

# IELTS Life Skills



# Aims of this webinar

- Background to IELTS Life Skills
- IELTS Life Skills users
- Test content and format
- Levels of the test
- Assessment of IELTS Life Skills – **Learning Outcomes**
- Teaching IELTS Life Skills candidates
- Round-up and further support for teachers

About the test  
**SECTION 1**

# Background to IELTS Life Skills

IELTS Life Skills is a new English language test offered by the three IELTS Test Partners – British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment.

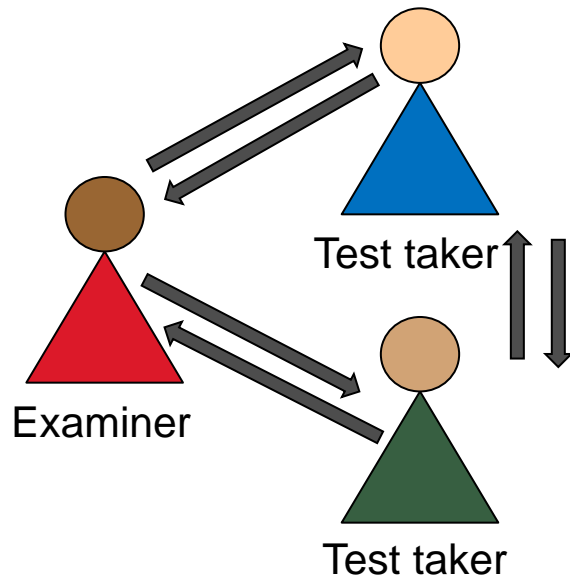
IELTS Life Skills is a test of Speaking and Listening, available at CEFR Levels A1 and B1. ***It is designed to meet the requirements of UK Visas and Immigration for certain visa categories and other immigration purposes.***

# Who is IELTS Life Skills for?

People applying for visas for:

- family of a settled person
- indefinite leave to remain
- citizenship.

# How is the test organised?



- One examiner, two candidates
- Speaking and listening skills
- Test takers communicate with the examiner and the other test taker and listen to a recording

# What do test takers have to do?

Phase	A1	B1
1a	Ask and answer questions on familiar topics with the examiner.	Ask and answer questions on familiar topics with the examiner and with each other.
1b	Ask and answer questions on familiar topics with each other.	Talk for 1½ minutes on a familiar topic.
2a	Answer questions in a combined listening and speaking task.	Answer questions in a combined listening and speaking task.
2b	Discuss a theme related to the listening task.	Plan an activity together on a theme related to the listening task and discuss a related topic.

# What are 'familiar topics'?



# What are 'familiar topics'?

- personal details/experiences
- family and friends
- buying goods
- work
- health
- leisure
- education/training
- housing
- weather

Levels and learning outcomes

# **SECTION 2**

# CEFR

What has the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages done for us?

## CEFR quiz – true or false

1. The full title is *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Assessment, Teaching and Learning*.

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**False** (we'll accept 'partly true'). The actual order is **Learning**, Teaching and Assessment.

## **CEFR quiz – true or false**

2. There are six levels, each described in the four skills areas of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.

## CEFR quiz – true or false

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**True** (we'll give you 'false' as well).

There are six levels, **A1 to C2**, each covering the four skills.

However, Speaking is subdivided as 'Spoken Interaction' and 'Spoken Production'. (Are these different skills areas?)

## CEFR quiz – true or false

3. Every one of the self-assessment descriptors in the CEFR begins with the words '*I can ...*'.



## CEFR quiz – true or false

3. Every one of the self-assessment descriptors in the CEFR begins with the words '*I can ...*'.

**False** (but we'll accept true).

At the levels at which IELTS Life Skills is assessed (A1 and B1), the statement is true. C2 Listening begins '*I have no difficulty ...*' but if that doesn't mean '*I can ...*' what does?

## **CEFR quiz – true or false**

4. The CEFR includes a comprehensive and prescriptive list of grammatical structures required for each of the levels.

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**False**

	<b>A1</b>	<b>B1</b>
<b>Listening</b>	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.
<b>Spoken production</b>	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
<b>Spoken interaction</b>	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, and initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music, etc.

## Learning outcomes

- **Obtain information**
- **Convey information**
- **Speak to communicate**
- **Engage in discussion**

# Learning outcomes

➤ **Obtain information**

➤ Convey information

➤ Speak to communicate

➤ Engage in discussion

# Learning outcomes

## ➤ Obtain information

**Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.**

## ➤ Convey information

## ➤ Speak to communicate

## ➤ Engage in discussion

# Learning outcomes

## ➤ Obtain information

Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.

## ➤ Convey information

## ➤ Speak to communicate

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## Learning outcomes

➤ **Obtain information**

Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.

➤ **Convey information**

**Give a verbal account of relevant information in a structure appropriate to the context.**

➤ **Speak to communicate**

➤ **Engage in discussion**

## Learning outcomes

➤ **Obtain information**

Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.

➤ **Convey information**

Give a verbal account of relevant information in a structure appropriate to the context.

➤ **Speak to communicate**

**Make meaning clear by ...**

➤ **Engage in discussion**

## Learning outcomes

➤ Obtain information

Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.

➤ Convey information

Give a verbal account of relevant information in a structure appropriate to the context.

➤ **Speak to communicate**

**Make meaning clear by using language appropriate to task and context with accuracy and range of lexis, grammar and phonological features appropriate to level.**

➤ Engage in discussion

## Learning outcomes

### ➤ Obtain information

Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.

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Give a verbal account of relevant information in a structure appropriate to the context.

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Make meaning clear by using language appropriate to task and context with accuracy and range of lexis, grammar and phonological features appropriate to level.

### ➤ Engage in discussion

## Learning outcomes

### ➤ Obtain information

Listen and demonstrate understanding of verbal communication: everyday conversations, instructions, recorded texts.

### ➤ Convey information

Give a verbal account of relevant information in a structure appropriate to the context.

### ➤ Speak to communicate

Make meaning clear by using language appropriate to task and context with accuracy and range of lexis, grammar and phonological features appropriate to level.

