

http://www.examenglish.com/CAE/cae_use_of_english1.htm

CAE Speaking Test

Duration: 15 minutes (23 minutes for groups of three at centres where there's an odd number of candidates).

Participants: Candidates interviewed in pairs or threes. Two examiners: one examiner asks the questions, the other acts as assessor and doesn't speak during the interview.

Format: The test consists of four parts.

Part 1 (Interview)

Tests ability to: use language for social purposes, e.g. making introductions, answering questions, stating an opinion.

This first section of the CAE Speaking exam lasts about three minutes (five minutes for groups of three) and gives the examiner the chance to find out a little about you and your partner through some 'getting-to-know-you' questions. These will be simple questions to help 'break the ice', for example questions about your family, your studies, where you come from or what your interests are.

Example Questions

The interview will begin with the examiner saying something like:

Q: *Hello. My name is and this is my colleague*

Q: *And your names are?*

Q: *Can I have your mark sheets please? Thank you.*

Q: *First of all we'd like to know something about you.*

The examiner will then ask each of you some questions. For example:

Q: *Tell me about where you come from.*

Q: *Do you enjoy studying English?*

Q: *Do you have any hobbies or interests?*

Q: *Why are you preparing for the CAE exam?*

Tips!

You'll gain extra marks if you're able to give full, relevant answers to these questions.

1) Offer more than the bare minimum in your answers.

Q: *Tell me about where you come from.*

A: *I come from Bielefeld. (Don't stop there!) It's in the northern part of Germany. It's a lovely place with a busy town and it's also close to some nice countryside.*

2) Avoid short, 'yes', 'no' answers.

Q: *Do you enjoy studying English?*

A: *Yes I do! I quite like studying languages and English in particular. I have a lot of English friends and love to be able to communicate with them in their own language. And I love being able to read English novels.*

Q: *Do you have any hobbies or interests?*

A: *No, not hobbies really. I used to like collecting things as a child but that doesn't interest me now. I suppose you could say music is a big interest, I especially like listening to English bands.*

3) Offer examples to help you explain a statement.

Q: *Why are you preparing for the CAE exam?*

A: *Because it's important for my job. As part of my appraisal, my boss advised me to take an English exam to help me develop my professional skills. I passed FCE last year and if I'm successful at CAE I'd like to try CPE.*

Part 2 (Long Turn)

Tests ability to: speak at length coherently, use language to describe, compare and contrast, hypothesise and comment upon a topic.

Part 2 of the CAE Speaking test lasts about 4 minutes (six minutes for groups of three).

Candidate A is passed a set of pictures and has to speak about the pictures without interruption, either from the examiner or their partner. When Candidate A has finished the examiner asks Candidate B to answer a brief question about the pictures. The roles are then reversed: Candidate B is given a different set of pictures and speaks for 1 minute followed by Candidate A, who answers a brief question about the pictures.

Example Task

At this stage of the interview the examiner will say something on the lines of:

Q: *In this part of the exam I'm going to give each of you three photographs and I'd like you to talk about them on your own for about a minute and also to answer a question briefly about your partner's photographs.*

Q: *Here are your pictures (Candidate A). They show people in different educational settings. I'd like you to talk about two of these photos and **compare the settings** and **say how the students may be feeling in each one.***

Q: *All right?*



Notice there are TWO instructions here: first to 'compare and contrast' the photographs and also to speculate on how the students 'may be feeling'. In Part 2 candidates are required to show they can do more than simply describe and will need to show the ability to speculate or hypothesize on a particular topic or scene.

Tips!

1. The picture set will have a general theme but try to find two that are either very similar or very different in some way. This will give you a basis on which to compare and/or contrast the two pictures. In the example above, pictures two and three show two contrasting educational settings: the formal lecture theatre in picture two compared to the relaxed outdoor scene in picture three.
2. In terms of hypothesizing, pictures two and three offer a good opportunity to speculate on how students in each contrasting situation might be feeling. Think about opportunities for hypothesizing when choosing your pictures.
3. Signpost the end of your talk by adding a personal reaction to the pictures. For example:
'The two people in picture three look like they're enjoying themselves but personally, I think I'd prefer to spend my study time in a lecture theatre where I'd be more able to concentrate on learning'.
4. Many people preparing for the CAE oral exam worry about not having enough to say in the time available or not having enough time to express their ideas. The best way to get the timing right is to practise making short talks on various topics on your own. (Or in front of a friend if you're feeling brave!)

Practice Test



Part 3: (Two-Way Discussion)

Tests ability to: use language to discuss and interpret, to agree, disagree or agree to disagree, negotiate and collaborate, to rank or classify.

In Part 3 of the CAE Speaking test, which lasts about four minutes (six minutes for groups of three), the examiner will ask you and your partner to talk about another set of visual prompts together.

Example Task

The examiner will say something on the lines of:

Q: *I'd like you to talk about something together for three minutes.* (Five minutes for groups of three)

Q: *Here are your pictures showing different occupations. Discuss the role these people have in our lives. Then decide which job tends to be the most stressful.*

Q: *All right?*



Notice there are TWO instructions. The first asks you to 'discuss' the role of the people, and the second asks you to 'decide' which job is the most stressful. This means you're required not only to talk about each visual but also to show your ability to negotiate and collaborate with your partner. You don't have to reach agreement but you must at least work towards this.

