OALD10 iSpeaker: specification

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1 Overview of requirements

The iSpeaker forms part of the OALD10 premium online offer, and is designed to help learners with different aspects of speaking in English, from pronunciation of individual sounds to the types of longer turn-taking required for oral exams. There are video and audio assets and opportunities for learners to practise their own pronunciation and speaking. It covers both British and American spoken English.

As with the iWriter, the iSpeaker needs updating for OALD10. Originally created in 2014, it is in need of a complete overhaul. Some content will remain the same, and many video and audio assets will be re-used. However, the overall look-and-feel, and many of the user interactions, will be revised. Some of the video assets will also be replaced, and practice activities changed. This will modernize the whole application and simplify the user tasks.

Like the iWriter, the iSpeaker will be hosted on the *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* website, and will be accessible only to users with an active licence to OALD Premium. As such, no advertisements will appear on the page. Look-and-feel, and interaction patterns, should be consistent across the whole platform, so that Text Checker/iWriter/iSpeaker feel like a family of applications.

OUP has created a prototype of the new iSpeaker to work through some aspects of the design, navigation and content. Links to prototype pages are included throughout this document where relevant. Please note, though, that there are some aspects of the prototype which are out of date. Where the prototype is not exactly correct, this is noted in this document. Links to prototype pages are still included as an extra guide for the development.

The existing iSpeaker may be another point of reference. This can be accessed on the *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* website at the following URL when logged in as a premium user (active licence required):

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/ispeaker/

2 iSpeaker components

The new iSpeaker will be made up of the following components, similar to the old version but without the 'Exercises' section:

- Home (page)
- Sounds (section)
- Conversations (section)
- Exam Speaking (section)

The home page will be the landing page, allowing access to all the other sections. It is expected that the home page will be at the same URL as the old iSpeaker (i.e. [base-url]/ispeaker/).

The three iSpeaker sections should each have their own URL, allowing users to bookmark individual sections if they wish and to allow for better analytics to see which sections are most used. The

following URLs could be used for the three sections, and if bookmarked the link will open the relevant section menu page (see below for further details):

- [base-url]/ispeaker/sounds
- [base-url]/ispeaker/conversations
- [base-url]/ispeaker/exam-speaking

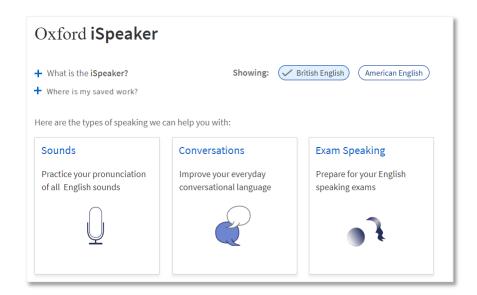
A specification for the home page, and all three sections, is below.

3 iSpeaker home

URL: [base-url]/ispeaker/

Users will usually start at the iSpeaker home page, as links to this page will be embedded all around the site and used in other promotional materials. OUP will supply all content for this page (text + images).

Please see screenshot below for a visual mock-up of the new home page of the iSpeaker (desktop layout). A link to the prototype page is also included below, but please note that the prototype includes an 'Exercises' panel, which is now out of scope, and does not include a link to the old iSpeaker. This mock-up includes the in-scope elements:



Link to prototype page: https://3mmzle.axshare.com/ispeaker_home.html

On small screens, the information and panels will be stacked in single-column width.

The iSpeaker home page will allow users to:

- Read a short description of what the iSpeaker is
- Link to the old iSpeaker (in order to access their saved data)
- Set language preference (British or American English)
- Select a section to start their speaking practice

3.1 See what the iSpeaker is

This mirrors what we have in the iWriter and should work and look the same. The 'What is the iSpeaker?' section is collapsed by default. When expanded, a short overview of the product is revealed. The copy for this section will be supplied.

3.2 Link to the old iSpeaker

This again will mirror what we have on the iWriter home page. The 'Where is my saved work?' section is collapsed by default. When expanded, an explanation of how to access the old version of the iSpeaker is revealed. The copy for this section will be supplied.