### ➤ Engage in discussion

Speak with other people (partner and examiner) to give and obtain information.

# Assessment

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Candidates are required to give evidence of the ability to meet **all Learning Outcomes** during the course of the IELTS Life Skills test.

Achievement of Learning Outcomes is assessed at the **end of Phase 1** and at the **end of Phase 2a** and at the **end of Phase 2b**.



The test

# **SECTION 3**

# A1 test

Phase	A1
1a	Ask and answer questions on familiar topics with the examiner.
1b	Ask and answer questions on familiar topics with each other.
2a	Answer questions in a combined listening and speaking task.
2b	Discuss a theme related to the listening task.

## A1

### Phase 1a and 1b

⌚ 4 – 5 minutes

Phase 1a

[The Examiner will select questions from those provided in the test pack, in a variety of areas such as name, nationality, work/study, where candidates live, and free time activities.]

⌚ 5 minutes

Phase 1b

Now I'd like you to ask each other *[signal]* some questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), I'd like you to ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B) about his/her neighbours.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B), I'd like you to ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A) about his/her favourite time of year.

Now think about the questions you want to ask. You have one and a half minutes. You can write down your questions if you want to. *[Indicate paper and pencil.]*

If you don't understand, please ask me.

*[Withdraw eye contact to signal start of preparation. Allow 1½ minutes for preparation.]*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), are you ready? Please ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B) your questions. *[Allow up to 2 minutes.]*

Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B), are you ready? Please ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A) your questions. *[Allow up to 2 minutes.]*

Thank you.

## A1

⌚ 4 – 5 minutes

Phase 1a

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Phase 1b

Now I'd like you to ask each other *[signal]* some questions.

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Now think about the questions you want to ask. You have one and a half minutes. You can write down your questions if you want to. *[Indicate paper and pencil.]*

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*[Withdraw eye contact to signal start of preparation. Allow 1½ minutes for preparation.]*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), are you ready? Please ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B) your questions. *[Allow up to 2 minutes.]*

Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B), are you ready? Please ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A) your questions. *[Allow up to 2 minutes.]*

Thank you.

# A1

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), are you ready? Please ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B) your questions. *[Allow up to 2 minutes.]*

Thank you.

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Now think about the questions you want to ask. You have one and a half minutes. You can write down your questions if you want to. *[Indicate paper and pencil.]*

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Thank you.

## A1

### Phase 2a

⌚ 4 minutes

#### Phase 2a

In this part of the test, you are going to listen to two recordings and answer some questions. You can make notes *[indicate paper]* if you want to.

You hear two people talking about their plans for the weekend. *[Hand each candidate the booklet open at the correct page.]* Where do they want to go at the weekend? To a town, to the mountains, or to the park?

Where do they want to go at the weekend?



to a town



to the mountains



to the park

Listen to the information. *[Play CD.]*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), in the **first** recording, where does the woman want to go at the weekend? To a town, to the mountains, or to the park?

Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B), in the **second** recording, where does the man want to go at the weekend? To a town, to the mountains, or to the park?

Thank you. *[Take back booklets.]*

Now listen again, and answer these questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B), in the **first** recording, who can the woman see in Littlegate? *[short pause]* And how much is a return ticket?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), in the **second** recording, how many hours does it take to climb the mountain? *[short pause]* And what is the man worried about?

*[Play CD again: scripts as above. At the end of the recording ask each candidate in turn their two questions again. After each question, wait for the candidate's response.]*

Thank you.

## A1

🕒 4 minutes

### Phase 2a

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Where do they want to go at the weekend?



to a town



to the mountains



to the park

Listen to the information. *[Play CD.]*

## A1

### Phase 2b

🕒 3 – 4 minutes

Phase 2b

Now you're going to talk together about places you like to go to at the weekend. Talk to each other about places that you like to go to, and what you like to do there.

*[Repeat if necessary. Withdraw eye contact to signal start of activity.]*

*If necessary, prompt candidates with questions from the box below (e.g. if students are experiencing difficulty in continuing the interaction or if they stray from the topic). Adapt if necessary. Encourage candidate-candidate interaction by eliciting agreement or alternative opinions from candidates by asking questions such as "What do you think?", "Tell us what you think.", "And you?"]*

#### Weekend plans – prompt questions

Who do you like to go out with at the weekend? (What do you do?)

Do you like going to new places? (Why?/Why not?)

Which places are good for children to go to?

What do people in your country like to do in their free time?

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

# A1

## Weekend plans – prompt questions

Who do you like to go out with at the weekend? (What do you do?)

Do you like going to new places? (Why?/Why not?)

Which places are good for children to go to?

What do people in your country like to do in their free time?

# B1 test

Phase	B1
1a	Ask and answer questions on familiar topics with the examiner and with each other.
1b	Talk for 1½ minutes on a familiar topic.
2a	Answer questions in a combined listening and speaking task.
2b	Plan an activity together on a theme related to the listening task and discuss a related topic.

## B1 Phase 1a

Now you are going to ask each other some questions. I want you to find out from each other about another town or city you have visited and why you like it. You have two minutes to talk to each other.

*[Withdraw eye contact to signal that candidates should start. Allow two minutes. Prompt candidates with questions from the box below, or others suitable for the level, if necessary (e.g. if interaction breaks down or if language remains below B1 level).]*

Prompt questions:

What did you do in \_\_\_\_\_/there?

How is \_\_\_\_\_ different from \_\_\_\_\_, and how are they similar?

What is the best time of year to visit \_\_\_\_\_ and/or \_\_\_\_\_?

What other places would you like to visit in the future?

Thank you.



## B1 Phase 1b

🕒 7 minutes

Phase 1b

In this part of the test, you are each going to talk for about one and a half minutes. While you are talking, your partner will listen to you. Your partner will then ask you three questions about what you have said.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A), you're going to tell \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B) about the kinds of things that make you laugh and the people who make you laugh.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate B), you're going to tell \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate A) about something you'd like to be good at and why you'd like to be good at it.

