



Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking (from 2015)

Sample test with examiner's comments

This document will help you familiarise yourself with the Speaking test for *Cambridge English: First for Schools*, also known as *First Certificate in English (FCE) for Schools*. It accompanies [this video](#), where you can see Kok Wee, from Malaysia, and Chris, from China, take a Speaking test. Both these candidates cope well overall with the tasks in the test.

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About the Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking test

The Speaking test is 14 minutes long and consists of four parts. The standard test format is two candidates and two examiners. One examiner (the interlocutor) will speak to you and your partner and the other (the assessor) will be listening.

Part 1 (2 minutes)

The interlocutor asks you and your partner questions about yourselves. You may be asked about things like your home town, your interests, your studies, etc.

Part 2 (4 minutes)

The interlocutor gives you two photographs and asks you to talk about them for about 1 minute. The interlocutor then asks your partner a question about your photographs and your partner responds briefly (up to 30 seconds).

Then the interlocutor gives your partner two different photographs. Your partner talks about these photographs for about 1 minute. This time the interlocutor asks you a question about your partner's photographs and you respond briefly (up to 30 seconds).

Part 3 (approximately 4 minutes)

This part is divided into two parts and the examiner asks you and your partner to talk together in both. You will be asked to discuss a written question. For example, you might be asked to discuss ways to use some rooms in a language school. The interlocutor gives you prompts to help you but does not join in the conversation. After 2 minutes, the interlocutor will ask you to make a decision which is related to what you have been discussing. You have 1 minute for this.

Part 4 (approximately 4 minutes)

The interlocutor asks some further questions, which lead to a more general discussion of what you have talked about in Part 3. You may comment or expand on your partner's answers if you wish.



How the Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking test is assessed

As you do the test, the **assessor** focuses on these areas of your English:

Grammar and Vocabulary

Are you using a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary? Are you using these structures and vocabulary correctly? Are you using vocabulary which is appropriate for a range of familiar topics?

Discourse Management

Are you using both long and short answers, depending on the task? Is everything you say relevant to the task? Are your ideas expressed clearly? Are you using some language to link and organise your ideas? Are you able to speak fluently and with very little repetition?

Pronunciation

You don't need to have an English accent, but it is important to be clear. Are you pronouncing individual sounds clearly? Are you placing stress on the right parts of words and on the right words in sentences? Does your voice go up and down at the right times?

Interactive Communication

Are you able to interact with the other candidate easily and effectively? Are you listening to the other candidate and answering in a way that makes sense? Are you able to start a discussion and help keep it going with your partner? Can you think of new ideas to add to the discussion?

The **interlocutor** focuses on your **Global Achievement**. This is about your general performance. How well are you speaking about the topics you are given? Are your answers clear and fluent? Are you using language that is right for the *Cambridge English: First for Schools* level?

The marks are for what you do over the whole Speaking test, not for each part of the test. The examiners give you marks for your own performance – they don't compare you with the other candidate.



Comments on the sample test

| <u>Part 1</u> | |
|---|--|
| Kok Wee | Chris |
| <p>Kok Wee gives a good response to the question about a good teacher he had, saying who the teacher was, the subject he taught and why he was a good teacher. This is a good example of an extended answer. He also gives a good answer to the question about reading, giving an example to extend his response.</p> <p>His answer to the question about a future holiday is clear, but he doesn't finish his answer very well, ending with 'whatever' rather than a clear idea.</p> | <p>Chris develops her answers adequately in this part of the test, giving information about who she spends time with after school and what they do together; and using the internet and why it is useful. Her answers are long enough, but could be spoken more clearly and confidently.</p> |
| <p>Part 1 tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise giving information about yourself. • You can give short answers, but it is good to extend them if you can. • Don't give answers which you have learned, as they don't sound very natural. | |

| <u>Part 2</u> | |
|---|---|
| Kok Wee | Chris |
| <p>Kok Wee uses a range of simple grammatical structures and attempts some complex sentences such as 'they have a certain amount of people participated together to run' and '... all you need is training and perseverance'.</p> <p>He also uses vocabulary appropriate for the task, e.g. tournament, marathon, opponent, level of skills, socialise.</p> <p>Kok Wee does well in Discourse Management, starting with 'The first picture is a tennis tournament ... for the</p> | <p>Chris uses a range of simple grammatical forms accurately e.g. 'they're having a picnic with their friends ... chat with each other', but there are also some inaccuracies e.g. 'the girls are hang out ...', 'they may go shopping or looking for the restaurant'.</p> <p>She uses a suitable range of Vocabulary appropriate for the task, e.g. 'fun', 'chat', 'good weather', 'hang out'.</p> <p>In terms of Discourse Management, Chris starts quite well, describing each</p> |



second picture ...' describing each picture in turn but not in too much detail. [He then focuses on the second part of the task](#) beginning '... as for the question what might be difficult for the people ...'. Repetition of the question gives him a little time to think and he then comments on each picture in turn.