Tips!

It will help both yourself and your partner if you work together collaboratively on this task.

1. Be prepared to ask your partner for his or her opinion rather than simply stating your own.
2. Listen 'actively' to what your partner says, responding to comments he or she makes. Use expressions such as the following to comment on something:
"That's an interesting point."

"I was interested in what you said about ..."
"So, when you say, do you mean?"
"Could you explain what you mean by?"

3. Use expressions to allow yourself time to think. For example: *'That's a good question.'*, *'Well, let me think ...'*

4. In order to bring the discussion to a constructive conclusion try using expressions such as the following:

"So, weighing up the pros and cons, do you think ...?"
"Are we generally in agreement that ...?"
"So, all in all do we feel ...?"
"Essentially, do we all agree that ...?"
"So, to sum up ..."
"So, in general ..."
"It seems we've reached the conclusion that ..."

Practice Test



Part 4: (Three-Way Discussion)

Tests ability to: use language to summarise, report and explain decisions; develop a topic further.

In Part 4 of the CAE Speaking test, which lasts about four minutes (six for groups of three), the examiner will join the discussion and ask candidates questions related to the visuals used in Part 3.

Example Questions

Q: *Do any of these jobs have a special status in your country?*
Q: *Which jobs do you think offer the greatest personal satisfaction?*
Q: *Do any of these jobs appeal to you?*

Tips!

1. Again, avoid short, 'yes', 'no' answers to the examiner's questions.
2. Use techniques to make your contributions powerful, for example by using short, personal anecdotes to help make a point.
3. Continue to work with your partner. Respond constructively and show interest in things he or she says.

Advanced English CAE Sample Answer: Speaking

You need to have a very high level of English to sit the CAE (Certificate of Advanced English) Exam. Here, I give a sample answer to a typical Speaking Test Part 2 question. In the video, before you hear my answer, I explain

- Some of the requirements of the speaking test
- What happens in Part 1 of the CAE speaking
- What the Cambridge examiners are listening for
- What you should say to get high marks
- How to approach the speaking test!>

Advanced English Transcript

(My Sample answer in the video **begins at 6:37**)

The first picture in the top left hand corner obviously represents education. We've got 3 children in school uniform and this is a completely different classroom than when I used to go to school. They are gathered round a computer. There's no teacher there and they're probably involved in some collaborative learning of some task based solving problem.

The next picture in the top right hand corner: We've got banks and banks of computer screens. This is probably a stock exchange, so we're talking here about finance, industry, international trade and commerce where people are buying and selling shares across continents instantaneously.

In the next picture on the left, we can see some pensioners online, so this is about communication. We've got video messaging, possibly SKYPE going on. And they are perhaps speaking to their relatives on the other side of the world in real time.

If we go across to the right hand side we can see a father and son. They've both got controllers in their hands and they're playing on their console, perhaps X-box, Nintendo or Playstation. And this shows how they are using their leisure time. So, here this represents entertainment: how people use computers in their free time. Perhaps not only for video games, but for reading – reading a book or watching a film, perhaps.

In the final picture at the bottom of the page, we've got a woman getting her shopping bags via the computer screen, so obviously this is online shopping depicted here. Popular websites like ebay and Amazon mean that you never have to leave your home to get what you need, or even to browse around. And computers have really changed our daily lives here because we've seen a decline of the high street, where traditional shops have closed down because online shopping is generally cheaper and you can find what you want almost immediately.

So, I think actually, all the pictures show a massive reshaping of our daily lives and how we've adapted and incorporated computers so easily. And if I were to choose just one picture to best represent the most significant change, it would be an exceptionally difficult task.

Finance and industry is of momentous importance, but not everyone is a banker. Perhaps it's only a small percentage of the population involved in that industry... of the global population. And people perhaps, some people are still wary of online shopping, so perhaps those pictures are less important than things like entertainment or education.

But if we consider the dramatic changes in computer technology advancement in the communication field, it's nothing short of astounding. How I used to live when I was a child, we didn't even have mobile phones, so....

Video conferencing is quite astounding. If I had told my grandmother that soon, instead of sending a letter to Australia and waiting months for a reply, or having to spend an incredible amount on a phone call in the middle of the night, that she could actually speak and almost touch her brother's face as she spoke to him in Australia on a video call, she would have been absolutely amazed and possibly she wouldn't have been able to have even believed that that was possible.

So, I would plump for the communication picture with the pensioners as the biggest change to our lives. Even though the others are still incredibly important.

How to make my answer better



for improvement and the need to change some basic things.

As you can hear, I keep repeating: *daily lives, perhaps, call, astounding.*

Under the pressure of the time limit, I forgot to use synonyms for these words. This was on my **Mental Checklist** – 'Use different vocabulary'

So, it just goes to show that when you are practising giving verbal answers to speaking exam questions, you shouldn't be too hard on yourself. Even mother-tongue speakers and supposed 'experts' make mistakes. We are all human!

Watch the video, remember the best points and practise, practise, practise!

Good luck in the CAE exam!

Even as a native-speaker AND being an experienced English teacher, there is still room

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