Developing Speaking skills for B1 Preliminary for Schools and B2 First for Schools:
A focus on pronunciation

Alberto Costa
Sarah Ellis

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24 February 2022 15:00-16:00 GMT
Overview

• B1 Preliminary for Schools & B2 First for Schools speaking paper
• Speaking assessment Criteria
• Features of pronunciation
• Resources and activities to practice pronunciation
• Exam preparation resources
B1 Preliminary for Schools & B2 First for Schools Speaking paper
**Speaking: B1 Preliminary for Schools & B2 First for Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1</th>
<th>Part 2</th>
<th>Part 3</th>
<th>Part 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1 Preliminary for Schools</strong></td>
<td>A conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate (spoken questions)</td>
<td>An individual ‘long turn’ for each candidate based on a photograph</td>
<td>A discussion on topics related to the collaborative task (spoken questions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2 First for Schools</strong></td>
<td>A conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate (spoken questions).</td>
<td>An individual ‘long turn’ for each candidate with a response from the second candidate based on a pair of photographs</td>
<td>A two-way conversation between the candidates, following instructions with written stimuli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speaking assessment Criteria

Grammar and Vocabulary

Discourse Management

Pronunciation

Interactive Communication
Handbooks for Teachers

Cambridge Assessment English Qualifications

B1 Preliminary for Schools
Handbook for teachers for exams from 2020

B2 First for Schools
Handbook for teachers
## Speaking assessment Criteria

### B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking Examiners use a more detailed version of the following assessment scales, extracted from the overall Speaking scales on page 83.

#### Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bands</th>
<th>Grammar and Vocabulary</th>
<th>Discourse Management</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Interactive Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Initiates and responds appropriately.</td>
<td>Is intelligible.</td>
<td>Initiates and responds appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.</td>
<td>Uses a range of cohesive devices.</td>
<td>Intonation is generally appropriate.</td>
<td>Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Does not maintain the interaction going with very little prompting and support.</td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features. at both utterance and word levels.</td>
<td>Does not maintain the interaction going with very little prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Uses basic cohesive devices.</td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation.</td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shows a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.</td>
<td>Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation.</td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Performance before Band 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B2 First for Schools Speaking Examiners use a more detailed version of the following assessment scales, extracted from the overall Speaking scales on page 88.

#### Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bands</th>
<th>Grammar and Vocabulary</th>
<th>Discourse Management</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Interactive Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple and some complex grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation.</td>
<td>Is intelligible.</td>
<td>Initiates and responds appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics.</td>
<td>Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.</td>
<td>Intonation is generally appropriate.</td>
<td>Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Initiates and responds appropriately.</td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features. at both utterance and word levels.</td>
<td>Initiates and responds appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Does not maintain the interaction going with very little prompting and support.</td>
<td>Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.</td>
<td>Uses basic cohesive devices.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shows a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.</td>
<td>Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Performance before Band 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
<td>Requires prompting and support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Handbooks for Teachers**
Pronunciation

• Is it **intelligible**?

• Are **individual sounds** articulated clearly?

• Is **sentence and word stress** accurately placed?

• Is **intonation** appropriate?
Intelligible
A contribution which can generally be understood by a sympathetic expert speaker, even if the speaker has an unfamiliar accent.

“Teaching pronunciation is about helping your learners to become more intelligible in the target language. It’s important to regularly check that what you are doing in class contributes to this basic objective.”

Mark Hancock (2020) 50 Tips for Teaching Pronunciation p. 2 Cambridge University Press
Intelligible
A contribution which can generally be understood by a sympathetic expert speaker, even if the speaker has an unfamiliar accent.

Phonological features
These include the pronunciation of individual sounds, word and sentence stress and intonation. **Individual sounds** are:

- **vowels**, e.g. the /æ/ in cat or the /e/ in bed
- **diphthongs**, when two vowels are rolled together to produce one sound, e.g. the /@U/ in host or the /eI/ in hate
- **consonants**, e.g. the /k/ in cut or the /f/ in fish.
Stress
The emphasis laid on a syllable or word.
• e.g. imPORtant.
• e.g. RecORD vs reCORD.
• e.g. WHY is that one important? versus Why is THAT one important?

Intonation
The way the voice rises and falls, e.g. to convey the speaker’s mood, to support meaning or to indicate new information.
• e.g. Where do you live? vs Do you live in Brazil?
Are you ready to teach pronunciation?
What is needed to teach pronunciation effectively


What the teacher needs to know

- **Knowledge of the pronunciation features** (e.g., articulation rules, occurrences in discourse)
- **Awareness of potential student problems** (e.g., stemming from student’s L1 or diagnostic work)
- **Pedagogical priorities** (i.e., which features should be taught and when)
Features of pronunciation – Individual sounds
Individual sounds (or segmental features) include:

- Vowels
- Diphthongs
- Consonants

Activities and resources to practise individual sounds
Minimal Pairs Pronunciation Practise: /æ/ and /e/ (man/men)

Note: Currently this feature only works in recent versions of the Chrome browser

Don't take this too seriously - speech recognition technology is far from perfect. Focus on getting your target sound correct.

