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Cambridge Pre-U Modern Foreign Languages

Speaking Test: Guidance for Candidates

Principal Course

9779 FRENCH
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9781 SPANISH
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Pre-U Modern Foreign Language Principal Course – Speaking Test

Notes for Candidates

These notes are intended to help you to feel prepared for your Speaking Test in Pre-U Principal Course French, German, Italian, Russian or Spanish.

Format of the Examination

The test is in two sections:

Section 1: Discussion of an Article and Related Themes
Section 2: Prepared Topic Discussion

The test will last 16 minutes in total, and you will have about 20 minutes to prepare before you begin. You may decide in which order you wish to approach the two sections in the test, but you should tell the examiner which order you have chosen before the start of the test.

A Cambridge Examiner will visit your school or college to conduct the test. At the beginning of the day you will have the chance to meet him/her and go through the procedures for the test.

The Examiner will record your examination. While you are speaking, they will make notes and mark the examination. They are not allowed to tell you how you have done or show you the mark sheet.

Section 1: Discussion of an Article and Related Themes

When you arrive to start preparing for your Speaking Test, you will be offered a choice of four short newspaper articles in the target language. Each article will have a general heading which relates to a topic area from the syllabus. You will have up to **two minutes** to select **one** of the articles, and you should choose a topic about which you have some opinions. You do not need to be an expert on the topic: you will only need to speak generally about it. You may find that one of the articles is on the same theme as your chosen topic. If this happens, it is a good idea to choose a different article so you do not run out of things to say.

You will then have about 18 minutes to read through the article and prepare for a discussion with the Examiner about the themes within it and related to it. You will not be allowed to use a dictionary or other reference material during this time, but you may make notes and refer to them during the test. You can take the article with you into the examination.

After the preparation, your Speaking Test will begin. You will present an overview of the article to the Examiner for about **one minute**. You will then talk about your opinion of the article, and discuss its themes and the issues they raise for about **three minutes**. After that the Examiner will move the conversation on to a broader discussion about the topic given in the heading on the card, which will last **four minutes**.

Section 2: Prepared Topic Discussion

You will need to choose and prepare a topic for this part of the examination. Your topic must be related to the history, current affairs or culture of a country where the language you are studying is spoken. You will need to fill in a **Speaking Test Prepared Topic Submission Form** giving details of your topic together with between five and eight headings, and your teacher will arrange for this to be sent to the Examiner at least two weeks before your examination. You should keep a photocopy of this form to bring into the test with you, to act as a prompt. If you wish, you can also bring up to three pieces of visual material, but you **may not** bring in a script or any notes in addition to the **Topic Submission Form**.

In the examination, you will be able to talk for up to **one minute** about your topic (e.g. why you chose it, the interesting/contentious points) before the Examiner will begin to ask you

questions. If you have not finished talking after one minute, the Examiner will interrupt you to begin the discussion.

Choosing your topic for Section 2:

Whatever topic you choose, you **must** relate it to the history, contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. For example, you might choose to talk about drug problems in modern society, but you need to ensure that you make specific reference to a country where the language is spoken. Where you do not fulfil this requirement, the mark for Factual Knowledge and Opinions will be adversely affected.

In order to avoid duplication of examined material, you may **not** use any of the texts or films listed in the syllabus for Component 4 (Topics and Texts) as the subject of your Speaking Test presentation. Where you do not fulfil this requirement, the mark for Factual Knowledge and Opinions will be adversely affected.

It is important that you deliver your presentation in as natural a way as possible. With the exception of the one minute introduction, the test is conducted through discussion, so you will need to listen carefully to what the Examiner says or asks, and be ready to respond in a relevant way. Remember that you can take your headings and up to three pieces of visual material in to the test with you.

You will need to show evidence that you can present relevant facts, express opinions and hypotheses and put forward points for discussion. When choosing a topic, you should think about how a conversation about it might develop: if you cannot think of half a dozen questions you could be asked about it, it is unlikely to present a fruitful source for discussion. Marks are awarded for the ideas and opinions you express, so you need to think carefully about how you can express these if the topic you choose is very factual. If the only way to continue conversation on the topic would be to ask for additional factual information, the topic is unlikely to score highly for the expression of opinions and the ability to raise issues for discussion.

Aim to develop your answers to the Examiner's questions beyond simple short responses. In the course of the conversation, you must be prepared to substantiate, elaborate, clarify and qualify issues from the presentation. If you can develop your answers, you will have the opportunity to steer the conversation to some degree, which is a hallmark of the higher band of the mark scheme. In order to give you every opportunity to do this, Examiners will ask questions of the "tell me more about…", "why…?", "how…?" variety, rather than closed questions which may be answered by "yes/no". The Examiner's objective will be to encourage you to contribute as much as possible to the conversation and to advance beyond simple sentence responses, without playing too large a part in the conversation him/herself.

