

B2 First Speaking Part 1

Teacher's notes

Aims of the lesson	to give students an overview of Part 1 of the B2 First Speaking paper, the topic areas and types of questions they may be asked, as well as introducing some strategies they can use
Time needed	40–60 minutes
Materials required	extra Part 1 questions from any past paper or the B2 First handbook

Procedure

1. Tell your students that you are going to look at Part 1 of the Speaking test (Paper 4). Briefly, elicit/tell them that it is known as the interview section. Ask them what they know about Part 1 of the Speaking test.
2. Give students the worksheet and ask them to discuss Exercise 1 in pairs/small groups.
3. Check answers in full class.
4. Get students to discuss in pairs/small groups the types of topics they think they may be asked to talk about in Part 1. Monitor, but don't offer any feedback yet.
5. Write their ideas on the board or on an OHT. Students often think that 'giving personal information' consists of giving their name and nationality and little other information, so don't worry if there aren't many ideas at this stage.
6. Ask students to refer to Exercise 2 of the worksheet and to, firstly, expand the skeleton questions into full questions, and then tick the questions they think they may be asked in the exam and cross the ones which they think they will not be asked.
7. Go through the answers in full class.
8. Now ask students to look at the topic areas for the interview and ask them to match each question to the relevant topic area. Point out that some of the questions can go in more than one category.
9. Check answers. Stress that in the Speaking test candidates will not be asked the same questions as the ones listed here. It is also unlikely that they will be required to answer a question from each topic area.

Optional extension: you could give or elicit more questions from the topic areas that your students aren't clear about, or from the areas where there is no skeleton question. See the B2 First handbook for examples.

10. Students take turns to ask and answer the questions. Monitor, paying attention to the length of responses. Good candidates expand briefly on their answers, giving one or two additional pieces of information. One word answers are unsuitable, as are long ‘rambles’. You could invite students to ask you two or three questions and give answers that are either too short, suitable or too long. Then discuss which they think was the best and why. You could also ask more confident students questions in front of the class. It would also be a good idea to prepare some more questions for them to answer, such as those found in the B2 First handbook.

11. To check students have retained the information given, read the following statements out to your class. Students must decide if they are true or false.

- You should prepare long responses in advance. (F)
- You should give as short an answer as possible. (F)
- You can ask for clarification if you don’t understand something. (T)
- You must talk to your partner. (F)
- Each candidate is given an equal number of chances to talk. (T)
- You only need to speak about your home and family in Part 1. (F)

Students could call out “True”/“False” after each statement; they could write “True”/“False” on either side of a piece of paper and hold it up after each statement; they could raise either their right hand (True) or their left hand (False) after each statement. The last two ideas are a good way of checking understanding, as every student must participate.

B2 First Paper 4 Part 1—answer keys

Key to Exercise 1: True/False

- a) **True** – Although candidates are not actively invited to interact with each other at this stage, they may if they wish and so should listen carefully to their partner’s answers.
- b) **False** – At no stage of the Speaking test are candidates given a copy of the questions.
- c) **True** – Note: 5 minutes for groups of three.
- d) **True** – The activities following this exercise deal with the topic areas and types of questions candidates will be asked in Part 1.
- e) **False** – Past, Present *and* Future circumstances can be tested.

- f) **False** – Candidates need to extend their answers beyond the minimum. Assessment begins as soon as the candidates introduce themselves, and Part 1 is when examiners get their first impressions of the candidates. One word answers are not usually adequate and candidates will lose marks for Interactive Communication if they give limited responses. Equally, candidates should not prepare long responses in advance. If a candidate does this, it often means that they don't answer the question appropriately. It is also not effective Interactive Communication and examiners spot it easily. It is much better for students to have as much practice as possible talking about themselves and their lives with different people and different focuses, so that they feel more confident.
- g) **True** – Candidates will be asked roughly the same number of questions, but not necessarily the same questions. Candidates need to pay careful attention to the question they are asked and make sure they answer it appropriately. In this part of the test, the interlocutor leads the discussion so candidates don't need to worry about turn-taking.
- h) **False** – Candidates must attempt to answer every question they are asked. They can ask for clarification if they don't hear or understand something and the interlocutor will repeat it. No marks are lost for asking for clarification, so make sure that your students know this and that they have the appropriate strategies for requesting clarification. Tell students that they **should** ask for clarification, if they have any difficulties understanding a question, before starting to answer. However, they will get no marks for silence (if they are afraid to admit that they haven't understood) and may lose marks for Interactive Communication if they answer a question inappropriately.

Exercise 2: Skeleton Questions

1. Where are you from?
2. How old are you?
3. What do you like about living here?
4. What is your favourite colour?
5. Do you prefer to spend more time on your own or with other people?
6. Do you enjoy playing computer games?
7. What is your favourite part of the day?
8. Are you married?
9. Do you find it easy to study where you live?
10. What sort of music do you listen to?
11. Where would you like to go on holiday in the future?
12. How much TV do you watch in a/per week?

All the questions could be asked in the exam apart from **2, 4** and **8**. Part 1 tests general interactional and social language, and requires students to offer basic personal information.

N.B. None of these questions have follow-up questions, but in the examination many questions do have follow-ups.

Exercise 4: Topic areas

Likes and Dislikes: Questions **3, 5, 7, 10**

Education and Work: **9**

Free time: **6, 10** Holidays

and Travel: **11** Media: **12**

Personal Experience: **1, 3, 7**

Daily Life: **3**

Science and Technology: **6**

Additional information

The interlocutor won't respond to what candidates say in Part 1, but will interrupt candidates if they give long, prepared answers.

B2 First Speaking Part 1 Activity- Student's Worksheet

1. How much do you know about Part 1 of the Speaking test? Look at the statements below and decide if they are True or False:

In Part 1...

- | | |
|--|-----|
| a) the interlocutor asks you questions which you answer individually. | T/F |
| b) you are given a copy of the interlocutor's questions. | T/F |
| c) the part lasts approximately 3 minutes. | T/F |
| d) you are tested on your ability to give personal information about yourself. | T/F |
| e) you only need to talk about past and present circumstances. | T/F |
| f) you should keep your answers as short as possible. | T/F |
| g) you and your partner are given the same number of questions to answer. | T/F |
| h) if you don't hear or understand a question properly, you don't need to answer it. | T/F |

2. Rewrite the question prompts below, making full questions. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Where/you from? Where are you from?
2. How old/you?
3. What/like/living here?
4. What/favourite colour?
5. Do/prefer/spend more time/own/other people?
6. Do/playing computer games?
7. What/favourite part/day?
8. Are/married?
9. Do/find/easy/study/where/live?
10. What sort/music/listen to?
11. Where/like/go/holiday/future?
12. How much TV/watch/week?

3. With another student, decide which questions you think you might be asked in Part 1 of the B2 First Speaking exam. Put a tick next to the questions you think you will be asked and a cross next to those you don't think you will be asked.

Now check your answers with your teacher.

4. In Part 1 of the Speaking test, you will be asked questions on the following areas:

Likes and dislikes

Education and work

Free time

Holidays and travel

Media

Personal experience

Daily life

Science and technology

Can you match each of the questions in the box in Exercise 2 to the categories above?

5. Now practise asking and answering the questions with another student. Remember to expand on your answers.