

Overview of the Cambridge Assessment English A2 Key for Schools Speaking test – Teacher's Notes

Time required: Approx. 45 mins

Materials required:

- Student handout 1 (enough copies for half the class)
- Student handout 2 (enough copies for half the class)
- Student Question Sheet 1 (enough copies for half the class)
- Student Question Sheet 1 (enough copies for half the class)

Aims:

- To familiarise students with the Cambridge Assessment English A2 Key Speaking test Paper 3
- to practise formulating correct questions in English

Procedure

1. Tell students they are going to learn about Paper 3 of the A2Key Speaking test. Ask them what they think makes someone a good English speaker (e.g. not making lots of mistakes, good pronunciation, knowing enough vocabulary, being able to listen and answer, etc.)
Timing: 5 mins
2. Put students into two groups. Give one group **Student handout 1** and the other group **Student handout 2**. Give them some time to read through the information only.
Timing: 5 mins
3. Tell students the two groups have different information missing and that they have to ask someone from the other group questions to find out the missing information on their worksheets. Before they do this, they have some time to prepare questions in their groups. Give **Student question sheet 1** to the group with **Student handout 1** and give **Student question sheet 2** to the group with **Student handout 2**. Ask students to work in pairs and to use the prompts to make questions. They can write their questions on their question sheets. Monitor the pairs of students to help them form appropriate questions (see **Answer key**).
Timing: 7 mins
4. Now put the students into new pairs, so that one student in each pair has **Student handout 1** and the other has **Student handout 2**. Ask them not to show one another their information, and to ask and answer questions in order to complete their worksheets.
Timing: 10 mins
5. Once they have asked and answered all their questions, let the students look at each other's handouts to check they each have all the correct information.

6. Tell students to turn their paper over so they can't see the information. Ask some general questions to check students have understood and remembered the information. Check to see if students have any further questions. Does any of the information surprise them?

Timing: 5 mins

7. Elicit what the 'listening' examiner (the assessor) does during the test (they listen to what the students say and assess their performance). Remind students of the brief discussion at the beginning of the class about what makes someone a good English speaker. Point out that:
- all parts of the test are assessed
 - all the way through they will be assessed on their own performance and not in relation to their partner
 - both examiners assess them, but in different ways. The assessor awards marks according to three criteria:
 - Grammar and Vocabulary
 - Pronunciation
 - Interactive Communication (the ability to take an active part in a conversation, to respond appropriately to other speakers and to keep a conversation going).

Make sure all students understand exactly what is meant by the above criteria and elicit examples of grammar, pronunciation, and interactive communication. Explain that the examiner 'who asks questions' (the interlocutor) gives a mark for how each candidate did in the test overall (Global Achievement).

Timing: 5 mins

8. Ask the whole class if they have any further questions and discuss with students:
- Which part do you think is the easiest/most difficult?
 - Which part will need a lot of practice?
 - How can you prepare for the speaking test?

There are no correct answers, but this information can help you plan your future speaking skills development lessons. Use the Additional information (below) to help answer their questions, and remember that there are activities available which look at each section in more depth.

Timing: 4 mins

Suggested follow-up activity

If possible, download the A2 Key for Schools Speaking test sample video from the Teaching Support section of our website and watch it with your class.

Additional Information

The standard format is two examiners and two candidates. In cases where there are an uneven number of candidates at a centre, the last Speaking test of the session will be taken by three candidates together instead of two. When three candidates are tested together, the test format, test material and procedure will remain the same, but the timing will be longer: 13–15 minutes instead of 8–10.

Candidates are not given their mark at the end of the Speaking test.

Part 1

This part of the test assesses the candidates' ability to answer simple questions about themselves.

The interlocutor leads a general conversation with each of the candidates in turn. Candidates are asked questions about their personal details, daily routines, likes, dislikes etc. Candidates respond directly to the interlocutor; they do not talk to each other in this part.

Part 2

This part tests the candidates' ability to keep a conversation going and discuss their personal preferences on activities, things or places.