You both have one minute to think about what you want to say. You can make notes if you want to. *[Indicate paper and pencil.]* If there's anything you don't understand, please ask me.

*[Withdraw eye contact to signal start of preparation. Allow 1 minute for preparation.]*



## B1

### Phase 2b

🕒 7 minutes overall

Phase 2b

🕒 3 minutes

Now you're going to plan something together.

I'd like you to imagine that a friend is planning a weekend away in the countryside with her family. *[Hand out candidate booklet at correct page.]*

First talk together about which transport she should use for the weekend away and choose the one you think would be best. *[Read out list while pointing at the first box.]*

Then plan and decide what to do about these things. *[Read out list while pointing at the second box.]*

You have two minutes to talk about this, so don't worry if I interrupt you.

*[Withdraw eye contact to signal that candidates should start. If candidates do not start within 10 seconds, ask: Would you like to start now?]*

Which transport?	Plan and decide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bus</li><li>• car</li><li>• train</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• what things they will need to take</li><li>• the best things to do</li><li>• how to organise their trip</li></ul>

Thank you.

*[Retrieve candidate booklets.]*

# B1

## Phase 2b

### Which transport?

- bus
- car
- train

### Plan and decide

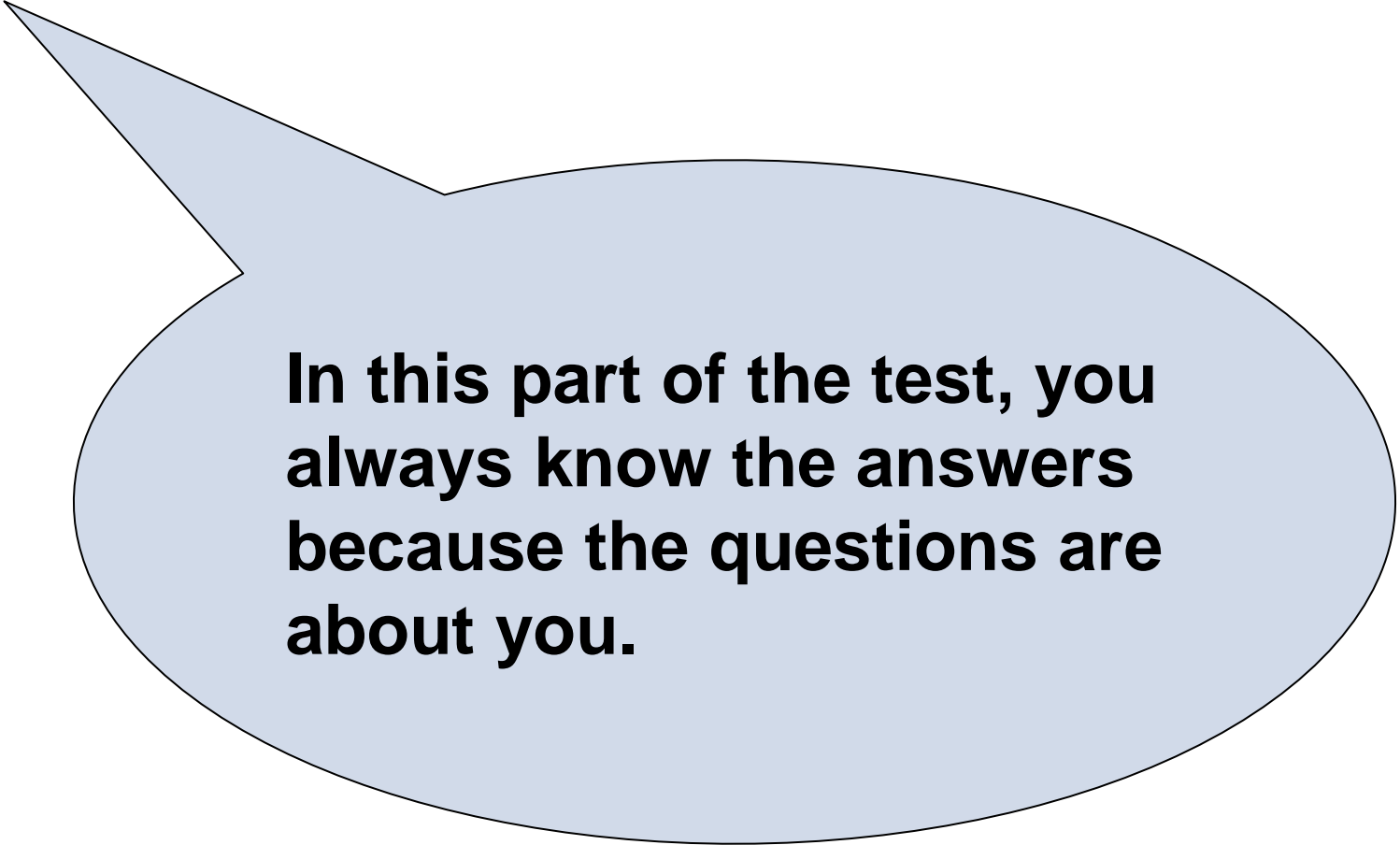
- what things they will need to take
- the best things to do
- how to organise their trip

