

Lesson plan: Introduction to the B2 First for Schools Speaking paper

Time required: 90 minutes. This plan can be done over two lessons, or in one lesson by taking out some of the activities.

- Materials:**
- **Learn English with Cambridge YouTube video: 5 tips for preparing for Cambridge Speaking exams**
 - **Student Worksheet 1** and **Student Worksheet 2** – one copy per learner
 - **Descriptions: Speaking Parts 1 to 4** – one set, cut up, per group of three or four
 - **Example questions: Speaking Parts 1 to 4** – one copy per learner
 - **Backs to the Board Teacher instructions**
 - **Speak! Speak! Speak! Teacher instructions**
 - **Useful phrases to learn and use for Part 3** – one copy per learner/pair
 - **Answer key**

- Aims:**
- To help learners get to know the four parts of the Speaking paper
 - To encourage learners to reflect on their strengths and areas to work on to prepare for the Speaking paper
 - To highlight useful study tools, resources and strategies to help learners prepare for the Speaking paper

Procedure

Lesson Stages

Warm-up: to get learners thinking about ways to improve their speaking skills and to introduce the lesson topic which is trying out useful tips for the Speaking paper.

Ask learners: *What ideas can you think of to help you prepare for your Speaking exam?*

Put learners into groups and give them two minutes to brainstorm ideas. To get them started you could offer the following as prompts:

- take an English class
- practise with friends or family who are also learning or speak English

Feedback: Write the learners' ideas on the board. There are no right or wrong answers at this stage. Tell learners that in this lesson they are going to watch a short video called *5 tips for preparing for Cambridge Speaking exams* from the Learn English with Cambridge YouTube channel.

Important! Keep their ideas on the board as they will refer to these in the next stage.

Online options: If your online teaching platform has a chat function, ask learners to brainstorm their ideas in the chat box.

Watch the Learn English with Cambridge video: 5 tips for preparing for Cambridge Speaking exams

This gives learners some further useful tips to help them prepare for the Speaking paper and provides integrated listening skills practice.

Set the following listening task:

- 1) Watch and listen to the video and see which of your ideas (from the warm-up stage) are mentioned.
- 2) Make a note of any other ideas that Jiri mentions in the video.

Play the video (5:38 mins): **5 tips for preparing for Cambridge Speaking exams**

Feedback: Give learners the chance to compare their answers in pairs. Now handout **Student worksheet 1** and ask learners to check their answers by comparing their ideas with the summary on their worksheet.

Exercise 1 Learners work in pairs and discuss the question *Which tip do you think would be most useful for you? Why?*

Feedback: Find out the most popular answers e.g., by getting learners to raise their hands.

Tell learners that in this lesson they are going to try some of the tips from the video.

Online options: give learners the link to the video so they can watch again after the lesson and explore the other useful videos in our Learn English with Cambridge YouTube channel.

If your online teaching platform has a polling tool, this would be a good way to see which strategy learners think is most useful for them. You can also access a free polling tool at [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com).

Tip 1: Know the exam format: to give learners an overview of the format of the Speaking paper so they know what to expect on exam day.

Student worksheet 1 Exercise 2 can be done in open class. Ask the learners to look at the picture and point to the candidates and examiners. Check their understanding of the words *candidates* and *examiners* by asking: *Who asks the questions: the candidates or the examiners? Who answers the questions?*

Now, to familiarise learners with the format of the Speaking paper, learners do a matching task followed by a Backs to the Board game.

You will need to cut up a set of **Descriptions: Speaking Parts 1 to 4** for each group. Each learner has a copy of **Example questions: Speaking Parts 1 to 4**.

Divide your class into groups of three or four. Give learners a few minutes to read, discuss and match each description to the example questions.

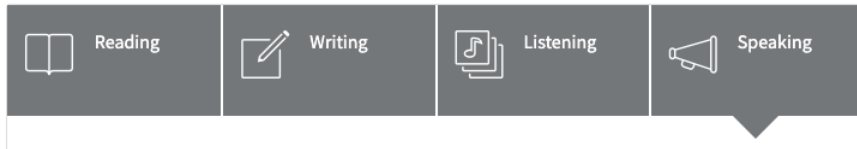
Feedback: Check the answers with the class. See **Answer key**.

