Students need to be taught report format, with the use of headings where appropriate. They should also work on specific vocabulary areas such as transport, leisure and entertainment, and learn how to make suggestions and recommendations.

**A review** is usually written for an English-language magazine, newspaper or website. The main purpose is to describe and express a personal opinion about something which the writer has experienced (e.g., a film, a holiday, a product, a website, etc.) and to give the reader a clear impression of what the item discussed is like. Description and explanation are key functions for this task, and a review will normally include a recommendation to the reader.

### Teaching tips for writing reviews

Students should be encouraged to read as wide a range of reviews as possible, such as those for holidays, books, television programmes and consumer goods. They need to be taught the use of appropriate adjectives, and how to describe and explain. They also need to know how to give an opinion, positive or negative, and make a recommendation.

# Listening

## Teaching tips for Listening

- 1 Students' ability to understand what they hear can improve dramatically if they are regularly exposed to audio materials: the more English they hear, the more readily they will pick out individual words, then phrases and sentences. A daily learning programme which includes a 'hearing English' component from audio or video recordings will help prepare your students for the Listening test. This should include a range of voices, accents and styles of delivery.
- 2 Classroom discussion activities provide an invaluable source of listening practice.
- 3 Encourage students to identify the stressed syllables and words in a listening text (the ones which carry the message) rather than trying to listen for every single syllable.
- 4 In order to build up confidence, get your students to read a summary of what they are going to hear before they listen to the full text.
- 5 Make students aware of how much they themselves bring to a listening task. For example, discuss with them what they can expect to hear, e.g. names and places when they turn on the news, or numbers and times if they listen to announcements.
- 6 Try changing the focus of the tasks they do in class; sometimes ask your students to listen for specific things, sometimes for the overall gist.
- 7 Students should practise listening to and reading the question, so that they are sure they understand what they are listening for and what they have to do.
- 8 Remind your students that they should use the time allowed before each recording to read through all the questions carefully, so they are prepared for what they hear.
- 9 Students should be advised that the information on the question paper is there to help them follow as they listen.
- 10 Remind students that they should write their answers for Part 2 clearly when they copy them onto the answer sheet, using CAPITAL LETTERS.
- 11 Students should get used to answering all the questions, even if they are not sure of the correct answer - they've probably understood more than they think.
- 12 Students shouldn't be distracted by individual words and phrases in Parts 1, 3 and 4. They should listen to the whole message.
- 13 Students should know when to stop concentrating on a question which they are finding difficult, so that they don't miss the next question.

# The four parts of the Listening paper

## Listening Part 1: Multiple choice

*This part tests candidates' ability to listen for gist, detail, function, purpose, attitude, opinion, genre, agreement, etc. in a series of unrelated short texts.*

The eight questions in this part of the paper are each preceded by a context sentence which is read out on the recording. The candidates then have time to read each question before hearing the recording twice.

## Teaching tips for Listening Part 1

- 1 Play real-life snippets to your students, e.g. a teacher's announcement, a weather report, and ask them to identify the text type and topic.
- 2 Candidates can be distracted by hearing words or phrases in the text which appear in one of the incorrect options. They need to practise spotting such mismatches, and understanding why they are wrong.
- 3 Try using a variety of short practice texts. The questions should range from people to places, from opinions to events, from relationships to reasons. Provide the text and options, but get the students to write the questions themselves.

### For example:

You overhear a student talking about a film he watched last night.

(Students suggest a question)

*Options*

A: a car

B: a family

C: a robbery

*Text*

*Student:* It's so difficult to get everyone to agree about what we're going to watch on TV. Is it the same in your house? Last night, for example, there were three films on. There was that one with the four sisters and their mother, during the American Civil War. Do you know the one I mean? I'd been looking forward to seeing it for ages. But the others had different ideas. Jessie was eager to see some cartoon thing about a car, but Lizzie wanted a thriller about two bank robbers. And rather than give in to each other, they both went with my choice - actually we all enjoyed it.

## Listening Part 2: Sentence completion

*This part tests candidates' ability to listen and locate specific information and stated opinion, from a single long text, and produce written answers by completing gapped sentences. Texts may be broadcasts, talks or classroom presentations.*

The 10 questions in this part of the paper take the form of incomplete sentences. The questions follow the order of the information in the listening text. Candidates need to listen to the text and complete the sentences.