Teaching tips  
**SECTION 4**

# A1 Phase 1a

- **Make it real: swap classes.**

## **A1 Phase 1a**



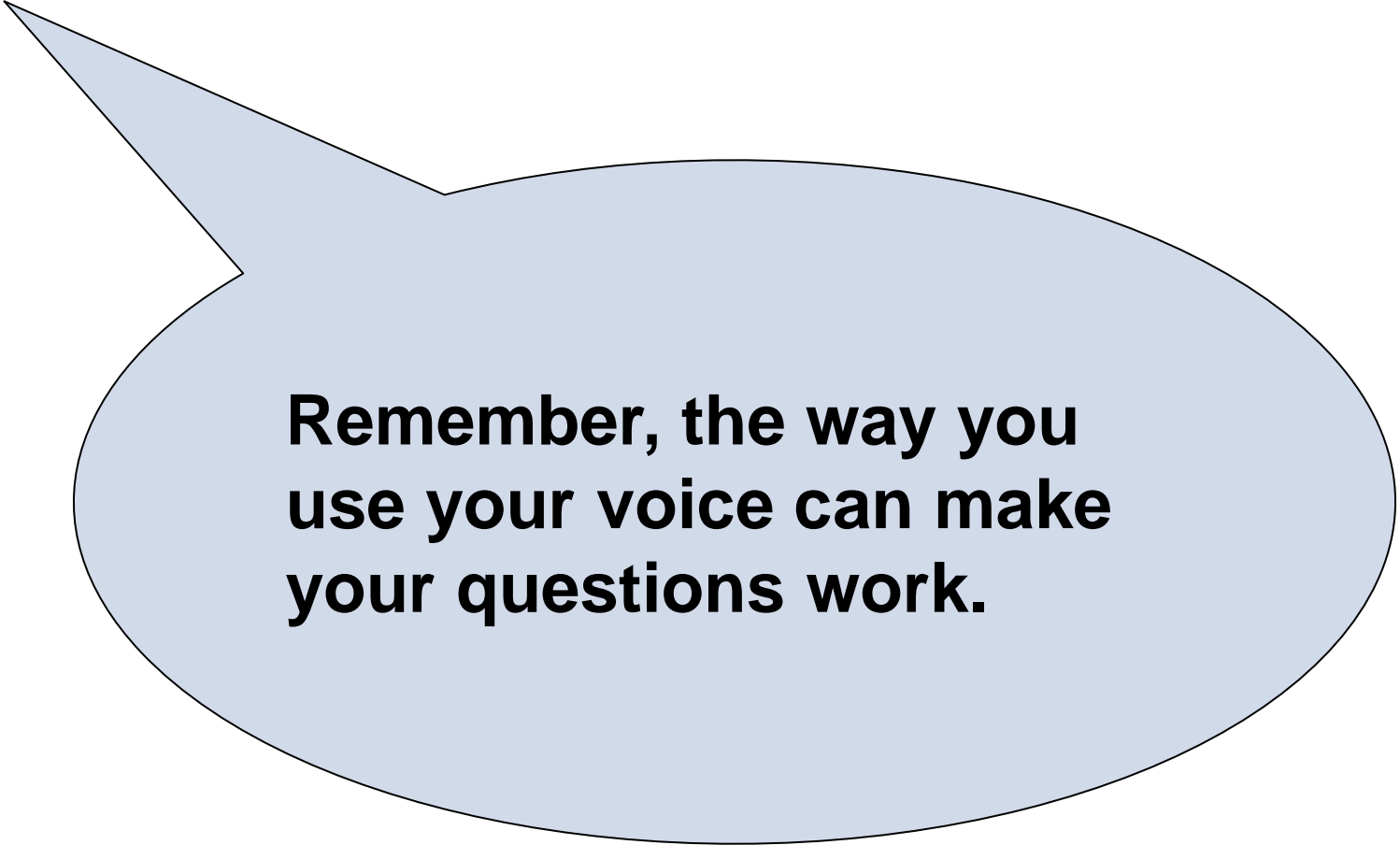
**In this part of the test, you  
always know the answers  
because the questions are  
about you.**

## **A1 Phase 1b**

**‘What’s the question?’ is a fun classroom activity:**

- **Put learners into groups of 3–4.**
- **Give the learners a response, e.g. At 9 o’clock.**
- **Groups decide on 2–3 questions which could elicit that response.**
- **Give points for questions which work, even if they’re not perfect.**

## **A1 Phase 1b**



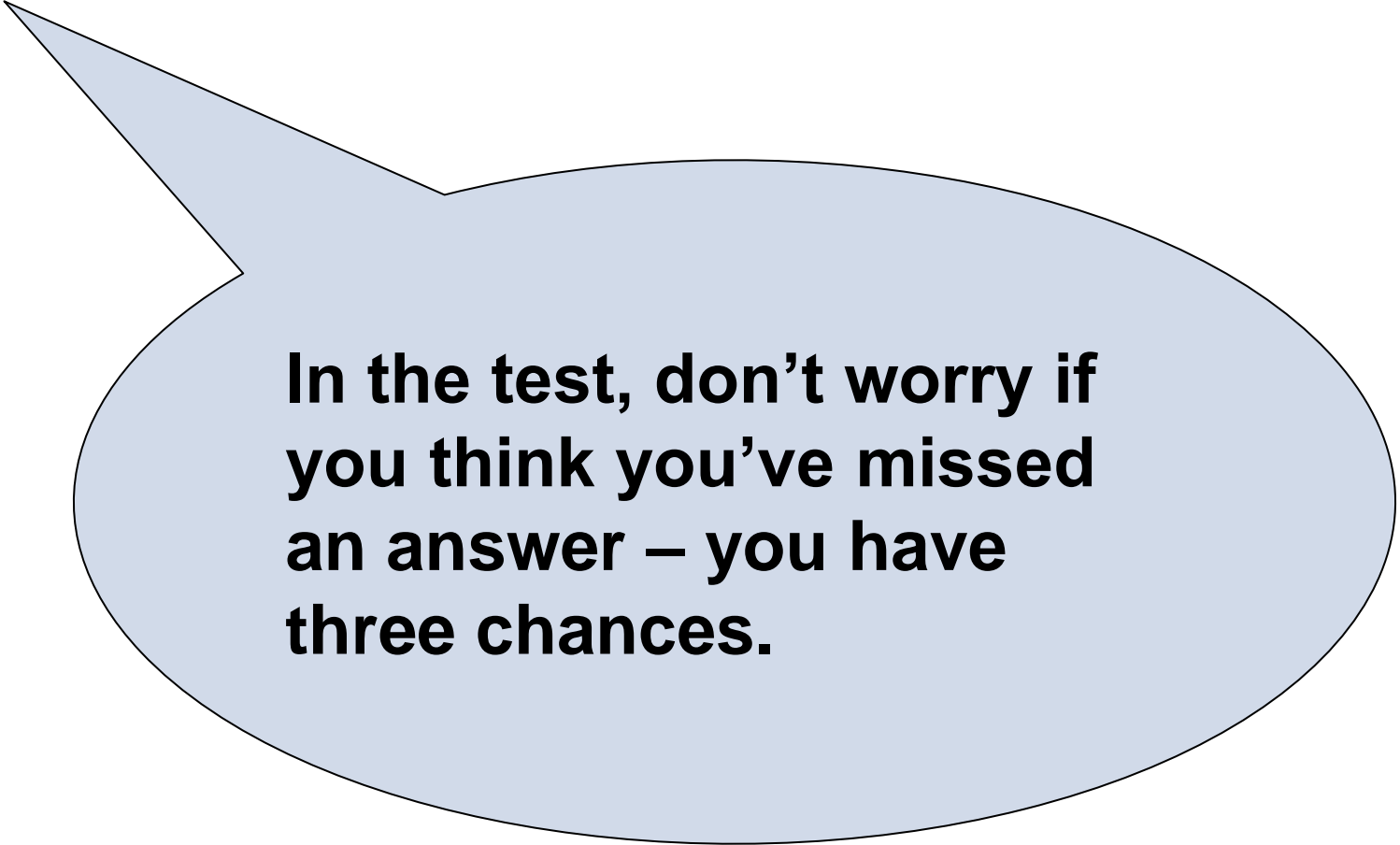
**Remember, the way you  
use your voice can make  
your questions work.**