The Examiner is not necessarily an expert on your chosen topic. He/she will at all times adopt the position of the interested layperson, and ask a series of general, open-ended questions, designed to allow you to talk freely about the aspects of the topic which have particularly interested or engaged you.

Remember that the Examiner is on your side, and wants to reward your strengths - but cannot do this if they are not expressed!

Discussion of a Newspaper Article and Related Topics (30 marks)

- Comprehension and Discussion (14 marks)
- Range and Accuracy (10 marks)
- Pronunciation and Intonation (6 marks)

Comprehension and Discussion (14 marks)	**Range and Accuracy (10 marks)**	**Pronunciation and Intonation (6 marks)**
13-14 *Excellent* Excellent understanding of article and response to Examiner's prompts. Shows initiative in developing discussion.	**9-10 *Excellent*** Excellent level of accuracy. Confident and effective use of wide range of structures.	**6 *Excellent*** Authentic pronunciation and intonation.
11-12 *Very good* Very good understanding of article and response to Examiner's prompts. Responds readily without undue hesitation.	**7-8 *Very Good*** Very good level of accuracy, over range of structures. Tenses and agreements generally reliable, but some lapses in more complex areas.	**5 *Very good*** Very good pronunciation and intonation.
9-10 *Good* Good understanding of article and response to Examiner's prompts. Reasonably forthcoming but tends to follow examiner's lead.	**5-6 *Good*** Good level of accuracy, with some inconsistency. Some complex language attempted. Errors do not impair communication.	**4 *Good*** Generally good pronunciation and intonation.
7-8 *Satisfactory* Adequate understanding of article and response to most of Examiner's prompts. Has difficulty with more complicated ideas.	**3-4 *Satisfactory*** Gaps in knowledge of grammar. Communication impaired by errors.	**3 *Satisfactory*** Satisfactory pronunciation and intonation.
4-6 *Weak* Limited understanding of article and very limited response to Examiner's prompts, with marked hesitation.	**1-2 *Weak*** Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Accuracy only in simple forms.	**2 *Weak*** Many sounds mispronounced.
1-3 *Poor* Minimal understanding of article and response to Examiner's prompts.		**1 *Poor*** Native language heavily influences pronunciation and intonation, impeding communication.
0 No significant understanding of article and response to Examiner's prompts.	**0** No rewardable language.	**0** Wholly inauthentic pronunciation and intonation.

Prepared Topic Discussion (30 marks)

- Factual Knowledge and Opinions (14 marks)
- Range and Accuracy (10 marks)
- Pronunciation and Intonation (6 marks)

Factual Knowledge and Opinions (14 marks)	**Range and Accuracy (10 marks)**	**Pronunciation and Intonation (6 marks)**
13-14 *Excellent* Excellent factual knowledge of subject, understanding, illustration and opinion. Excellent preparation and discussion.	**9-10 *Excellent*** Excellent level of accuracy. Confident and effective use of wide range of structures.	**6 *Excellent*** Authentic pronunciation and intonation.
11-12 *Very good* Comprehensive knowledge of subject, demonstrating clear understanding and using appropriate illustration. Range of relevant opinion, confidently discussed.	**7-8 *Very Good*** Very good level of accuracy, over range of structures. Tenses and agreements generally reliable, but some lapses in more complex areas.	**5 *Very good*** Very good pronunciation and intonation.
9-10 *Good* A good range of knowledge, generally well used. Relevant opinions. Ideas discussed well.	**5-6 *Good*** Good level of accuracy, with some inconsistency. Some complex language attempted. Errors do not impair communication.	**4 *Good*** Generally good pronunciation and intonation.
7-8 *Satisfactory* Solid base of knowledge, but insecure in some areas. Opinion adequate. Not always able to develop discussion.	**3-4 *Satisfactory*** Gaps in knowledge of grammar. Communication impaired by errors.	**3 *Satisfactory*** Satisfactory pronunciation and intonation.
4-6 *Weak* Limited knowledge, with obvious gaps. Some irrelevance and repetition. Opinions limited. Discussion pedestrian and/or hesitant.	**1-2 *Weak*** Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Accuracy only in simple forms.	**2 *Weak*** Many sounds mispronounced.
1-3 *Poor* Very limited knowledge. Material very thin and vague. Very hesitant discussion.		**1 *Poor*** Native language heavily influences pronunciation and intonation, impeding communication.
0 No knowledge shown of topic.	**0** No rewardable language.	**0** Wholly inauthentic pronunciation and intonation.