Answers will not exceed three words in length. The word, number or phrase required will be heard on the recording and will not need to be changed in any way. Minor spelling errors are not penalised, but the candidate's intention must be clear and unambiguous. Candidates will not be asked to spell words which are above B2 level.

## Teaching tips for Listening Part 2

- 1 Preparation for this part should include lots of exposure to simple gapfill listening exercises.
- 2 Students need to get into the habit of reading not only the text in front of the gap, but also the text which follows the gap, which may affect their answer. You can reassure them that the tested items come in the same order as they are heard on the recording.
- 3 Candidates sometimes write too much, either by including unnecessary detail, or by trying to rephrase what they hear on the recording. Irrelevant detail can spoil what would otherwise have been a correct answer. Candidates should be reminded that no changes are required to the key information, that no answer will need more than three words, and that in many cases they will need only one or two words.

## Listening Part 3: Multiple matching

*In Part 3, the focus is on the skill of listening for general gist, detail, attitude, opinion etc. Candidates need to match an option to the correct speaker.*

In this part, candidates listen to five short texts, each with a different speaker, which are related in some way. For example, they may all be speaking about aspects of the same subject, such as travel, or about similar experiences, such as journeys. Candidates choose the option from a set of eight, which matches what each speaker says.

### Teaching tips for Listening Part 3

- 1 It is really important for candidates to use the time they are given to read through the questions, since they need to have a clear idea of what they are listening for. Students could practise doing the exercise with the transcript, so that they can see the kind of matching required. Other relevant exercises would be any which practise 'saying the same thing in a different way'.
- 2 If your students are at all unsure about an answer, they should wait for the second listening before making their final decision. Making too quick a decision may mean that a candidate 'uses up' an answer that belongs to another speaker.

## Listening Part 4: Multiple choice

*In Part 4, the main focus is on testing the candidates' ability to listen for opinion, attitude, gist, main idea, and specific information.*

The seven questions in this part of the paper take the form of 3-option multiple-choice questions. The questions follow the order of the interaction on the recording. Texts are usually interviews or discussions featuring two speakers.

### Teaching tips for Listening Part 4

In preparing for multiple-choice questions, it can be useful for students to answer questions in their own words before they look at the options; they can then decide which option seems to correspond most closely to their own answer.

# Speaking

## Teaching tips for Speaking

1. Classroom activities which involve students working in pairs and small groups will give practice in skills such as initiating and responding, which are essential to success in the Speaking test.
2. Make sure your students are familiar with the format of each part of the test. They should be aware of the different interaction patterns (who speaks to whom) and what stimulus will be provided by the interlocutor.
3. Encourage your students to speak clearly so that they can be heard by both the interlocutor and assessor. They should be made aware that different varieties of English accents in the UK and elsewhere in the world are acceptable.
4. Train your students to paraphrase when they do not know, or cannot remember, a word.
5. Train your students to listen carefully to the instructions, and to read the questions above the pictures in Part 2 and the discussion question and prompts in Part 3, so that they know precisely what they have to talk about.
6. To ensure all candidates are treated fairly, the interlocutor keeps to a scripted frame (as shown in the sample papers). However, you may remind your students that they can ask the examiner to repeat the instructions or a question.
7. Encourage your students to initiate discussion and to respond to what other students say.

*N.B. in some centres candidates from the same school are paired together. However, where candidates from a number of different schools are entered at the same centre, some candidates may find that they are paired with a candidate from another school. Students may check with the centre through which they are entering for the local procedure, if they wish.*

## The four parts of the Speaking paper

### Format

The paired format for the Speaking test (two examiners and two candidates) offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate, in a controlled but friendly environment, their ability to use their spoken language skills effectively. The test takes 14 minutes. One examiner, the interlocutor, conducts the test and gives a global assessment of each candidate's performance. The other, the assessor, does not take any part in the interaction but focuses solely on listening to, and making an assessment of, each candidate's oral proficiency.

At the end of the Speaking test, candidates are thanked for attending. They are given no indication of the level of their achievement.

The standard format is two examiners and two candidates. In cases where there is an uneven number of candidates at a centre, the last Speaking test of the session will be taken by three candidates together instead of two. When three candidates are tested together, the test format, test material and procedure will remain unchanged, but the timing will be longer: 20 minutes instead of 14.