## **A1 Phase 2a**

**Use sample materials to help your learners become used to listening for clues and avoiding distractors.**



## A1 Phase 2a



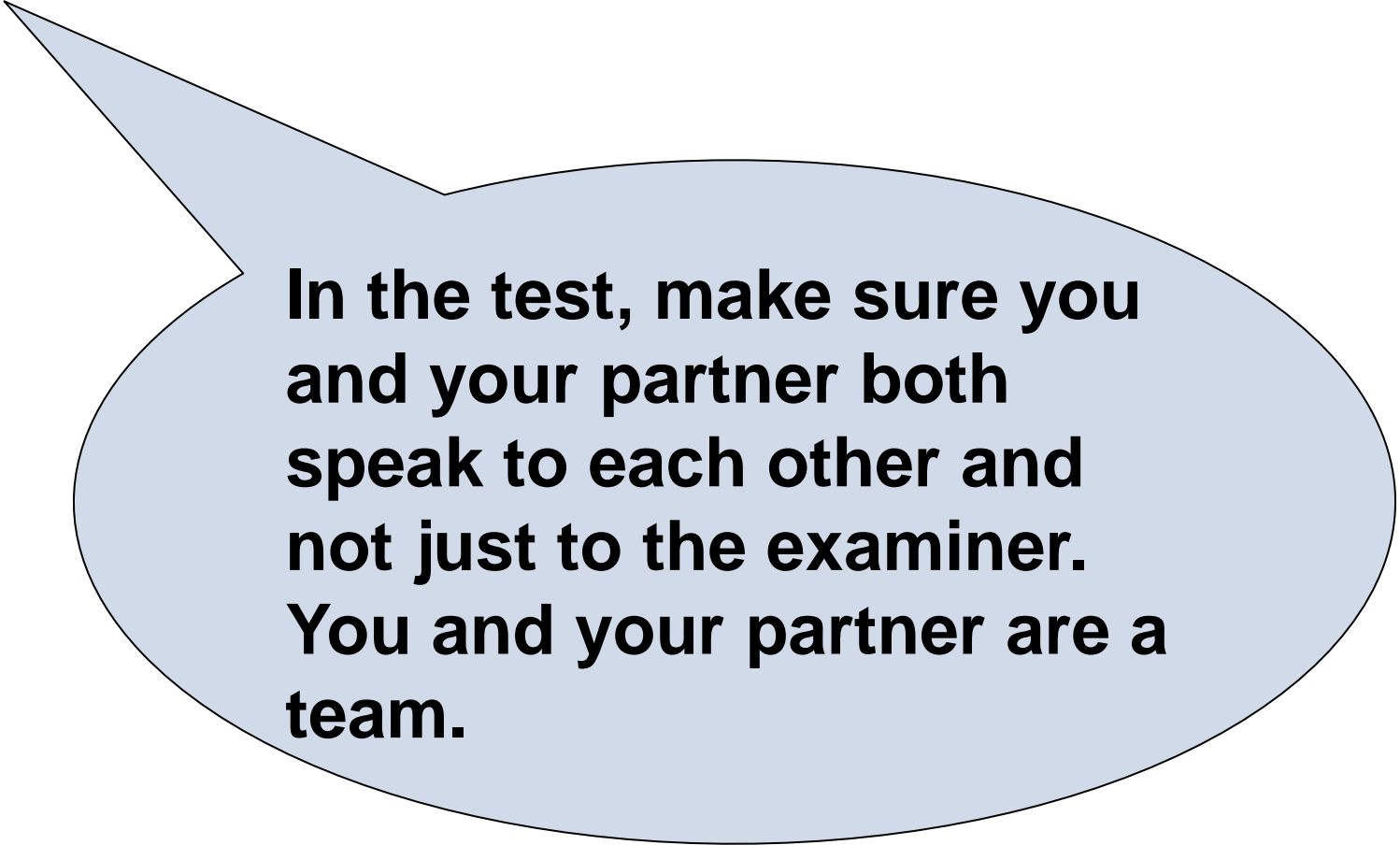
**In the test, don't worry if  
you think you've missed  
an answer – you have  
three chances.**

## **A1 Phase 2b**

**Practise turn-taking strategies, e.g. the ‘triangle’ activity:**

- **Put learners into groups of three (A, B and C).**
- **Give A and B a sample Phase 2b task. Ask C to note down the interaction patterns.**
- **Rotate the triangle to give everyone practice.**