In the first phase of this part, the candidates talk to each other. The interlocutor sets up the task, but does not take part in it at first. The interlocutor allows candidates to talk before extending the conversation by asking questions related to the pictures. This phase finishes with the interlocutor asking both candidates a question.

In the second phase, the interlocutor leads a follow-up discussion on the same topic as phase 1. Each candidate is asked two questions.

Answer key

The A2 Key for Schools Speaking test takes 8–10 minutes for two students and 13–15 minutes for three students. There are two examiners: one asks you questions, the other just listens and gives most of the marks.

Part 1 takes a total of 3–4 minutes for two students. In Part 1, you talk to the examiner. The examiner asks you your name and if you work or if you are a student. The examiner will ask you questions about yourself: about your hobbies and interests; friends and your family; what you like doing or don't like doing.

In Part 2 you speak to your partner and the examiner. The examiner will give you five pictures and you will talk with your partner about which ones you like and dislike. You need to give reasons for your answers and ask your partner about their likes and dislikes. The examiner will talk with you, asking you questions about the pictures then you will both be asked to say which one you like. The examiner will then ask you and your partner another question on the topic.

At the end of the test the examiner says, 'Thank you', but they won't give you your mark, so please don't ask.

Possible questions

1. **How long is the Speaking test?** 8–10 minutes (for two students and 13–15 minutes for three students)
2. **How many examiners are there?** two
3. **What do the examiners do?** one asks you questions, the other just listens and (gives most of the marks)
4. **Who do I talk to in Part 1?** the examiner
5. **What are the questions about?** (Part 1) about yourself (myself)
6. **Who do I speak to in Part 2?** my partner and the examiner
7. **How many pictures are there?** five (six for groups of three)
8. **What do we talk about?** what we like and dislike
9. **What does the examiner say at the end of the test?** 'Thank you'
10. **Will I get my mark at the end of the exam?** no

Student handout 1

Read the text. Look at the gaps and think about what information you need. Make questions to find the information to put in the gaps.

The A2 Key Speaking test takes (1.) _____ for two students and 13–15 minutes for three students. There are two examiners:

(3.) _____ gives most of the marks.

Part 1 takes a total of 3–4 minutes for two students. In Part 1 you talk to the examiner. The examiner asks you your name and if you work or if you are a student. The examiner will ask you questions about (5.) _____: about your hobbies and interests; friends and your family; what you like doing or don't like doing.

In Part 2 you speak to your partner and the examiner. The examiner will give you (7.) _____ pictures and you will talk with your partner about which ones you like and dislike. You need to give reasons for your answers and ask your partner about their likes and dislikes. The examiner will talk with you, asking you questions about the pictures then you will both be asked to say which one you like. The examiner will then ask you and your partner another question on the topic.

At the end of the test the examiner says, (9.) _____ but they won't give you your mark, so please don't ask.

Student question sheet 1

1. how long / Speaking test

3. what / examiners do?

5. what / questions about?

7. how / pictures are there?

9. what / examiner say at the end of the test?

Student handout 2

Read the text. Look at the gaps and think about what information you need. Make questions to find the information to put in the gaps.

The A2 Key Speaking test takes 8–10 minutes for two students and 13–15 minutes for three students. There are (2.) _____ examiners: one asks you questions, the other just listens and gives most of the marks.

Part 1 takes a total of 3–4 minutes for two students. In Part 1 you talk to (4.) _____. The examiner asks you your name and if you work or if you are a student. The examiner will ask you questions about yourself: about your hobbies and interests; friends and your family; what you like doing or don't like doing.

In Part 2 you speak to (6.) _____. The examiner will give you five pictures and you will talk with your partner about (8.) _____. You need to give reasons for your answers and ask your partner about their likes and dislikes. The examiner will talk with you, asking you questions about the pictures then you will both be asked to say which one you like. The examiner will then ask you and your partner another question on the topic.

At the end of the test the examiner says, 'Thank you', but they (10.) _____ give you your mark, so please don't ask.

Student question sheet 2

2. how many examiners / there?

4. who / talk to in Part 1?

6. who / speak to in Part 2?

8. what / we talk about?

10. will / get my mark for the exam?
