



## BEC Preliminary Speaking Overview – Teacher's Notes

### Description

Students complete a set of notes about the Speaking test using information from a table. They also read some facts and advice about the test and decide which are right and which are wrong. The activity finishes with a brief discussion on opportunities to speak in English.

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**Time required:** 15 minutes

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**Materials required:**

- *Student's Worksheet* (one per student)

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**Aims:**

- *to familiarise students with the structure of the Speaking test*
- *to make clear to students what's expected of them*

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### Procedure

1. Ask students about their experience of speaking English – who they've spoken to, whether face to face or by phone, why they've spoken to that person [e.g. to book a hotel room, to chat], whether it's easier to speak in some situations than in others and why.
2. Ask if they've taken any Speaking tests before (e.g. as part of school exams or in other international exams), and if so, ask about their experiences.
3. Tell students that you are going to focus on the BEC Preliminary Speaking test. Give each student a copy of the **Student's Worksheet**. Explain that Exercise 1 focuses on the main facts about the test, and ask them, in pairs, to complete the exercise with information from the General Description on page 2.
4. Check their answers [see **Key to Student's Worksheet**].
5. Tell them that Exercise 2 gives some more facts and some advice about the Speaking test. Elicit the answers from the class [see **Key to Student's Worksheet**].
6. Point out that the test is an opportunity to show how well they can have a conversation in English, and encourage them to speak English as often as possible. Ask them how they can create opportunities to speak English [e.g. only speaking English in the classroom, speaking to each other in English outside class, phoning customers or suppliers who don't speak the student's own language, etc.].



**BEC Preliminary Speaking Overview activity – Answer Keys**

**Key to Student's Worksheet Exercise 1**

1. 2 (If there is an odd number of candidates, there will be one group of three.)
2. 12 (If there are three candidates, the test will last about 14 minutes.)
3. 2
4. 2
5. interests, job, studies
6. 5
7. 2
8. important
9. 3
10. 1 minute
11. 1 minute
12. 5
13. situation
14. pictures, words. (For example, if the candidates are asked to decide on the best three ways of advertising a new product, they will be given either a list or pictures of several forms of advertising.)
15. situation

**Key to Student's Worksheet Exercise 2**

1. B. (This allows you to use your English in various ways, just as in real life.)
2. A. (Candidates with no experience of business may communicate effectively. It's an English language test, not a business test.)
3. B (Grammatical accuracy is part of one criteria which candidates are assessed on – Grammar and Vocabulary. There are four criteria in total.)
4. A. (It's better to speak, otherwise your speaking can't be assessed. And it's possible to communicate effectively, even with some mistakes.)
5. A. (You need to listen to the examiner to answer questions and follow instructions; you need to listen to the other candidate to take part in the discussion.)
6. A (The assessment criteria Grammar and Vocabulary refers to range and accuracy as well as appropriate use of grammatical and lexical forms. It doesn't matter if candidates make mistakes, as long as the errors don't obscure communication.)
7. B (Pronunciation is another of the four criteria which candidates are assessed on. They need to be comprehensible.)



**BEC Preliminary Speaking Overview – Student’s Worksheet**

**Exercise 1**

**Facts about the Speaking test**

Fill in each gap with a word or number from the table on the next page.

**General**

- 1 Usual number of candidates: .....
- 2 Usual length of test: ..... minutes
- 3 Number of examiners: .....  
(one talks to the candidates, the other listens without joining in)

**Part 1 – Conversation**

- 4 Usual length of Part 1: about ..... minutes
- 5 Includes questions about the candidates’ ..... , ..... or .....

**Part 2 – Mini-presentation**

- 6 Usual length of Part 2: about ..... minutes
- 7 The candidate chooses between ..... business-related topics.
- 8 The topic always begins ‘What is ..... when...?’
- 9 The candidate is given ..... ideas related to the topic.
- 10 The candidate can spend about ..... thinking about the topic before talking.
- 11 Each candidate’s mini-presentation lasts about .....

**Part 3 – Discussion with the other candidate(s)**

- 12 Usual length of Part 3: about ..... minutes
- 13 The examiner describes a business ..... which the candidates discuss.
- 14 They are given some ..... or ..... to help them in the discussion.
- 15 The examiner will then ask questions connected with the same .....



General description of the Speaking test			
Timing:	12 minutes		
Interaction pattern:	Two candidates and two examiners. One examiner talks to the candidates. The other listens and does not join in.		
Format			
Part 1	Conversation	About 2 minutes	The examiner asks each candidate about their interests, job or studies.
Part 2	'Mini-presentation'	About 5 minutes	Each candidate is given a paper with two business-related topics on it, each with three related ideas to talk about. Each candidate chooses one, and has about a minute to plan a mini-presentation, and a minute to talk. The topics always begin 'What is important when ... ?'
Part 3	Discussion	About 5 minutes	The examiner describes a situation for the candidates to discuss, and gives them some pictures or words to help them. After the discussion the examiner asks further spoken questions related to the situation.

## Exercise 2

### Facts and advice about the Speaking test

Choose the better option, A or B, in each pair.

- A. The candidates answer questions from the examiner throughout the test.

B. The candidates answer questions, give a short talk and have a conversation.
- A. The mark is based on your ability to use English in a business situation.

B. The mark is based on your knowledge of business.
- A. The mark is based on how accurate your grammar is.

B. The mark is based on how effectively you communicate.
- A. It is best to speak, even if you make mistakes.

B. It is best to say nothing and make no mistakes.
- A. You need to listen to the examiner and the other candidate.

B. You don't need to listen to the examiner and the other candidate.
- A. You should try to use a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

B. You should only use simple vocabulary and grammatical structures that you know are right.
- A. Your pronunciation isn't important.

B. Your pronunciation needs to be easy to understand.