Click here for Backs to the Board game Teacher instructions.

Feedback: Find out how your learners feel about each part of the Speaking paper. Ask them to raise their hands if they feel most confident about Part 1, 2, 3 or 4. Ask learners to share their reasons and to discuss their thoughts about the other parts of the Speaking paper.

You might want to try using this information to help you decide which part of the paper to focus on in the next stage. Giving learners some choice in the content of the lesson can be very motivating for them.

Online options: Share this link to the **Cambridge English website** with your learners and ask them to scroll down to the image as shown below and to select Speaking.



Create slides showing each of the example questions in a mixed-up order. Remember to blank out which part of the Speaking exam the example question is from.

Show the questions one by one and ask learners to read the information about the test on the website quickly to decide which part matches the question. Give them a chance to compare their ideas in breakout rooms if possible and then check the answers as a class.

Use the polling tool on your online platform or at [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com) to take a class vote on which part of the Speaking paper the learners think is most challenging.

Tip 2: Speak! Speak! Speak! to help learners practise speaking fluency and build their confidence, before reflecting on what they need to continue to work on.

Refer learners to Tip 2 on **Student worksheet 1**. Tell them they should take every opportunity to practise speaking in English as it will improve their fluency, accuracy and confidence.

Explain that they are now going to practise speaking with just **one** of the parts of the Speaking paper. You can use **Example questions: Speaking parts 1 to 4** for this section. If you have a longer lesson and more time, you could practise more than one part of the Speaking paper.

You need the **Speak! Speak! Speak! Teacher instructions**. Choose *either* Part 1, 2, 3 or 4 from the example questions to practise in the lesson. If you have a longer lesson, you could practise more than one part of the Speaking paper.

The **Speak! Speak! Speak! Teacher Instructions** show you how to approach teaching each part of the Speaking paper so that learners can practise speaking as they prepare for their exam.

Online options: If appropriate in your teaching context, learners should work in breakout rooms. If this is not possible, learners could practise responding to the questions in Parts 1, 2 or 4 individually and record their answers using free apps such as Easy Voice Recorder or an online collaboration tool that allows audio recording such as **Padlet**. These recordings can be uploaded or shared with you and their classmates for peer or teacher feedback.

Reflect on speaking practice: to allow learners to reflect on what they did well, and what they think they need to work on with the part/s they practised.

You will need a copy of **Student Worksheet 2**.

Ask learners to focus on **Exercise 3** and read the list of suggestions. They should mark each item **E** for **Easy** or **C** for **Challenging** and can also add their own ideas. Give them a minute to compare their answers in small groups. If other learners in their group find something challenging that they find easy, they could offer advice.

Monitor and see if there are any common areas that learners find challenging – this can help you to plan for the rest of your course.

Feedback: Find out if anyone added other things to the list and ask the class to share what they found most challenging. Reassure learners that it's OK to find some things challenging at this stage. Now, they are going to look at some ways they can improve.

Tip 3: Establish a routine that works for you: to help learners set S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) learning goals.

Remind the learners of the tip from the video that the important thing is to practise regularly and to practise well. Draw learners' attention to the Weekly speaking practice schedule in **Student Worksheet 2 Exercise 4** and the examples that have been filled in.

Give the learners time to fill out their own schedule. Monitor and give individual feedback – encourage them to be realistic and specific e.g. will they really have time to do an hour of practice exercises each day? Do they think five minutes a week is going to be enough?

You can also suggest useful resources that are available in your school e.g. materials in your student coursebook if you are using one, access to books of practice tests etc. If you use a learning platform such as Google classroom with your learners, you can share worksheets and resources with them digitally.

To make sure learners do what they say they are going to do, tell them that they need to be prepared at the end of each week to share what they did with the class e.g. which exercises they tried, which topics they practised and anything useful that they learned.

Homework options

- Learners choose one of the example questions and record themselves answering it using a mobile app such as Easy Voice Recorder. If access to technology is an issue for learners in your class, an alternative is to ask learners to write out a script or notes of what they would say.
- You can access two additional sample papers **here** if you would prefer to choose an alternative question for learners to practise at home.
- Learners can complete a Speaking self-study lesson to help them practise Speaking Part 2 **here**.