3.3 Set language preference

Most videos and audio in the iSpeaker have both an American and a British version. On the iSpeaker home page users will set their preferred language variety, and all content in the various iSpeaker sections will reflect that choice. For example, with the language set to 'British English', users will see only the British sounds videos. They would need to return to iSpeaker home in order to change the language preference and see the American version.

The default language variety is 'British English'. A checkmark and blue shading indicate the active selection. The inactive one is white and without a checkmark. A similar device, with the checkmark and blue/white colours, can be seen on the page https://old.proofing.idm.fr/resources/.

The language variety preference of the user should be remembered and restored in future sessions. Thus if the application is closed with 'American English' selected, it will re-open with the same selection, and will stay as such until the user changes it.

3.4 Select a section to start their speaking practice

On a desktop screen, the three panels will go across the page, but they should rearrange for smaller/smallest screens. On a phone screen there will be a single column only.

The three panels will each consist of:

- Heading (Sounds, Conversations, Exam Speaking)
- Very short description of each (OUP to supply)
- Image for each (OUP to supply)

The panels will have an active state on mouseover. When the user clicks anywhere on the panel, the relevant section opens. This active panel state can be seen on the prototype page and also on https://old.proofing.idm.fr/resources/, where the panel border and shadow darken — please replicate this with the iSpeaker panels.

Clicking/tapping on any of the three panels will open the corresponding section menu page.

A description of each section follows.

4 Sounds

Clicking/tapping on the 'Sounds' panel on the iSpeaker home page will open the Sounds section. It should have its own URL, such as: [base-url]/ispeaker/sounds.

The Sounds section aims to help English language learners recognize and produce the individual sounds (phonemes) of English.

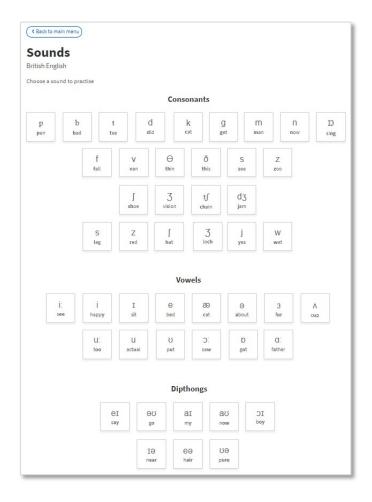
The section is made up of a menu page which contains all English phonemes, and a content page for each phoneme. The menu and content pages are different according to whether the user has selected 'British English' or 'American English' on the iSpeaker home page.

4.1 Sounds menu page

The menu page allows the user to select a phoneme to practise. A 'Back to main menu' button at the top of the page will return the user to the iSpeaker home page to choose a different section. The currently selected language variety is shown beneath the main page heading.

All phonemes are displayed in tiles, with an example word underneath. Like the panels on the home page, the whole tile is clickable, and tiles have an active state on mouseover, identical to the home page.

For the look and feel of this page, please see the prototype page here (screenshot also given below): https://3mmzle.axshare.com/sounds.html

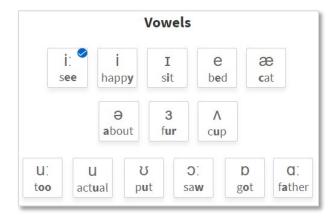


For smaller screen sizes, the phonemes will regroup. Please follow this demo for the reflow of tiles, as it is important that certain groupings are maintained on different screen sizes:

http://eltdicts.uk.oup.com/soundbank/phonchart_demo_2020/

There are two different versions of the menu page – one to display if the user has selected 'British English' (or by default) and another to display if they have selected 'American English'. Please select 'American English' on the demo at http://eltdicts.uk.oup.com/soundbank/phonchart_demo_2020/ to see the different menus. OUP will supply the words and phonemes to be used on the two menus (British and American). We recommend using Charis SIL for the phonemic font, and embedding this font in the iSpeaker application to ensure that it will render correctly on all browsers and devices.

