



Speaking Part 4: three-way conversation

Overview: An introductory lesson for this part of the exam which teaches students how to discuss a topic collaboratively.

Part of Exam: First Speaking (Paper 4) Part 4

Language/Skill Practised: expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing.

Materials: One copy of Part 3 visual prompts per two students, taken from a sample/past exam paper. One copy of the Worksheet per group of three or four students.

Time: 50 to 75 minutes

Preparation

Cut up the worksheet into packs of cards. You might want to alter the worksheet to include the exam topics you plan to use in Part Two below. This lesson can only be done after Speaking Part 3 has been covered.

You may find it useful to look at the Cambridge ESOL website for examples of the questions used in the speaking paper. Try this link:

cambridgeenglish.org/exams/first/exam-format/

Procedure

Part One: Warmer – Difficult question

Ask students to pick a letter of the alphabet, e.g. 'Q'. Brainstorm 10 words beginning with this letter and write the words on the board. Next ask students to pick a number from 1–10 and use this to choose one of the words they brainstormed, e.g. 'quiz'. Put students into pairs and ask them to discuss this topic in pairs for 4 minutes. If they have difficulty starting, you might want to brainstorm some questions or sub-topics, e.g. 'Do you ever watch TV quiz shows?'

Stop them after the allocated time. Prompt any groups that stop before then with suggestions for further questions.

Tell them that if they managed to complete this task, they will have no problems with Speaking Part 4.

Part Two: Exam task

Hand out the Speaking Part 3 visual prompts. Ask them what part of the exam it comes from. Tell them that Part 4 is an extension of Part 3, so they need to do a Part 3 task first. Read out the exam task. Check they understand it and leave them to speak in pairs for 3 minutes.

Ask students what the general topic of the task they have just completed is, e.g. if they just talked about what birthday gifts to give certain members of their family, the general topic could be 'gift giving' or 'celebrations'. Tell them that Part 4 will be a discussion of questions the examiner will ask them on that topic. Brainstorm as many possible examples as possible and put them on the board, using the real exam questions as examples/prompts, e.g. 'When do you give gifts in your country?', 'What do you prefer – giving or receiving gifts?'

Split the class into groups of three. Nominate an examiner in each group. Ask them to make the other two students speak for 4 minutes by prompting them with the questions on the board.

Stop the class after 4 minutes and give any relevant feedback, especially on the functional language they used.

NB. The 'examiner' in each group will often ask whether they should ask their questions to the two candidates together or to individual students. Leave dealing with this question until the feedback stage. The answer is 'it depends' – different examiners do different things, although if one student has dominated Part 3, examiners will often nominate the other student to speak slightly more in Part 4 to compensate for this.

**Speaking Part 4: three-way conversation****Part Three: Opinion game**

Leading on from the initial feedback stage, brainstorm language for giving and asking for advice, e.g. 'Do you think that...?', 'In my opinion...'. You could also cover language of agreeing and disagreeing.

Ask students if they thought the opinion questions in Part Two were interesting. Tell them they can't complain about difficult or boring questions in the next activity, as they will be making the questions.

Pick a card from the pack you have prepared and write the word(s) on the board, e.g. 'capital punishment'. Brainstorm interesting questions using this word/topic. Choose an interesting question to begin the discussions e.g. 'Do you think capital punishment helps reduce crime?'

Take out a coin and elicit the terms 'heads', 'tails' and 'toss a coin'. Tell them that in this game 'heads' = 'ask' and 'tails' = 'answer'. Toss the coin yourself. If you got heads you can direct your question at any member of the class, but if you got tails you must answer it yourself.

Choose a student, e.g. the one that asked the previous question, and ask them to take a card, make a question and toss the coin. If they have difficulty making a question, let the other students help them.

After the relevant person has answered the question, check everyone understands the rules and then split the class into teams of three or four. Give them a pack of cards and a coin per group, and let them start.

Monitor, especially for the use of opinion forms, and feedback as a class after 20 to 30 minutes of the game.



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Tips

Tip 1 This task follows on from the 'working together' task in First Speaking Part 3. Part 4 is always related to Part 3 topic-wise, in some way, and therefore the examiner will ask the candidates more general questions based on the topic of Part 3. For example, if in Part 3 the students have decided which way is best to promote healthy eating, in Part 4 they might be asked questions on health such as 'Do you think government health campaigns are effective?'

Tip 2 To help students anticipate the questions in Part 4, it can be useful to brainstorm possible questions after practising Part 3 (see Teacher's Notes).

Tip 3 Unlike in Part 3, this part of the exam is a three-way spoken interaction. As in the other parts of the speaking exam, it is meant to be as natural as possible. Therefore, students can comment on what the other candidate has said and politely interrupt if they feel it is appropriate. The general tone is semi-formal.

Tip 4 Students often ask whether the questions will be aimed at both of them or specifically to one person. The answer is that it depends – on the examiner and on the candidates. An examiner will often choose to direct the questions if one candidate has been dominating the conversation too much. It is good to tell students this if they are doing the exam with someone they don't know, as they often worry about how much they are allowed to speak.

Tip 5 Students are sometimes uncertain about the length of their answers in this part of the exam. There is not an exact length that any one answer should be. This part generally lasts 4 minutes (or 6 minutes for groups of three). The examiner has about 6 or 7 questions to ask in Part 4, so two-word answers for each one are going to lead to a very unhappy examiner! Not having much to say on one or two of the questions is not a big problem, however. At the other extreme, if the candidates find one of the questions so fascinating that they can talk about it in a natural way for 4 minutes, this is a good thing, as it saves them from any more tricky questions the examiner may have.

Tip 6 The functional language of asking for and giving opinions, including some agreement and disagreement language, is useful for this part of the exam. Any speaking tasks involving giving opinions can be good, fun practice for this, e.g. debates. See First Speaking Part 4 Teacher's Notes for another example of an opinions game.



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Worksheet

Capital punishment	Corporal punishment	Compulsory military service	Abolish	Ban
Smoking	Traffic	Pollution	Globalisation	Public transport
Retirement age	TV	The press	Computer games	Exams
Illiteracy	The 3rd world	Mobile phones	Taxes	Marriage
Diet	Fashion	Modern art	Exercise	Teenagers
Hollywood	Unemployment benefit	The environment	Materialist	The future