



## Speaking Part 3: working together

**Overview:** An introductory lesson for this part of the exam which teaches students to work co-operatively through speaking games

**Part of Exam:** First Speaking (Paper 4) Part 3

**Language/Skill Practised:** exchanging ideas; expressing and justifying opinions; agreeing and/or disagreeing; suggesting; speculating; evaluating; reaching a decision through negotiation.

**Materials:** a selection of Part 3 tasks taken from sample/past exam papers for each pair of students

**Time:** 20 to 30 minutes

### Preparation

This activity is best done after you have completed Speaking Part 2.

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

- Tell students that their current class is being cancelled and they have to work together to choose a new schedule, location and teacher. Put them in groups of three or four and ask them to discuss what they would like to do. They have three minutes to decide together on the new details and it is important to try and justify their choices.
- Feedback as a class after 3 minutes and ask what each group decided. Tell them they have just completed a variation of a First Certificate Part 3 speaking task.

#### Part Two: Exam Practice

- Read out the script for the exam task, using a sample or past exam paper. Give out a spidergram exam task to each pair of students (and possibly one group of three) as you speak.

- At the end of your instructions, check if the students have any questions or need any instructions repeated. Do not prompt them to do so, though, as they should be well trained by now.
- Let them start and time them carefully (3 minutes in total, or 4 minutes for groups of three). Monitor for task completion (actually answering the question given), turn taking and agreeing and disagreeing language.
- Interrupt them after three minutes and say 'What did you decide?' Feedback as a class for a couple of minutes.
- Feedback on task completion.
- Feedback on turn taking. Ask students how much talking they should each do (50%). Tell students you are going to practise this now.

#### Part Three: Turn-taking games

- Students will often ask at the previous stage 'What if my partner won't talk/doesn't stop talking?' If they do not, use this section to introduce these questions.
- Deal with the first question first. Brainstorm tactics and language to get the other person involved. This includes phrases like 'What do you think?', 'Do you agree?', tag questions ('isn't it?', 'don't they?') and intonation.
- Give out another exam task from a sample/past paper and tell students the person in each pair who will 'win' the task is the one who makes their partner talk most.
- Read out the instructions, time the task and monitor for turn taking. Ask each pair who 'won'.
- Now deal with the 'partner won't stop talking' question. Brainstorm polite interruption language. This is often similar to polite disagreement language, e.g. 'Yes, but...', 'I agree, but...', etc.
- Give out a third task from a sample/past paper and tell them this time the person who can speak most without being rude or talking over the other person wins. Monitor and interrupt groups if they are not using the language/tactics mentioned. Stop after three minutes and give feedback.
- **Variation:** Rather than having different tasks each time, you can repeat the task with different pairings.



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#### Tips

**Tip 1** The examiner will explain the speaking task as he/she gives the associated visual prompt to the candidates. Students will need to concentrate on listening to the instructions and make sure they are not distracted by the spidergram at this stage.

**Tip 2** The question always has at least 2 parts. First students discuss their ideas (2 minutes for pairs, 3 minutes for groups of three). Then they need to try to reach an agreement (1 minute). Encourage students to keep their discussions flowing with phrases such as 'Perhaps we should move on' or 'Let's talk about...'. In class, students need to get used to taking turns in a conversation so a good way to practise this is to allow one student to start speaking and then clap your hands at random intervals to signal that they should pass the conversation to their partner.

**Tip 3** In the exam it is important to minimize silences. If students really have no opinion, they should say 'I really have no opinion'. A cheeky but occasionally necessary trick is for candidates to start off by asking their partner 'What do you think?'

**Tip 4** In this part of the exam communication takes place between the two (occasionally three) students only. The examiner will often look out the window and pretend not to listen. This is to show students not to address the examiner. The examiner sometimes does such a convincing impression of not listening to the candidates that his/her first question of Part 4 is often 'What did you decide?'

**Tip 5** Students should try to make sure the conversation is split evenly between them. If someone's partner really won't talk or let them talk, then only the uncooperative student will be penalized. However, such an unusual circumstance is a good opportunity to show polite interruption and other turn-taking skills. These skills can be enjoyable to practise in the classroom. In addition to the ideas in the Teacher's Notes, the 'Interrupting Game' can be quite fun. The idea is that one person tries to complete a story/ anecdote and the other people politely interrupt him/her by asking for additional information or clarification.

**Tip 6** Candidates are being marked on their ability to work their way towards a conclusion. They need to discuss the ideas in the spidergram in turn, making sure to spend roughly the same amount of time on each idea. If possible they should try to compare and contrast the ideas as they did in Part 2. When they have discussed each idea they need to reach a consensus. However, it is not a problem if they do not agree. It is important that they try to justify their opinion and evaluate it in relation to the task question.

**Tip 7** In this section students often lack language to express polite disagreement. This is also often a matter of cultural awareness. It is a good idea to raise students' awareness of useful common English phrases like 'Yes but...', 'I see what you mean but...', 'I agree up to a point but...'.