Users will click on a tile to practise a particular phoneme. Once they have fully practised it and feel that they have mastered that sound, they can check a box on the content page 'Review' tab (details below). If that box is checked, a corresponding small check mark will be displayed in the corner of the relevant phoneme tile. This is to provide an indication to the user that they have 'done' that sound, so they have an idea of progression and completion. See screenshot showing a completed sound:



4.2 Sounds content page

Clicking on a phoneme tile will open the relevant content page. Every content page in the Sounds section will have the same template.

The current phoneme is displayed next to the main page heading, and the language variety (British English or American English, reflecting the language variety selection on the iSpeaker home page).

A 'Back to main menu' button at the top of the screen returns users to the iSpeaker home page. A 'Try another sound' button at the bottom links back to the Sounds menu page.

Four tabs across the page show the different activities that users can do with this phoneme: **Watch**, **Listen & Record**, **Practise** and **Review**. On a desktop, the tabs can contain both heading + icon, while on a small screen, the tabs may only contain the icon to save space. OUP will supply all images for the tabs. The active tab should be white, with inactive tabs grey (as in the prototype, and also the iWriter and Text Checker).

The screenshots below show the look-and-feel of the tabs on desktop and mobile, and links to the prototype are given. The tabs on the prototype are clickable, to show different tabs, however the further visuals for individual tab contents are given below, and should be followed where they differ from the prototype.

Desktop layout (tabs and general layout):

https://3mmzle.axshare.com/sounds_watch.html



Mobile layout (tabs):

https://3mmzle.axshare.com/mobile_sounds_i_watch.html



Further details on each tab follow, with screenshots.

4.2.1 Watch

This tab should be active by default.

Users can watch a video showing how to pronounce the sound. Each phoneme will have a different video, and there are also different videos for British and American English. The videos will be streamed via Vimeo (as on the current iSpeaker, but a completely new set of videos rather than reusing the old ones). OUP will supply all embed links, which should be integrated so that the large video thumbnail is visible and the user can simply click to play, as shown in the screenshot above and on the prototype page. Controls such as volume and full screen are handled within the video player.

4.2.2 Listen & Record

Users can listen to audio files and make their own recordings.

There will be two audio files for each phoneme. The first will play the sound in isolation (e.g. the phoneme /z/ on its own), and other will play words that include the sound (e.g. zone, easy, please). The audio will be either British or American English, according to the language variety selected on the iSpeaker home page. Users should click/tap on the speaker icon to hear the audio, and it can be played as many times as they want.

Users can then record their own version of the audio files, using the Record button. They can listen back to their recordings using the Play button.

The Record button is a red circle, which changes to a red square only while recording is in progress. Users may re-record any number of times, as the Record button will revert to a circle showing that recording is possible. If for any reason recording is not possible, it should be greyed out and a message displayed (see section on browser compatibility below).

The Play button is a standard 'play' icon, and is greyed out if there is no user recording to play. Once there is something to play, it will become blue. This should change to a blue square while play is in progress. The last user recording should be stored and preserved across sessions.

Screenshot below shows suggested layout of the contents of this tab:



OUP will supply all audio files for the 'Listen & Record' tab, which should all fit into the same template.

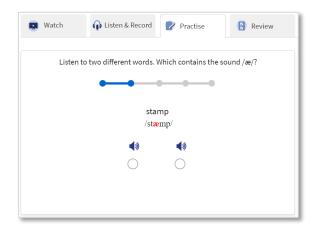
4.2.3 Practise

The Practise tab contains a simple activity for the user to listen and identify whether they have heard the phoneme being practised.