## **A1 Phase 2b**



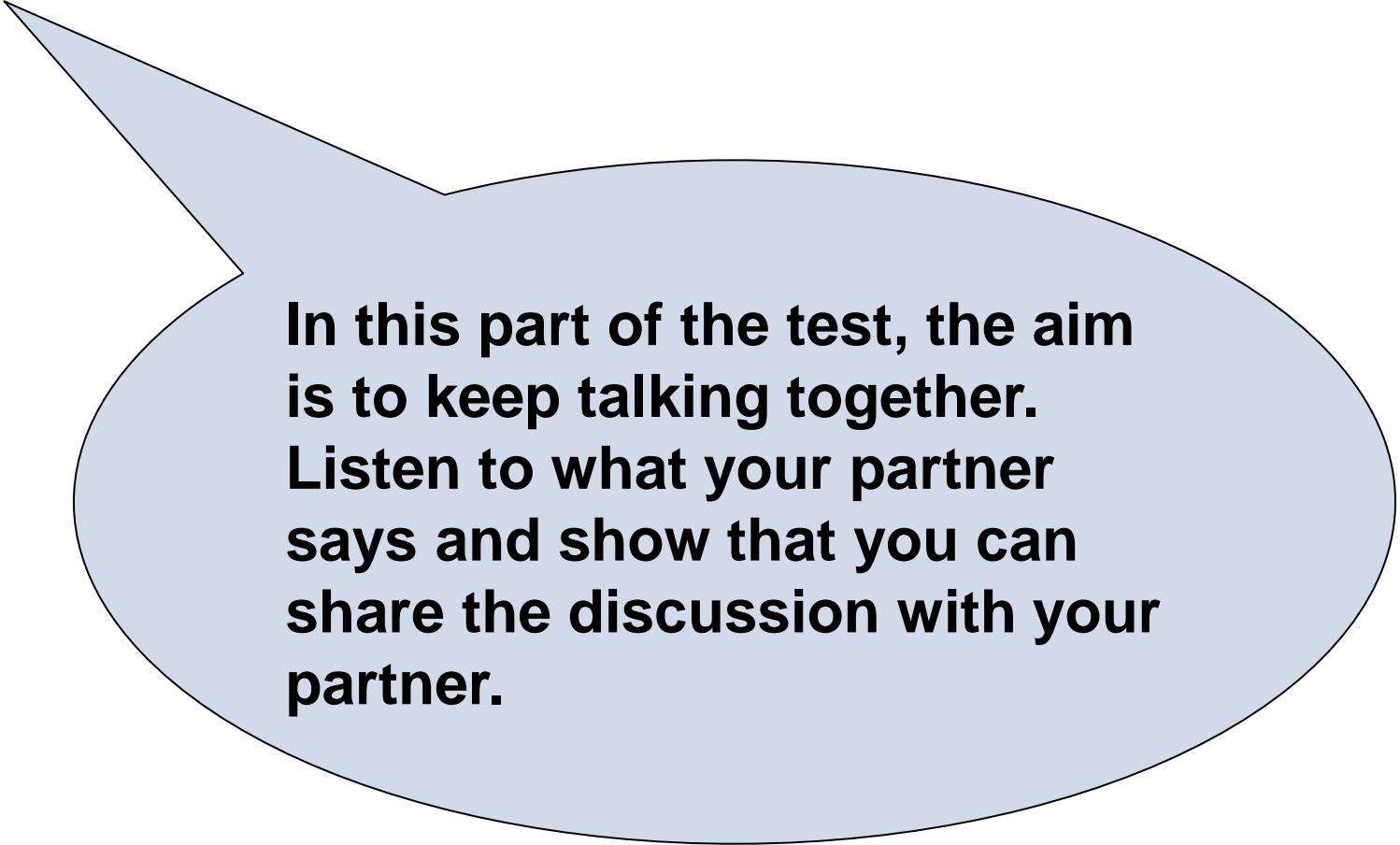
**In the test, make sure you  
and your partner both  
speak to each other and  
not just to the examiner.  
You and your partner are a  
team.**

## **B1 Phase 1a**

**‘Keep talking’ is a fun classroom activity:**

- **Put learners into pairs.**
- **Give one pair a suitable topic. They must try to talk about the topic for 2 minutes without repeating an idea, hesitating or going off the topic.**
- **Other learners can challenge. Teacher is the ‘referee’.**