Word: 8

Try saying sad

I heard: set

Click to Restart

You got 6 out of 8
Minimal Pairs Pronunciation Practise: /ɑː/ and /ɜː/ (heart/hurt)

Note: Currently this feature only works in recent versions of the Chrome browser.

Don't take this too seriously - speech recognition technology is far from perfect. Focus on getting your target sound correct.

Word: 1
Try saying heart

Listening...

Word: 4
Try saying purse
I heard: purse

Click to Speak

X X X X
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxQUapA-2w4

Pronunciation tips from bbclearenghlish.com

BOX SET: The complete guide to English Pronunciation | Learn ALL 44 sounds of English in 75 minutes!
Rice, rise

The consonant sounds /s/ and /z/

“It’s six or seven years since Sydney’s sister sang that song.”

“Zebras in zoos are like dolphins in pools.”

### 4.1

Find a way from Start to Finish. You may *not* pass a square if the word contains the sound /z/. You can move horizontally (↔) or vertically (↓) only.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>spots</th>
<th>squares</th>
<th>prize</th>
<th>since</th>
<th>six</th>
<th>sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>streets</td>
<td>wise</td>
<td>sells</td>
<td>sits</td>
<td>exact</td>
<td>escapes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice</td>
<td>rise</td>
<td>sense</td>
<td>science</td>
<td>lose</td>
<td>lost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oasis</td>
<td>desert</td>
<td>smokes</td>
<td>songs</td>
<td>crisps</td>
<td>box</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place</td>
<td>face</td>
<td>snacks</td>
<td>seas</td>
<td>voice</td>
<td>boxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plays</td>
<td>phase</td>
<td>nose</td>
<td>smiles</td>
<td>focus</td>
<td>concert</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FINISH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
4.1 Find a way from Start to Finish. You may not pass a square if the word contains the sound /z/. You can move horizontally (↔) or vertically (↑) only.

START

spots squares prize since six sports
streets wise sells sits exact escapes
rice rise sense science lose lost
oasis desert smokes songs crisps box
place face snacks seas voice boxes
plays phase nose smiles focus concert

FINISH
Individual sounds that make a difference

/s/ versus /z/

≠

≠

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/phonemic-symbols
Features of pronunciation – Stress, rhythm and intonation
The Phonemic Chart

- Stress
- Rhythm
- Intonation

(Known as the suprasegmental features)

Stress

- `/"/ Primary stress
- `/! / Secondary stress

Pronunciation

/prəˌnʌn.siˈeɪ.ʃən/

Intonation

- Rise
- Rise fall
- Fall rise
- Fall
- Level tone

The Phonemic Chart

Activities and resources to practise stress, rhythm and intonation
Group sort

3A - Ex. 2 - Syllable Stress

Drag and drop each item into its correct group.

https://wordwall.net/resource/27267040/3a-ex-2-syllable-stress
Correct Answers

Group 1
- beautiful✓
- interesting✓
- popular✓

Group 2
- cheap✓
- clean✓
- old✓

Group 3
- exciting✓

Group 4
- lively✓
- crowded✓
- dirty✓
- modern✓
- noisy✓
- peaceful✓

https://wordwall.net/resource/27267040/3a-ex-2-syllable-stress
Word stress maze

https://lessonplansdigger.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/word-stress-maze.pdf
Word stress maze

https://lessonplansdigger.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/word-stress-maze.pdf
Add the following words to the correct place in the grid below.

photograph - political - democrat - photographic – democratic - intellectual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. politics</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3. politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. democracy</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>11.</td>
<td>12. photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. diplomacy</td>
<td>14. diplomatic</td>
<td>15. diplomat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<td>4. democracy</td>
<td>5. democratic</td>
<td>6. democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. intellect</td>
<td>8. intellectual</td>
<td>9. intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. photograph</td>
<td>11. photographic</td>
<td>12. photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. diplomacy</td>
<td>14. diplomatic</td>
<td>15. diplomat</td>
</tr>
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<td>Noun</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politics</td>
<td>political</td>
<td>politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democracy</td>
<td>democratic</td>
<td>democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intellect</td>
<td>intellectual</td>
<td>intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photograph</td>
<td>photographic</td>
<td>photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diplomacy</td>
<td>diplomatic</td>
<td>diplomat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sentence stress & connected speech

Do you like living in Florence?
Sentence stress & connected speech

Do you like living in Florence?