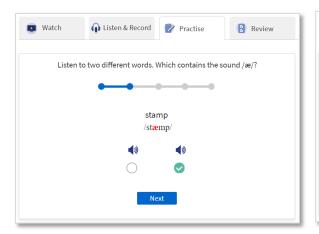
There are two audio files, indicated by a speaker icon. Users can play both, and select the one they think matches the phonemic transcription. Each item is auto-marked on selection, either correct or incorrect. A progress bar shows how many questions there are in total for the current sound, and at the end a total score is given. Please see prototype for basic functionality (with clickable elements), and screenshots below for look-and-feel:

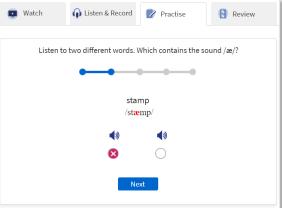
https://3mmzle.axshare.com/sounds practises.html

1. Listen and select. NB, this is question 2 of 5 – see progress bar:

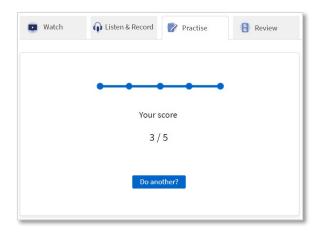


2. Auto-marking on selection (user clicks 'Next' to proceed):





3. Final score is given after 5 questions:



OUP will supply all audio files for the 'Practise' tab, for both British and American English. Content for all phonemes will fit in the same template as described above.

4.2.4 Review

The Review tab allows the user to say whether they think they have mastered the phoneme or not, via a simple check box.

See screenshot (showing mobile tab view, but identical on desktop):



If this box is checked, then a corresponding check mark is displayed on that phoneme tile on the Sounds home page. If the box is unchecked, no checkmark appears on the tile. This information must be retained and stored across sessions:



5 Conversations

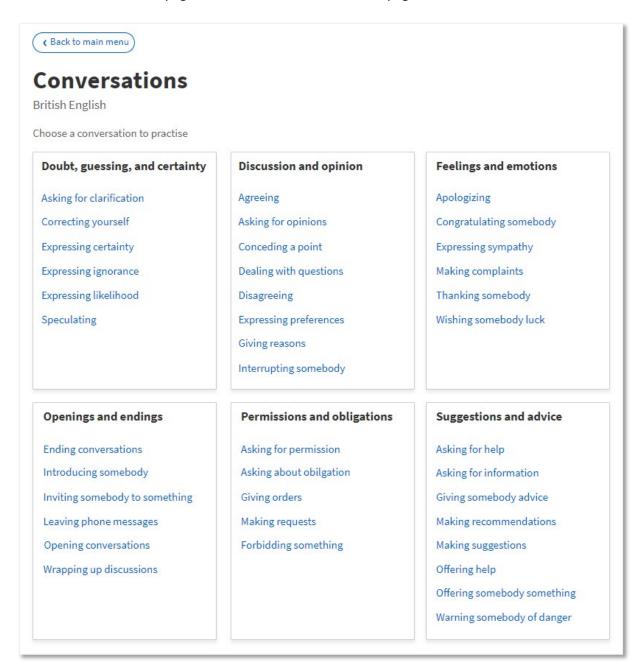
Clicking/tapping on the 'Conversations' panel on the iSpeaker home page will open the Conversations section. It should have its own URL, such as: [base-url]/ispeaker/conversations.

The Conversations section aims to help learners develop their everyday English skills through useful functional language that can be used, for example, to agree with someone, to apologize for something, or to make suggestions.

Like other sections, the Conversations section is made up of a menu page which contains all the conversation topics, and a content page for each topic.

5.1 Conversations menu page

The Conversations menu page contains links to all the content pages within the section:



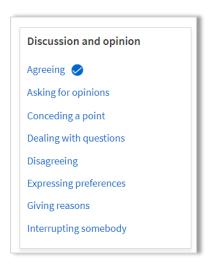
On this menu, instead of the panels being clickable, each line of text is clickable. The text should underline on mouseover to indicate a live link. The black headings are not clickable, they are just there to allow the topics to be arranged in groups.

Depending on which language variety is selected on the iSpeaker home page, there will be 'British English' or 'American English' displayed underneath the main page heading. This can only be changed by returning to the iSpeaker home page and selecting a different option. Unlike the 'Sounds' section, the actual menu does not change for British and American English – there is only one version of the menu.