The Speaking test consists of four parts, each of which is assessed. Each part of the test focuses on a different type of interaction: between the interlocutor and each candidate, between the two candidates, and among all three. The patterns of discourse vary within each part of the test.

## Speaking Part 1: Interview

*This part tests the candidates' ability to use social and interactional language.*

Part 1 gives candidates the opportunity to show their ability to use general social and interactional language and to give basic personal information about themselves. The questions which are asked relate to the candidates' own lives and focus on areas such as work, leisure time and future plans. Candidates are expected to respond to the interlocutor's questions, and to listen to what their partner has to say.

The candidates are not actively invited to talk to each other in this part of the test. This short social exchange is a natural way to begin an interaction, and it gives candidates time to settle before dealing with the more specific tasks in Parts 2, 3 and 4.

## Teaching tips for Speaking Part 1

- 1 In this part of the test, students will benefit from finding opportunities to practise talking about themselves. Interlocutors will ask candidates a range of questions about their everyday lives, for example sports they enjoy, travel and holidays, work experience and so on. Encourage your students to respond promptly, with answers which are complete and spontaneous. Rehearsed speeches should be avoided as these might be inappropriate for the question asked.
- 2 Encourage your students to look for opportunities to socialise with English speakers. In class, they could role-play social occasions in which they meet new people, e.g. parties, train journeys, starting a new job. This will give them the opportunity to practise a range of topics for this part of the test.
- 3 Students could brainstorm possible questions from the categories above. The different groups could then answer each other's questions.



## Speaking Part 2: Long turn

*This part tests the candidates' ability to produce an extended piece of discourse.*

In Part 2, candidates are given the opportunity to speak for 1 minute without interruption. Each candidate is asked to compare two colour photographs, and to make a further comment about them in a response to a task that is read out by the interlocutor. A prompt is given to the candidates in the form of a direct question; this is written above the photographs. Candidates are expected to point out similarities and differences between the photographs and then move on to deal with the questions, answering it with reference to both photographs.

Candidates have the opportunity to show their ability to organise their thoughts and ideas, and express themselves coherently with appropriate language. The listening candidate is also asked to comment briefly (for about 30 seconds) after their partner's long turn. They should not speak during their partner's long turn.

### Teaching tips for Speaking Part 2

- 1 Teach your students to listen carefully to the instructions and to carry them out. Remind them that they should listen carefully to the instructions which follows the words 'and say' and read the question above the photographs. If they do not do this they may miss the focus of the task and not produce a wide enough range of language, or they may find it difficult to speak for the full minute.
- 2 Students should be confident that they know what they have to say before they start their long turn. Remind your students that they will not lose marks if they ask the examiner to repeat the instructions.
- 3 Students sometimes find that a minute is quite a long time to talk. Give your students practice at talking for a minute about a given topic. Topics and visuals in coursebooks published for this exam will be appropriate for this practice. Give students plenty of practice in organising an extended turn and in linking their ideas together. Time this practice so that your students get a feel for how long a minute is. Without this, they may finish the task too quickly and as a result fail to give the examiners an adequate sample of language.
- 4 Give your students practice by cutting thematically linked pairs of photographs from magazines and giving these an additional focus as in the test. For example, you might choose photographs of two different types of holiday and ask your students to compare the photographs and say what people would enjoy about a holiday in each of the different places.
- 5 Encourage your students to bring their own photographs to class and to speak about them.
- 6 Candidates are not expected to give detailed descriptions of each picture. Rather, they are asked to compare the pictures and to give their reaction to them. Get your students to work in pairs or small groups to share ideas about what they might say, before they attempt a task.
- 7 Students often find it useful to observe a good model answer given by a more advanced learner of English or by the teacher.
- 8 Encourage your students to focus on useful language for this part of the test. In particular, ways of expressing similarity and difference may help, e.g. 'one similarity is that...'; 'in this picture there's....whereas in the other there's...' remind your students that using comparatives and linking words will produce a more extended and coherent sample of speech than simply stringing together a series of simple statements. This will help them to gain marks under the Discourse Management assessment criterion.

- 9 Play games such as *Just a Minute* where candidates have to speak for 1 minute without repeating themselves.