## **B1 Phase 1a**



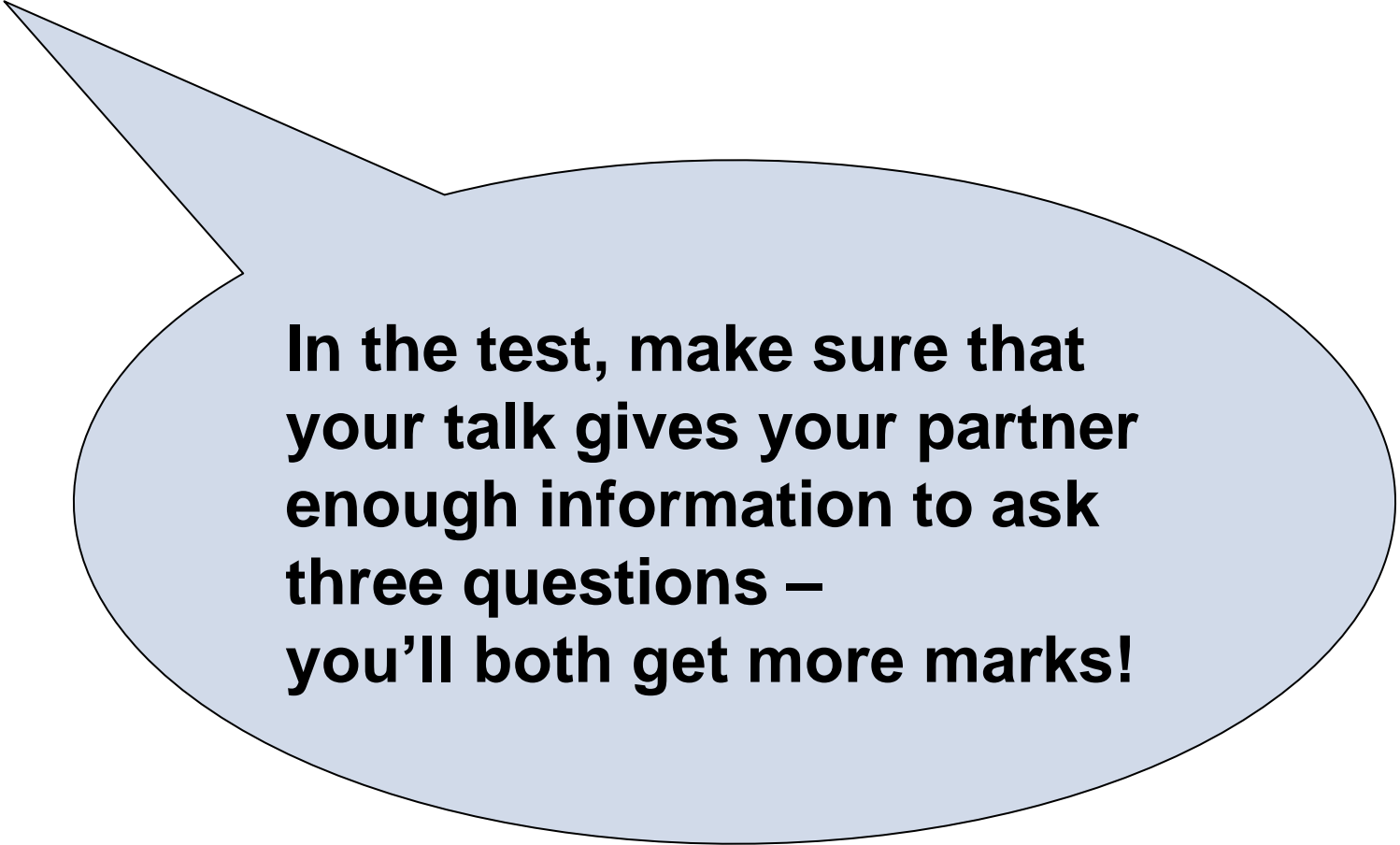
**In this part of the test, the aim is to keep talking together. Listen to what your partner says and show that you can share the discussion with your partner.**

## **B1 Phase 1b**

**Timing is everything:**

- **Put learners into groups of four.**
- **Three learners plan a talk in three sections of 30 seconds.**
- **The fourth learner listens, keeps time (5 seconds' leeway) and asks a question of each speaker, if possible.**
- **Each successful speaker scores 1 point.**
- **Swap roles.**

## **B1 Phase 1b**



**In the test, make sure that  
your talk gives your partner  
enough information to ask  
three questions –  
you'll both get more marks!**