Don't forget to allocate time at the end of the week for learners to discuss what and how they practised their speaking.

Descriptions: Speaking Parts 1 to 4

Cut up and distribute one set of cards to each group. Match the descriptions to the **example questions**.

- The examiner asks questions about the candidates' lives. For example, about school, leisure time and future plans.
- Candidates answer their questions individually.
- This part of the test takes two minutes (or three minutes with three candidates).

- Each candidate is asked to compare two photographs and answer a question about them. Each candidate talks for one minute. The question is also written above the photographs.
- The other candidate is asked to comment for about 30 seconds after their partner speaks, so must listen carefully. They should not speak during their partner's turn.
- The total time for this part is four minutes (six minutes for three candidates).

- This is a question with five ideas to discuss. Candidates have two minutes to discuss the ideas **together**.
- Candidates are not expected to discuss all five ideas in this time – continue until the examiner asks you to stop.
- You then have one minute to complete a decision-making task together related to the ideas. The total time for this part is four minutes (five minutes for three candidates).

- The examiner asks questions which encourage both candidates to discuss the topics introduced in Part 3 some more.
- You may be asked if you agree or disagree with your partner so you must listen carefully.
- The total time for this part is four minutes (six minutes for three candidates).



English Qualifications

Example questions: Speaking Parts 1 to 4

These questions are taken from **Sample paper 1** which can also be downloaded in full [here](#).

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Part 1

First we'd like to know something about you.

Select one or more questions from any of the following categories, as appropriate.

People you know

- Who are you most like in your family? Tell us about him/her.
- Do you have a best friend? (What do you like about him/her?)
- Who do you spend time with after school? (What do you do together?)
- Tell us about a good teacher you've had.

Things you like

- What's your favourite subject at school? (Why do you like it?)
- Do you like reading? (What do you like to read?) (Why?)
- Do you enjoy using the internet in your free time? (Why? / Why not?)
- Tell us about the things you like doing at the weekend.

Part 2

Interlocutor

In this part of the test, I'm going to give each of you two photographs. I'd like you to talk about your photographs on your own for about a minute, and also to answer a question about your partner's photographs.

(Candidate A), it's your turn first. Here are your photographs. They show **people trying to win in different situations**.

Place **Part 2** booklet, open at **Task 1**, in front of Candidate A.

I'd like you to compare the photographs, and say **what you think might be difficult for the people about trying to win in these situations**.

What might be difficult for the people about trying to win in these situations?



Part 3

Interlocutor Now, I'd like you to talk about something together for about two minutes (*3 minutes for groups of three*).

I'd like you to imagine that a school is going to start some after-school classes to encourage their students to learn new skills. Here are some ideas for the classes and a question for you to discuss. First you have some time to look at the task.

Place Part 3 booklet, open at Task 21, in front of the candidates. Allow 15 seconds.

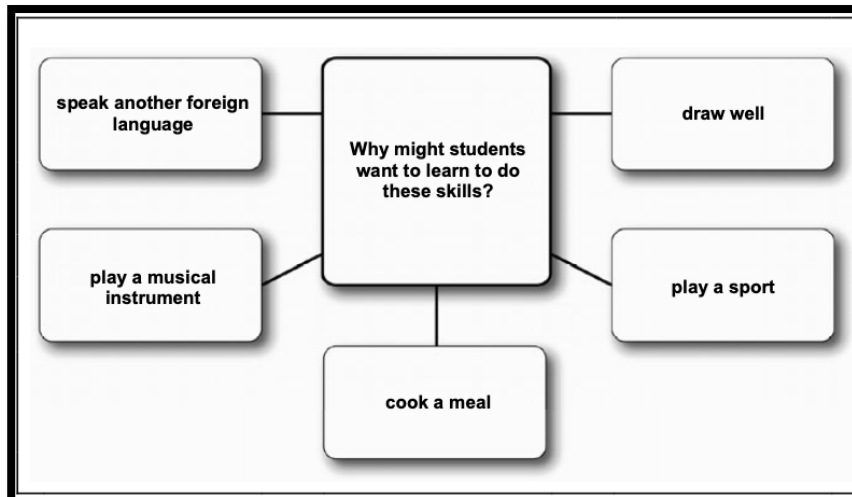
Now, talk to each other about **why students might want to learn to do these skills**.