## Speaking Part 3: Collaborative task

*This part tests the candidates' ability to engage in a discussion and to work toward a negotiated outcome of the task set.*

In Part 3, candidates are asked to respond to a written stimulus which forms the basis for a discussion. They are given a discussion question, together with five written prompts designed to help candidates by providing ideas for their discussion. Candidates are expected to answer the question by exploring the different prompts. Candidates can choose which prompts to discuss and are not expected to discuss all five prompts in the time available but should continue their discussion until asked to stop by the interlocutor. Candidates are expected to express and justify their opinions and speculate in order to have a conversation which answers the discussion question. The interlocutor will then ask candidates a second question designed to encourage them to summarise their discussion and to work towards a negotiated decision. Candidates are not penalised if they fail to reach a negotiated decision. They are assessed on their ability to hold a conversation, turn-taking appropriately, and use the language of negotiation and collaboration while doing this.

The task is opinion based and there is no right or wrong answer. The task gives candidates the opportunity to show their range of language and their ability to invite the opinions and ideas of their partner. Candidates are expected to share the interaction in this way and to initiate and respond appropriately.

## Teaching tips for Speaking Part 3

- 1 In this part of the test the interlocutor will give candidates a question to discuss. Encourage your students to use the written prompts as fully as possible. The interlocutor will then ask a question encouraging candidates to reach a decision by agreeing or disagreeing with each other. Tell your students not to be afraid to disagree with each other politely and that they will not lose marks if they fail to reach a decision.
- 2 It is very important for candidates to interact with each other when they carry out the Part 3 task. All classroom discussion in pairs and small groups, therefore, provides excellent preparation.
- 3 Remind your students to make positive contributions to move the discussion forward. They should be encouraged to respond to each other's contributions by agreeing, disagreeing and questioning each other, rather than just giving information about the task.
- 4 In classroom activities, one student in each group could be made responsible for ensuring that every member of the group gets an equal opportunity to speak, so that the students become alerted to the importance of turn-taking.
- 5 It may also be useful to focus on accurate production of functional language likely to be useful in this type of discussion. This may include ways of managing the discussion, e.g. 'Shall we start with this one?'; 'What do you think?'; 'Shall we move on to...?'. Ways of expressing and justifying opinions, and agreeing and disagreeing (politely) are also likely to be useful.

## Speaking Part 4: Discussion

*This part tests the candidates' ability to engage in a discussion based on the topic of the collaborative task in Part 3.*

In Part 4, the interlocutor directs the interaction by asking questions which encourage the candidates to broaden and discuss further the topics introduced in Part 3. The questions differ from Part 1 in that they ask primarily for an evaluation rather than for information.

This part of the test gives candidates an opportunity to show that they are capable of discussing issues in more depth than in the earlier parts of the test.

### Teaching tips for Speaking Part 4

- 1 Encourage your students to give full answers to the questions asked. They can do this by keeping useful question words in their heads, e.g. 'Why?', 'How?', 'When?', 'Where?'. If, when answering a question, students also respond to related question words like these, they will give full contributions. For example, in response to a question following Part 3 on the subject of 'Holidays', students could be asked 'Would you like to go on a holiday like this?'. Students could answer 'yes', giving the reasons *why* they would like a particular holiday, *when* they would like to go, *where* they would go, and so on. The question 'Why?' is useful for nearly all Part 4 questions and the interlocutor will often ask this question if students fail to give more than a minimal response.
- 2 Let your students practise asking each other for their opinions on everyday situations and current events, and encourage them to give full answers to the questions asked in the way suggested above.
- 3 Candidates may be asked individual questions, but they may also be asked to involve their partner in the discussion. Therefore, as with Part 3, classroom discussions in pairs and small groups provide excellent preparation.
- 4 In order to raise awareness of the types of questions asked and of effective ways of answering them, it may be helpful to give pairs of students different topics and to ask each pair to think of six discussion questions for their topic. These sets of questions could then be exchanged by the different pairs of students and discussed.
- 5 Remind your students that there are no right answers to the questions and candidates will not be judged on their opinions, only on the language they use to express their opinions. It is quite acceptable for candidates to admit to not knowing much about a particular question, but they should be taught to expand on their views wherever possible and should be discouraged from making responses such as 'I don't know', 'I'm not sure' or 'I haven't thought about that'.