The 'Back to main menu' button at the top will return the user to the iSpeaker home page, as usual.

On a smaller screen the panels will reflow with only two panels fitting across the page.

Users will click on a menu item, for example 'Agreeing', to open the content page for that topic. Like in the 'Sounds' section, once users have fully practised and feel confident with a topic, they can check a box on the content page 'Review' tab (details below). If that box is checked, a corresponding small check mark will be displayed after the topic on the menu page. See screenshot showing 'Agreeing' as completed:



5.2 Conversations content page

Clicking on an item on the Conversations menu will open a content page for that topic. Every content page in the Conversations section will have the same template.

The current topic is displayed, and the language variety as per the selection on the iSpeaker home page (British English or American English).

As usual, the 'Back to main menu' button at the top of the screen returns users to the iSpeaker home page. A 'Try another conversation' button at the bottom links back to the Conversations menu page.

Four tabs across the width of the page show the different activities that users can do with the current topic: **Watch & Study**, **Listen**, **Practise**, and **Review**. As with the Sounds section, on a small screen the tabs will only contain the icons (instead of text + icon). The look-and-feel of the tabs should be identical to the Sounds section, with only the change in name of the first two.

Screenshots and prototype links below are given to help with development. Some elements on the prototype are clickable. Where the prototype and this document differ, the latter should be followed.

Desktop layout: https://3mmzle.axshare.com/conversations tab watch study.html



Mobile layout (should include tab icons): https://3mmzle.axshare.com/conversations mobile.html



The contents of the four tabs are described below.

5.2.1 Watch & Study

The content page should open with this tab active. There are two sections in this tab, headed 'Watch' and 'Study'.

5.2.1.1 Watch

The 'Watch' section allows users to watch a video for the current conversational topic. As with the 'Sounds' section, these videos will be streamed via Vimeo and OUP will supply all embed links. Users should simply click to play.

5.2.1.2 Study

The 'Study' section is collapsible and is collapsed by default. On expanding, the script of the video conversation is displayed.

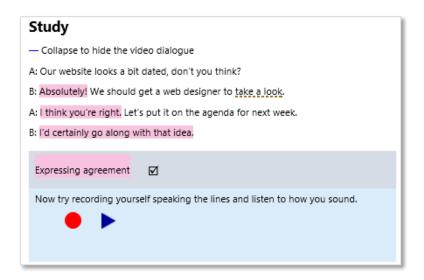
The user can highlight key phrases in the dialogue. This is not shown in the prototype but the content and functionality of the current iSpeaker should be replicated. A screenshot below shows how the highlighting should work.

At the end of the 'Study' section there is a Record & Playback feature to allow users to record themselves speaking the lines of dialogue if they wish.

Prototype page link (missing highlighting feature):

https://3mmzle.axshare.com/conversations_tab_watch_study_expanded.html

Mock-up showing highlighting feature and Record & Playback section:



Highlighting colours should be pink and blue, matching those used in the iWriter. OUP will supply all script files and highlighting information.

The Record & Playback section should look and work in the same way wherever it appears in the iSpeaker, as described in the 'Sounds' section above, i.e.:

- Record button is a red circle, toggling to red square when active
- Play button is grey until a recording has been made, when it is blue
- Play button toggles to square when active
- Re-recording is possible (overwrites previous)
- The last user recording is stored and preserved across sessions
- If recording is not possible, the button should be greyed out and a message displayed

5.2.2 Listen

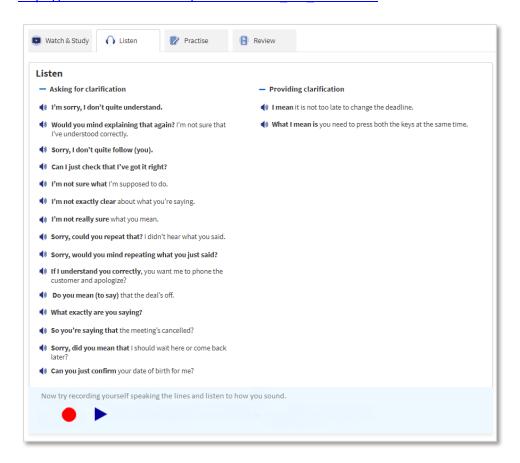
Users can listen to a range of example sentences, often grouped by function – for example on the prototype page audio files are divided into 'Asking for clarification' and 'Providing clarification' groups. The audio files will be British or American English, as per the selected language variety.