Candidates

🕒 2 minutes
(3 minutes for groups of three)

.....

Interlocutor Thank you. Now you have about a minute to decide **which two would be the easiest to learn to do well?**



Part 4

Interlocutor Use the following questions, in order, as appropriate:

- Do you think classes like these would be popular with students? (Why? / Why not?)
- How important do you think it is for people to try new activities? (Why?)
- Why do you think some people don't like to try new things?
- A lot of people enjoy doing sport after school. Do you think this is a good thing? (Why? / Why not?)
- What do students enjoy doing after school in (candidate's country)? (Why?)
- Do you think it's better to go out and do things after school or is it better to stay at home? (Why?)

Select any of the following prompts, as appropriate:

- What do you think?
- Do you agree?
- And you?

Backs to the Board game: Teacher instructions

Set up

Divide the class into two teams. Ask for a volunteer from each team. The volunteers stand at the front with their backs to the board, so they can't see what the teacher writes on it.



Explain the rules:

- Each team has to try and help the learner from their team who has their back to the board to guess which part of the Speaking paper the teacher writes on the board behind them.
- The learner at the board can only ask their team Yes/No questions to help them guess. For example: *Do I need to talk for a minute?* or *Do I discuss something with my partner?*
- If teams are not sure of the answer to the questions they are asked, they can refer to their example questions to help them find the answers
- The learner at the board can't ask *Is it Part 3?* The rule is to work out the answer by asking questions about the exam, for example *I think it's Part 3 because ...*
- The first learner with their back to the board who correctly guesses the part written on the board, wins the point for their team.

Activity

The game can be played for several rounds with different volunteers. The level of challenge can be increased by:

- asking the teams to share what else they can remember about each part of the paper for extra points.
- learners with their backs to the board not being able to refer to the example questions. How much do they know about each part of the exam?

Extra support: learners with their backs to the board can refer to the example questions to help them plan their questions, and to decide which part of the Speaking exam is written on the board.

Feedback

Congratulate and reward the winning team – this can be with something as simple as a round of applause from the class.

Speak! Speak! Speak! Teacher Instructions

Choose *either* Part 1, 2, 3 or 4 from the example questions to practise in the lesson. If you have a longer lesson, you could practise more than one part of the Speaking paper.

Part 1

Step 1: Give each learner a copy of Part 1 from the example questions. If your learners are able to mingle, ask them to stand up. Tell them they are going to work with different partners and take turns to ask and answer the first set of questions: People you know. After one minute, you shout 'change' and they move to a new partner where they ask and answer the other set of questions: Things you like.

Learners should have the chance to answer at least one set of questions twice.

Monitor discreetly.

Step 2: Now, give them some feedback on their performance. You could consider the following areas:

- Are their answers too long, too short or just right? Remember that candidates do not need to talk at length in Part 1. Suggest that they answer the question and then add one or two pieces of extra information.

Example: *I'm most like my mum – we look very similar and we both love reading.*

- Are they struggling to think of an answer on the spot?
 - Reassure learners that this is OK at this stage and remind them that a good way to practise is to try and answer the same questions more than once.
 - You could also remind them of the phrase: *Let me think about that for a moment.* This will give them some thinking time.
 - Learners sometimes don't realise it's OK to give negative answers if a question doesn't really apply to them e.g. *Actually, I don't really like reading at all, I prefer...*

Step 3: Learners repeat the activity with new partners and try to incorporate some of your feedback.

Step 4: Give some feedback on good language use and comment on any improvements made between Step 1 and Step 3.

Part 2

This activity focuses on learners talking on their own for one minute which can feel challenging.

It's a good idea to give learners some thinking time and the chance to brainstorm ideas together before they attempt the task. This will help build confidence.