English is a stress-timed language, not a syllable-timed one.
Features of Spoken English
Sound Foundations by Adrian Underhill

Me | You | Him | Her
---|-----|-----|-----
Me and | You and | Him and | Her
Me and then | You and then | Him and then | Her
Me and then it’s | You and then it’s | Him and then it’s | Her
Combining stress and intonation
Contrastive stress

Notice how the change in stress changes the meaning of each question and elicits a different response

Is the bedroom window cracked? No, the kitchen window is cracked

Is the bedroom window cracked? No, the bedroom door is cracked

Is the bedroom window cracked? No, it’s stuck
### Contrastive stress

**Off the Page** (2020) p. 203 CUP

1. Did they get here at **eight** o’clock?  
   No, they arrived at **nine**.

2. Is it going to **rain** tomorrow?  
   No, they say it’ll be **cloudy**.

3. Have you got a **German** car?  
   No, we’ve got a **Japanese** one.

4. Is your **older** sister a lawyer?  
   No, only my **younger** one.

5. Did you go to the **cinema** last night?  
   No, we went to a **concert**.

6. Do you usually come to school by **bus**?  
   No, I normally get there by **train**.
Intonation - Showing surprise

Dan: I’ve won a competition.
Martina: Have you? Fantastic. What’s the prize?
Dan: A weekend for two in Bath ...
Martina: Really? That’s great!

Match 1-4 with a-d

1. I’m getting married. a) Do you?
2. I really like grammar b) Have you?
3. I went to New York for the weekend c) Are you?
4. I’ve eaten an insect. d) Did you?
What is needed to teach pronunciation effectively


What the teacher needs to know

- Knowledge of the pronunciation features (e.g., articulation rules, occurrences in discourse)
- Awareness of potential student problems (e.g., stemming from student’s L1 or diagnostic work)
- Pedagogical priorities (i.e., which features should be taught and when)
Individual sounds that make a difference

Brazil

Words starting with the letter “R” sound like /h/. So...

red /red/
around /əˈraʊnd/
proud /praʊd/

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/phonemic-symbols
Exam preparation resources on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/user/cambridgeenglishtv

B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test - Roberto and Simone | Cambridge

Comments on the test video

Part 1

Roberto

Roberto responds clearly to all the questions in this part of the test. When asked to talk about a teacher he likes, he gives an extended and detailed answer, including reasons: 'So, I really like my Italian teacher, because she really makes us feel part of the lesson ...'

He also adds detail to his response about using a mobile phone: 'I use it every day, and I use it just to chat with my friends and maybe sometimes watch some videos.'

He uses appropriate vocabulary and accurate grammar, with good range in both. His pronunciation is very clear.

Simone

Simone gives clear answers to all his questions in this part of the test. In response to the question about whether he likes the morning or afternoon best, he extends his answer well, giving reasons to explain his preference: 'I like the afternoon because you can chill yourself, you can have time for yourself because the morning is too busy; you have to go to school, you have to go to work, so the afternoon you can relax and enjoy yourself.'

His pronunciation is very clear and he uses appropriate vocabulary. The grammatical forms he uses are mostly accurate.

Part 1 tips

- Practise giving information about yourself.
- You can give short answers, but it is good to give some longer answers too.
Exam preparation resources on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpmCHL8PnXq-k7ul81gTcYWmUP6HZm2Xj
Activities for learners
Dispelling ELT myths: What really matters when teaching pronunciation – part 1

Essential tips for teaching pronunciation: from elementary to advanced levels, part 1

Tips for teaching pronunciation online
Handbooks for Teachers
Prepare for exam success: B1 Preliminary for Schools self-access learning

Speaking

Summary
- Practise describing pictures of rooms in the home – useful for Speaking Part 2 in the B1 Preliminary for Schools exam.
- Create your own practice tasks to help build you confidence in speaking.
- Review common mistakes.
- Reflect on your progress and create an action plan for further study.

Getting started

Top tip: Find a study partner.
Make your speaking practice more realistic by working with a friend who is also learning English.
- If you are studying at home, you can do this on a video chat or a conferencing platform e.g. Zoom, Skype, FaceTime or WeChat.
- Take turns in the roles of Student A and Student B.
- Share pictures and create your own practice tasks.
- Share your recordings from this lesson plan with each other.

Review vocabulary for things in the home by playing a ‘guess the word’ game.

How to play
1. Arrange a time to meet and talk to your partner online.
2. Before you meet your partner, choose a room in the home e.g. the kitchen.
3. In your notebook, write a list of 10 things (not food) you usually find in this room. Don’t show your partner the list. Example: a cooker, a knife, a fork, a spoon, a plate, a fridge, a sink, a table, a saucer, a chair.
4. Set a timer for 2 minutes. Your partner has to try and guess as many of the words on your list as they can.
5. Now choose another room in the home. This time your partner will write a list of words for you to guess.

Working alone? Make a list of all the rooms in your home. Try to list 5 things you can find in each room. Ask a family member to guess which words you have on your list. When they guess correctly, tell them the word in English.

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 videos: 4 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: Get learners thinking about ways to improve their speaking skills and to introduce the lesson topics 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
- practice 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.