By default, all example sentences are expanded out. All groups can be individually collapsed. Users will click/tap on a speaker icon to play the audio.

A Record & Playback feature is available in this tab for users to record their own voice and see how they sound compared to the model audio. This section will look and behave the same as in the 'Study' section described above.

See link to prototype and screenshots below:

https://3mmzle.axshare.com/conversations tab listen.html



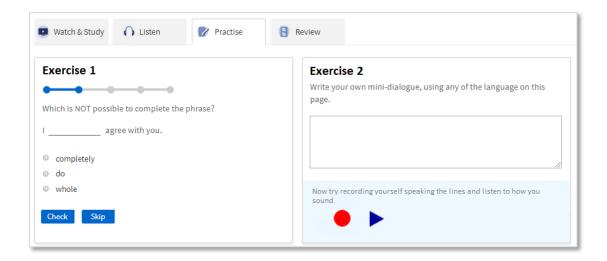
OUP will supply all audio files for the 'Listen' tab.

5.2.3 Practise

The Practise tab consists of two sections, headed 'Exercise1', and 'Exercise2'. On a small screen these two panels will be underneath each other but on a desktop screen they can show side-by-side.

A link to the prototype page, which has some active functionality, is given below. However, the mock-ups given in this document reflect more up-to-date content.

Link to prototype: https://3mmzle.axshare.com/conversations tab practise.html



5.2.3.1 Exercise1

Exercise 1 contains simple exercises to practise the language of the current topic. These vary between topics but are a mixture of simple multiple choice, gap-fill, or dictation templated exercises. A progress bar indicates how many questions remain, and the exercises are auto-marked as users progress. At the end of the exercises an overall score is given.

Where elements are identical to those in the 'Sounds' practise tab, they should be replicated here. For example, the progress bar, the green checkmark for correct answers, the scoring screen, etc.



OUP will supply all content for the 'Exercise 1' section.

5.2.3.2 Exercise 2

Exercise 2 is the same for every topic, and consists of a space for the user to write their own minidialogue using the language of the current topic. The text box should expand downwards if the user adds lots of content, so no scrolling is required.

Any content that the user adds to this section should be stored and preserved across sessions.

There is a Record & Playback feature available here for users to record themselves if they want. This feature should look and behave as all other Record & Playback sections across the iSpeaker.



5.2.4 Review

The Review tab allows the user to assess whether they have mastered the topic or not, via one or more simple check boxes.

See screenshot below for sample Review tab, although the extra spacing at the bottom should be removed:



There may be one or two check boxes on this tab, depending on the topic. OUP will supply all content for the Review page.

As with the Sounds section, if the user has checked all the boxes in the Review tab then a corresponding checkmark will display on the Conversations menu page after the item. Any and all checkmarks should be preserved across sessions.



6 Exam Speaking

Clicking/tapping on the Exam Speaking panel on the iSpeaker home page will open the Exam Speaking section. It should have its own URL, such as: [base-url]/ispeaker/exam-speaking.

The Exam Speaking section aims to help learners develop the skills they need for English speaking exams and other longer turn-taking tasks. The structure of this section is quite similar to Conversations.

Like other sections, the section is made up of a menu page which contains all the tasks, and a content page for each task.

6.1 Exam Speaking menu page

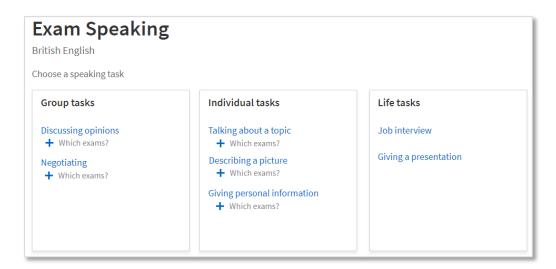
As usual, the Exam Speaking menu page contains links to all the content within the section. The 'Back to main menu' button at the top of the page will return the user to the iSpeaker home page.