Step 1: Give each learner a copy of Part 2 from the example questions. Put learners into pairs to brainstorm their ideas about the two pictures in the Part 2 example question. They should:

- think about comparing the set of pictures e.g. how they are similar *and* how they are different

- think of some ways to answer the question: *What might be difficult for these people about trying to win in this situation?*

Monitor and note any phrases they use for comparing/contrasting on the board.

Feedback: When learners have finished, ask the class if they can think of any more phrases or grammatical structures for comparing and contrasting so that you have a good selection useful language on the board. Examples might include: comparatives and superlatives and expressions like: *the same as, different from and similar to, in picture A...whereas in picture B...*

Nominate different pairs to share some of their ideas about how to answer the question with the whole class. There are many possible answers here e.g. having an audience cheering you on, the age of the competitors, how much practice or training they've had, their physical fitness etc.

Step 3: Set a timer for one minute. Give each learner the chance to talk about the pictures for a minute. Monitor discreetly as they speak and make notes on some good use of grammar, vocabulary, linking words, expressions for comparing etc.

Step 4: After each learner has had a go, put them into groups of four to discuss these questions:

- What did you find easy/difficult?
- Which speaking tips from the video and Student Worksheet 1 might help you to improve your speaking skills for Part 2?
- Do you have any other ideas of how you could practise this type of question?

Feedback: Write some examples of any good language use you heard on the board for the class to note down. Ask some learners to share which strategies they would use and why. A good example answer here would be recording yourself talking for a minute on different topics.

Part 3

Candidates usually find managing the conversation with a partner quite challenging at first, so the matching activity, **Useful phrases to learn and use for Part 3**, aims to give learners some useful language they can use before they start speaking together and discussing the question.

Step 1: Give each learner a copy of **Useful phrases to learn and use for Part 3**. Ask them to match the phrases to their uses and then compare their answers with their partner.

Feedback: See **Answer key**

Step 2: Now give each pair a copy of Part 3 from the example questions. Ask learners to work together to brainstorm their ideas next to each prompt. They should try to add two or three ideas for each one.

Example: *Speak another foreign language: can be useful in many jobs, for travel in the future, to read books, play games or watch TV in that language.*

Step 3: Put each pair together with another pair to create groups of four. One pair will be observers and the other pair will answer the question. Tell learners they have two minutes to answer the question. The observers should listen and tick any of the useful phrases from the matching activity that they hear. The pairs then swap roles.

Monitor as they do the task and listen out for good examples of vocabulary and grammatical structures to highlight in feedback.

Feedback: Ask learners how many of the useful phrases they managed to use and how many ideas they spoke about. Remind them it's OK if they didn't speak about all the ideas. Write some of the good examples of language you heard on the board, and give learners time to copy it into their notebooks.

Step 4: Finally, set the second part of the question: *You have a minute to decide which two would be easiest to do well.* As in Step 3, learners can work in groups of four so they can observe each other.

Set a one-minute time limit and remind learners to keep the phrases in front of them so they can try and use them.

Feedback: Nominate two or three learners to share what they decided and give general feedback on good language use and errors for correction that you picked up while monitoring.

Part 4

Part 4 is directly related to Part 3, so it works best if you have time to practise both parts together, by following on with Part 4 after you have completed the feedback stage for Part 3.

Give learners a copy of Part 4 from the example questions.

Allow the learners to discuss the questions in larger groups. It helps to give them some thinking time first so that they feel prepared to give their opinions on these kinds of topics.

Feedback: Nominate learners to share an example answer to each question with the class. Highlight examples of good language use and errors for correction.

