



## Speaking Part 2: talking about photos

**Overview:** After a warmer and a diagnostic test, students play a game for intensive oral practice of the language of comparing and contrasting, and try another exam task. There is an optional homework/extension activity to allow them to personalise the language.

**Part of Exam:** First Speaking (Paper 4) Part 2

**Language/Skill Practised:** talking about something on your own; comparing, describing, expressing opinion, speculating

**Materials:** Past/Sample exam papers for Speaking Part 2, e.g. 2 full sets of materials for an exam task (including the examiner's scripts) per pair of students. (Optional) 1 x A4 sheet of 20 small pictures of objects and animals per student, for comparing and contrasting in '20 Questions'.

**Time:** 40–60 minutes

### Preparation

This lesson should take place after covering Part 1 of the speaking exam. A Part 1 revision game can then be used as a warmer for this lesson (see below).

You will need to photocopy the examiner's script for the second exam task in Part Four below. This can be copied from a past/sample exam paper, or from the exam practice book you are using. However, you will need to make sure the instructions are clear as the students will not have seen this part of the exam before.

The optional pictures for '20 Questions' can be found in EFL photocopiable resource books or in Clipart.

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/](http://cambridgeenglish.org/exams/first/exam-format/)

### Procedure

#### Part One: Warmer – Endless question (Speaking Exam Part 1 Revision)

- Write a simple question like 'Where are you from?' on the board. Tell students you want them to ask you that same simple question over and over again. Try to answer it in a different way every time they ask it (e.g. 'A small town on the south coast', 'The most boring town in the world', 'About 60 miles from here'). Tell them it is important to find different ways to answer the same question, as range of vocabulary is something that is tested in the exam.
- After you have finished answering their questions, ask students to work in pairs and do the same activity. One student should be the examiner and the other should be the candidate (they don't take turns). Write another question on the board (e.g. 'Do you have a large family?') and tell students to begin. Write a different question on the board. Students swap roles and repeat.

#### Part Two: Diagnostic test

- Tell students they are going to practise Part 2 of the speaking exam, so they should listen very carefully.
- Split the class into pairs and nominate an A and B in each pair. Using a past/sample exam paper for Speaking Part 2, read out the examiner's script for the task and hand out the photos. Make sure you leave time for students to ask you questions if they need further clarification. Next, indicate that each student A should talk to their partner. Stop them after exactly 1 minute and continue with the script. Stop student B after 20 seconds and repeat everything with the second set of photographs. **N.B.** If you have an odd number of students, make sure the extra student gets a chance to practise with you.
- Encourage class feedback on how the experience felt for them. Students often comment on how quickly the time goes.

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- Give your feedback on how you think it went. Concentrate on how well the students followed the examiner's instructions. Typically, students spend too much time describing and not enough time comparing and contrasting.

**Part Three: Comparing and contrasting '20 questions'**

- Brainstorm language for comparing and contrasting and write it on the board.
- Elicit full sentences using the phrases on the board.
- Tell students you are going to play a game to practise this language. Their partner will think of an object or animal. They need to ask questions using the language on the board to guess the object or animal. Their partner will only be able to answer yes or no.
- Show students how the game works by providing a few examples. Start by choosing an object in the room. Allow students to ask you yes/no questions such as 'Is it as big as a book?' Make sure all the questions contain the comparing language written on the board. If they make an incorrect guess of what it is, e.g. 'Is it Sergei's coat?', tell them why not using the comparing language ('No, because Sergei's coat is red, whereas this is blue').
- When they have guessed one or two objects in the room, either give out your photocopy of pictures of other objects/animals or brainstorm ideas for objects/animals (e.g. Mars, lake, mouse, match) and write these words on the board. Put students in groups of 3 or 4 to continue the game as above, choosing either from the pictures on the sheet you gave them, or from the words on the board.
- Optional extension: Students continue to play the game, but this time they can choose any object/animal they can think of.

**Part Four – Second Exam Practice**

- Split students into groups of three or four.
- Get students to do another exam practice, but this time with one of the students acting as examiner. Nominate an examiner for each group and give him/her a past/sample exam paper for Speaking Part 2, including the examiner's script and the photos. Make sure all the examiners read the whole script before they start. Tell the examiners to watch the timing very closely. Tell the candidates to answer the questions and try to use as much of the language you have just practised as possible. Start all the groups simultaneously.
- Feedback on how much they have improved.

**Part Five – Optional Extension – Language Personalisation: Cities**

- Get students to personalise the language of comparison and contrast they have just practised by using it to communicate about something they know well – their own town or city. There are two ways to do this:
- Option one: Students work in pairs and compare and contrast their home towns/cities and feedback to the class the similarities and differences.
- Option two: Students write about their home town/city and a city everyone knows, e.g. the city they are studying in. This is best done for homework. They can read about each other's cities in the next class and feedback as above. The teacher can collect the texts and correct the language. The corrections can be used in a future revision class closer to the exam.



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## Tips

**Tip 1** The examiner will give one of the candidates two photographs. First he/she will ask the candidate to show the pictures to the other candidate(s). This means everyone has seen the pictures. Therefore, teachers can encourage students to use language to identify which photos they are talking about, e.g. 'these pictures', 'the top/bottom two pictures' or more complex language such as 'the former/the latter'.

**Tip 2** The examiner will then give the candidate precise instructions about what they should say about the pictures. The instructions always have two parts (the first part asks them to compare the photos, the second part asks for an opinion about the photos), so students should listen very carefully.

**Tip 3** If the student doesn't fully understand the question, they should ask the examiner to repeat or rephrase it. If they still don't understand, they should ask again. They should remember that they are being tested on their speaking in this part of the exam, not their listening comprehension. However, one thing they are being scored on is their ability to actually answer the question they are asked.

Asking the examiner to repeat can actually be the perfect opportunity to show off some complex language, e.g. 'I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch the last part', 'If I can just check what you are saying, you'd like me to...', 'I'm not quite sure what (compare) means', etc.

**Tip 4** The examiner always asks the students to 'compare the two photographs'. They will never be asked to simply describe them. Any activities giving oral practice of comparing language (more than, less than, (not) as \_\_\_\_\_ as, similar to, etc.) and contrasting language (although, whereas, however, etc.) are good practice for this. See the Teacher's Notes for Speaking Part 2 for examples. Students should also refer to specific parts of the pictures (in the top right corner, in the background).

**Tip 5** The second part of the question is usually about giving some kind of opinion e.g. 'Compare the two holidays and say which you would prefer'. Expressions like 'in my opinion' and 'from what I can see' can be very useful here.

**Tip 6** Students should make sure they are talking to the examiner (and the other candidate) rather than to the photos. This can be practised in the classroom by getting students to turn over the photos once they have taken a glance at them, or even getting them to do a task with imaginary pictures.

**Tip 7** The examiner will interrupt the student speaking after one minute, even if they are halfway through a sentence. Being interrupted is actually good, as it means they haven't run out of things to say. The student should not wait for the examiner to interrupt them. They should just keep talking. If they have compared, contrasted and described the pictures in a short space of time, they could go on to apply a personal experience to the topic of the pictures.

**Tip 8** As the examiner takes the photos away from the first candidate, he/she will ask the other candidate a question about those photos. Again, this is probably a question of opinion, e.g. 'Which holiday would most people prefer?' This only requires a short answer, but is a perfect chance to show they have been listening to what their partner said, with language such as 'As (Juan) said...', or 'I agree entirely with (Kimiko).'



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What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying in these ways?



Worksheet