Depending on which language variety is selected on the iSpeaker home page, there will be 'British English' or 'American English' displayed underneath the main page heading. However, as with Conversations, there is only one version of the menu.

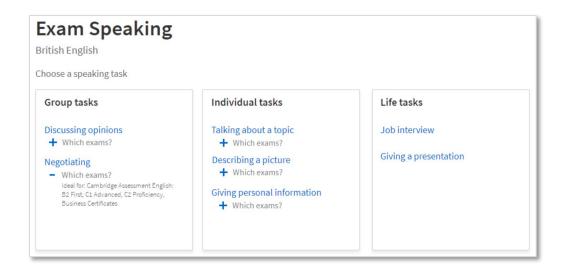
Each item in blue is a link to the relevant content page, and should underline on mouseover to indicate this. The black headings are not clickable. On a smaller screen the panels will reflow with only two panels (or one) fitting across the page.

Additionally on this page, users may expand a 'Which exams?' section which will reveal which particular exams the given task is relevant to. OUP will supply all content for the menu page.

Mock-up showing collapsed 'Which exams?' section (= default):



Mock-up showing expanded 'Which exams?' section:



6.2 Exam Speaking content page

Clicking on an item on the Exam Speaking menu will open a content page for that task. Every content page in the Exam Speaking section will have the same template.

The heading area shows the current task and the language variety as per the selection on the iSpeaker home page (British English or American English). Only the audio content will differ between the two in this section.

As usual, the 'Back to main menu' button at the top of the screen returns users to the iSpeaker home page. A 'Try another task' button at the bottom links back to the Exam Speaking menu page.

Four tabs across the width of the page show the different activities that users can do: **Watch & Study**, **Listen**, **Practise**, and **Review** (i.e. identical to the Conversations tabs).

Prototype page link: https://3mmzle.axshare.com/negotiating tab watch study.html

[See next page for screenshot]



The contents of the four tabs are described below.

6.2.1 Watch & Study

There are three sections in this tab, headed 'Task', 'Watch', and 'Study'.

6.2.1.1 Task

This section provides input for the task and contextualizes the video. It will consist of text and/or images. OUP will supply all content for this section.

6.2.1.2 Watch

The 'Watch' section allows users to watch a video for the current task and will look and work the same as in other sections. OUP will supply all embed links.

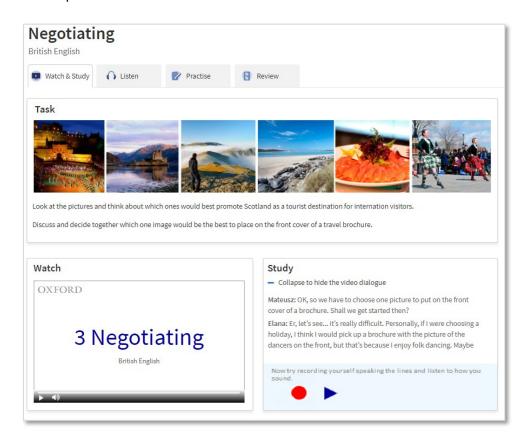
6.2.1.3 Study

As in the Conversations content page, the 'Study' section is collapsed by default. On expanding, the script of the video conversation is displayed.

The user can highlight key phrases in the script, as in the Conversations section. This is not shown in the prototype or screenshot below, but functionality is identical to this part of the Conversations

section. Highlighting colours should match those used in the iWriter and in Conversations. OUP will supply all script files and highlighting information.

There is a Record & Playback feature at the end of the 'Study' section to allow users to record themselves speaking the lines of dialogue. This should look and work in the same way as elsewhere in the iSpeaker.