Useful phrases to learn and use for Part 3

Match the phrases (1 to 8) with their uses (a to f). Some uses match with more than one phrase.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) Agreeing with your partner | 1. Shall we start with...? |
| b) Suggest an idea to start the discussion. | 2. That's an interesting idea but... |
| c) A polite way to disagree with your partner | 3. What do you think about...? |
| d) Ask for your partner's opinion | 4. Do you think that...? |
| e) Give a reason for your opinion | 5. Yes, that's true. |
| f) Give your opinion | 6. Yes, I agree. |
| | 7. I think X might be a better idea because... |
| | 8. The way I see it... |

Student worksheet 1

Summary of ideas in the 5 tips for preparing for Cambridge Speaking exams video:

<p>Tip 1: Know the format</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out more on the Exam preparation website • Read the B2 First Information for Candidates booklet • Watch Jiri's new video about the exam format
<p>Tip 2: Speak! Speak! Speak!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a speaking buddy and have regular chats in English • Think of useful topics to talk about • Speak to yourself • Record yourself, listen back and think about what you need to improve • Talk about the same topic more than once
<p>Tip 3: Establish routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set fixed times to practise • Find a place to study where you feel comfortable • Set realistic and measurable goals • Practising regularly and well is more important than practising for long periods of time
<p>Tip 4: Cultivate a positive mindset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualise your success • Develop a growth mindset – remember you learn every time you practise!
<p>Tip 5: Master useful expressions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have some useful phrases in your bag

Exercise 1

Which tip do you think would be most useful for you? Why? Compare your answer with your partner.

Tip 1: Know the exam format

Exercise 2

Look at the picture from the **B2 First for Schools Speaking test video**. How many examiners are there? How many candidates are there?



Student worksheet 2

Tip 2: Speak! Speak! Speak!

Exercise 3

Think about what you found easy or challenging about the speaking questions you tried. Choose from the list below and add your own ideas too. Write **E** for **E**asy or **C** for **C**hallenging.

- thinking of ideas quickly enough
- talking for enough time
- pronouncing clearly so my partner could understand me
- using simple grammar accurately
- using simple vocabulary accurately
- using more complex grammar and vocabulary
- discussing the ideas and reaching a decision with my partner (Part 3 only)
- *your own ideas*
- ...



Now compare your answers with your partner. Share your reasons for each answer. Did you find the same things easy or challenging?

Tip 3: Establish routines

Exercise 4

Make a weekly speaking practice schedule in your notebook, here is an example:

Weekly speaking practice schedule (example)						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<i>Do one pronunciation exercise on the Cambridge English website.</i>	<i>Do one grammar exercise on the Cambridge English website.</i>	<i>Do one vocabulary exercise on the Cambridge English website.</i>	<i>Decide topic to talk about with study buddy on Saturday.</i>	<i>Look up some useful words for discussion with study buddy.</i>	<i>Meet my study buddy to speak in English for at least 30 minutes.</i>	

You can use ideas from the video on Student Worksheet 1, the three ideas shown below, and your own ideas to complete your Weekly speaking practice schedule:

1. To find out more about the exam format, you could watch a **Speaking Test video** on the Cambridge English YouTube channel.
2. Choose a topic to talk about by yourself. Use a timer and try to talk for a minute. If you get stuck for a word, look it up and try again. Repeat this with the same topic later in the week too: repetition helps your memory and confidence!
3. The **Cambridge English website** has lots of **free online activities** to help you work on your grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation and find new phrases to 'put in your bag.'

Answer key

Matching task

Part 1

- The examiner asks questions about the candidates' lives, for example, about school, leisure time and future plans.
- Candidates answer their questions individually.
- This part of the test takes two minutes (or three minutes with three candidates).

Part 2

- Each candidate is asked to compare two photographs and answer a question about them. Each candidate talks for one minute. The question is also written above the photographs.
- The other candidate is asked to comment for about 30 seconds after their partner speaks, so must listen carefully. They should not speak during their partner's turn.
- The total time for this part is four minutes (six minutes for three candidates).

Part 3

- This is a question with five ideas to discuss. Candidates have two minutes to discuss the ideas **together**.
- Candidates are not expected to discuss all five ideas in this time – continue until the examiner asks you to stop.
- You then have one minute to complete a decision-making task together related to the ideas. The total time for this part is four minutes (five minutes for three candidates).

Part 4

- The examiner asks questions which encourage both candidates to discuss the topics introduced in Part 3 some more.
- You may be asked if you agree or disagree with your partner so must listen carefully.
- The total time for this part is four minutes (six minutes for three candidates).

Useful phrases to learn and use for Part 3

a. 5 and 6; b. 1; c. 2; d. 3 and 4; e. 7; f. 8