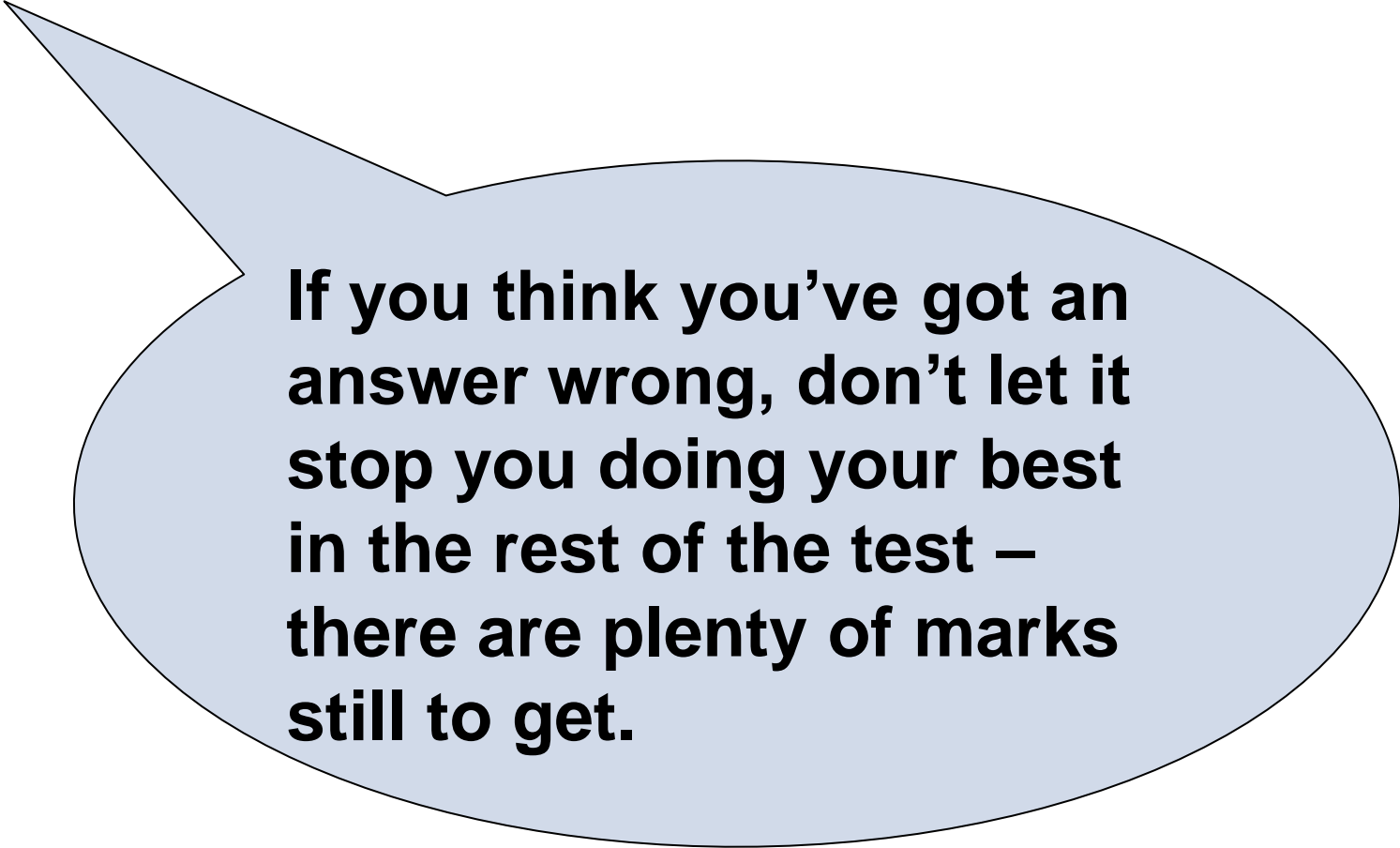
## **B1 Phase 2a**

**Adapt sample materials to help your learners become used to listening for clues and avoiding distractors:**

- **Split the class into two teams.**
- **Each team must make up three true/false questions based on a tapescript.**
- **They then swap questions and listen to the recording to find the answers.**



## **B1 Phase 2a**



**If you think you've got an answer wrong, don't let it stop you doing your best in the rest of the test – there are plenty of marks still to get.**

## B1 Phase 2b

**Work on efficient teamwork in making choices and planning an action together.**

<p><b>Which transport?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bus</li><li>• car</li><li>• train</li></ul>	<p><b>Plan &amp; decide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• what they will need to take</li><li>• the best things to do</li><li>• how to organise their trip</li></ul>
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## B1 Phase 2b

**Work on efficient teamwork in making choices and planning an action together.**

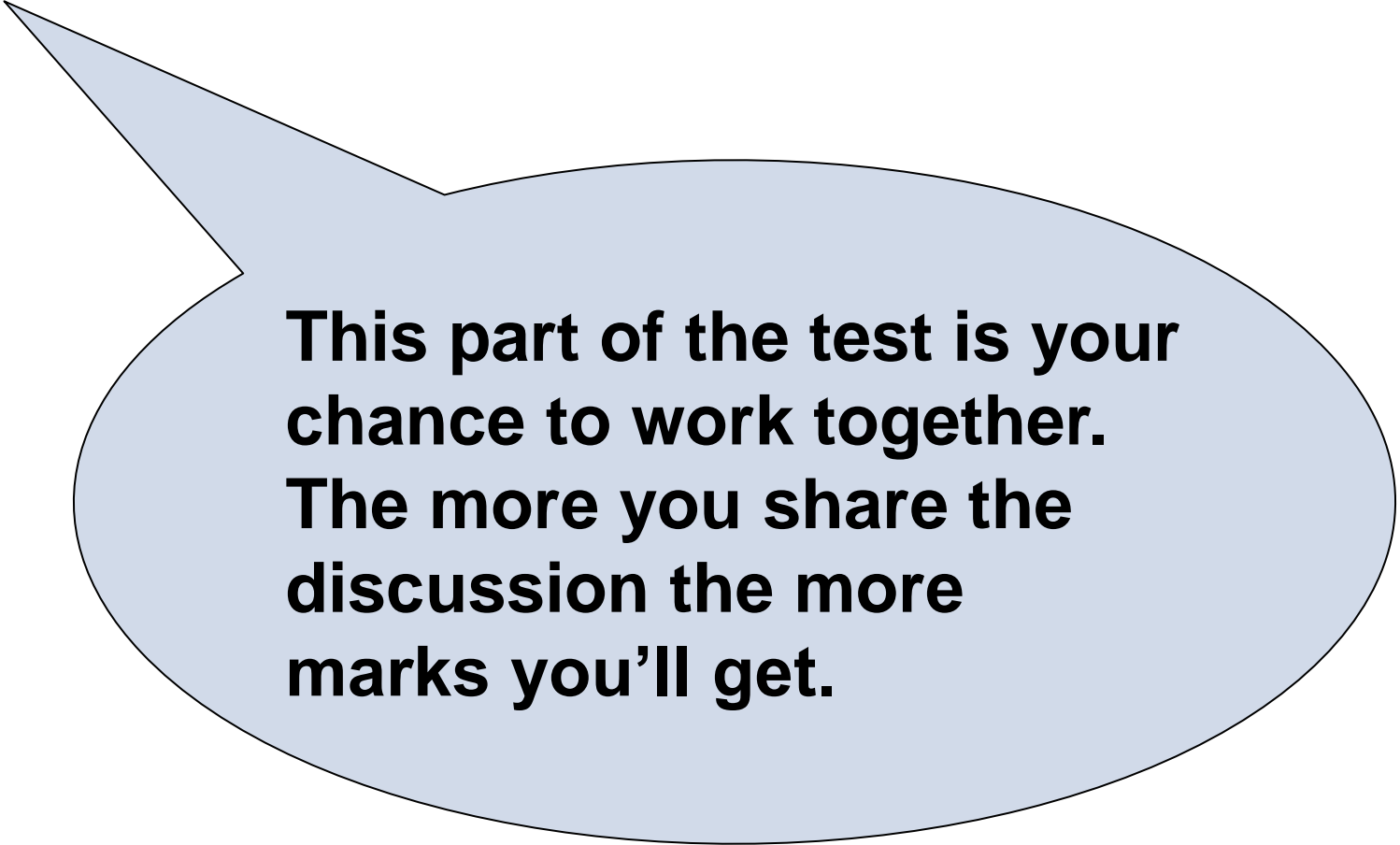


<p><b>Which transport?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bus</li><li>• car</li><li>• train</li></ul>	<p><b>Plan &amp; decide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• what they will need to take</li><li>• the best things to do</li><li>• how to organise their trip</li></ul>
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## **B1 Phase 2b**

**Work on efficient teamwork in making choices and planning an action together.**

## **B1 Phase 2b**



**This part of the test is your chance to work together. The more you share the discussion the more marks you'll get.**

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- Assessment of IELTS Life Skills – **Learning Outcomes**
- Teaching IELTS Life Skills candidates
- Round-up and further support for teachers