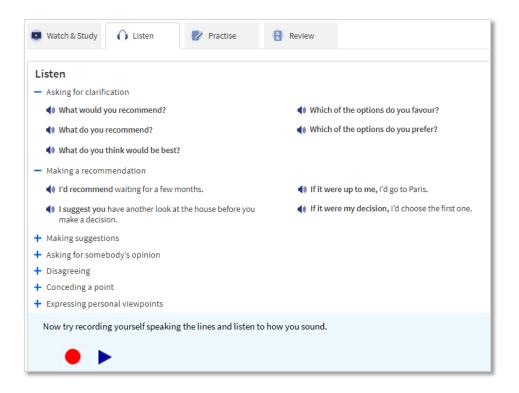
6.2.2 Listen

Users can listen to a range of example sentences, often grouped by function, as in the Conversation section. The audio files will be British or American English, as per the selected language variety.

As there are often multiple groups, only the first group of sentences are expanded out. Users will click/tap on the plus/minus symbols to expand and collapse groups, and on a speaker icon to play the audio, as usual.

A Record & Playback feature is available in this tab for users to record their own voice and see how they sound compared to the model audio.

Prototype page link: https://3mmzle.axshare.com/negotiating-tab-listen-expanded.html



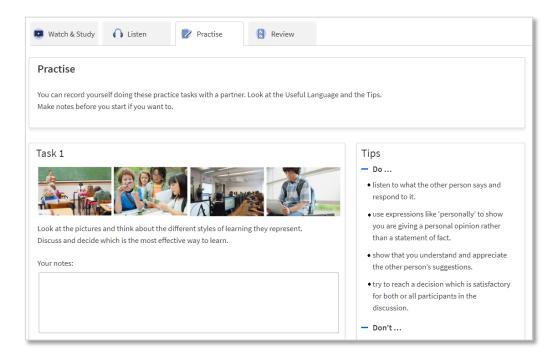
6.2.3 Practise

This tab consists of different panels showing pieces of content, such as 'Task' and 'Tips'. OUP will supply all content.

There will be a space for users to write in, and a Record & Playback section like elsewhere. User-generated content should be stored and preserved across sessions as usual.

Prototype page link: https://3mmzle.axshare.com/negotiating tab practise.html

Screenshot showing bulleted 'Tips' content:



6.2.4 Review

As elsewhere, the Review tab contains a number of checkboxes (up to a maximum of four) for the user to self-assess their confidence with the task.

If ALL boxes are checked in the Review section, then a checkmark will appear on the Exam Speaking menu page to indicate that the task is completed. Any and all checkmarks should be preserved across sessions:



7 Assets to supply

OUP will supply all content:

- Icons (for home page and content page tabs)
- Home page text
- Menu pages text (including phonemes for Sounds menu)
- All video embed links
- All video scripts with highlighting information (Conversations, Exam Speaking)
- All British + American audio files with accompanying list of filenames
- Exercises content (Sounds Practise, Conversations Practise)
- Exam Speaking Task, Practise, Tips content
- Review text

OUP & Mitr should agree on optimal format for delivery of content.

8 Browser/Device compatibility

The Record & Playback feature should be available where possible, however OUP understands if complete cross-browser and cross-device compatibility is not possible to achieve.

OUP and Mitr should discuss and agree in what circumstances the recording feature will be available and ensure that it works in those cases. No separate app should be developed, and the recording should be delivered within the browser.

Where recording is not possible, it should be clear that this is the case by greying out the Record button and/or displaying a message to users. This should be discussed and agreed once it is identified when the recording will and will not be possible.

9 Working on IDM's platform

As with the iWriter, the new iSpeaker application should be built on IDM's Proofing Platform at https://old.proofing.idm.fr/, and it will be moved to the Production Platform as part of the release process. Any internal links should reflect this and not be hard-coded to link only to the Proofing server.

It is expected that IDM will move the current iSpeaker to a new URL before development of the new version begins. This will allow Mitr to build the new version at the correct location in the first place instead of having to move files later on.

User-generated content should be stored and retrieved in the same way as with the iWriter.