Altogether, his talk is logically organised.

His Pronunciation is generally intelligible.

[Response to question after Chris's talk:](#)

Kok Wee's answer is very clear; he refers to the pictures and his own likes and dislikes in a good answer which is almost 30 seconds long.

picture in turn, but after about 30 seconds, [she repeats the same ideas and seems to have difficulty thinking of anything else to say](#). After some hesitation and repetition, she tries to make a comparison between the pictures, but has problems finding the language to do this.

She could have said more about the second question in the task.

Chris's Pronunciation is generally intelligible, but because she speaks very quietly and keeps her voice continuously at a very low level, it can sometimes be difficult to follow what she says.

[Response to question after Kok Wee's talk:](#) Chris's response is clear; she supports it with two reasons and also adds a personal comment which makes a good finish to her answer, which is about the right length.

Part 2 tips

- Practise comparing two pictures to get a feel for how much you can say in 1 minute and how you can organise what you say. Remember not to simply describe the pictures.
- Remember that the question is printed above the pictures.
- Approach the task in an organised way.
- If you don't know or can't remember a word, try to use other words for what you want to say.

Part 3

Kok Wee

In terms of Grammar and Vocabulary, Kok Wee uses a range of simple structures accurately and complex structures with some success e.g.

Chris

Chris is generally able to express her ideas using mostly simple structures accurately e.g. 'I think studying to play a musical instrument might be popular as

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'Students might want to learn another language because it's very useful for their future; they can communicate with other people using the certain language and they can make more friends'; 'but you need to take classes in order to draw well'.

He uses a good range of Vocabulary e.g. 'capable', 'healthy', 'instruments', 'passion'.

In terms of Discourse Management, he organises his ideas clearly, using linking e.g. 'if you learn another language, the university will be more interested in you because you are multi-lingual'

'I won't reckon that because if the students are not capable of ... they won't ...'; '... because being healthy is also very important compared to just studying all the time'.

His Pronunciation is clear.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Kok Wee starts off with his ideas for both the discussion and the decision, and communicates well. He moves the discussion forward e.g. 'Students that play sports well, it's another good thing to learn'. [He asks Chris questions e.g. 'Do you agree?'](#), [responds to her ideas and adds his own ideas](#) e.g. '... I agree, but some people ...'.

well'; 'everybody can draw' and 'they also need talent to do that'. There are also some examples of more complex forms e.g. 'What if the students can't speak English very well and still learn another foreign language?'.

She uses a range of Vocabulary appropriate for the topic e.g. 'attract a girl', 'spare time', 'talent'.

In terms of Discourse Management, Chris [expresses her ideas clearly and uses linkers](#) e.g. '... studying to play a musical instrument might be popular as well because if ... it's more useful to attract a girl ...'. Occasionally she hesitates while thinking of language e.g. 'the two language makes up ... might not speak both ...'.

Her Pronunciation is generally clear, with accurate word stress e.g. 'foreign', 'popular', 'attract', 'practise'. However, at times she is not so clear e.g. 'if I was a boy ...' and when she responds to Kok Wee's comment about drawing well.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Chris responds appropriately, asks for Kok Wee's opinions and helps maintain and develop the interaction e.g. [her 'what if' questions](#) and [addition of 'talent' to the discussion](#).

She sometimes moves the discussion forward e.g. 'I think study to play ...'. However, she sometimes doesn't develop her ideas as much as she could e.g. when saying why drawing is easy.



General comments on Part 3

Although Kok Wee and Chris do communicate in this part of the test, this mostly takes the form of taking turns to speak and then asking each other if they agree, so the interaction is not as smooth as it could be. Taking turns is important so that both of you speak, but the interaction should be like a conversation between you and not 'my turn/your turn'.

Part 3 tips

- Discuss each of the prompts together in detail. It doesn't matter if you don't talk about them all.
- Remember that the second part of the task is a discussion about a possible decision; it is not essential to reach a decision and you may even disagree.
- Listen to your partner and respond to what they say before adding your own ideas.
- You can ask your partner questions too if they are having difficulty adding to the discussion.
- Remember to invite your partner to respond and/or contribute.

Part 4

| Kok Wee | Chris |
|---|--|
| <p>Kok Wee's responses in this part generally show good control of Grammar e.g. 'there's a phrase that says ...'; 'if you don't try new stuff you won't know ...'.</p> <p>There are occasional errors with more complex structures e.g. '... you won't know are you capable of ...'; but also a lot of accurate structures e.g. 'In my opinion, people don't like to try new things because they know that they are not capable of doing that thing or ... they like what they are doing right now'.</p> <p>He uses a good range of Vocabulary e.g. 'efficiently', 'waste time', 'ceiling', 'stuff', 'no pain no gain', 'mentally and physically active', 'memorising terms'.</p> <p>He organises and expresses his ideas</p> | <p>In terms of Grammar and Vocabulary, Chris uses mainly simple structures, with occasional errors e.g. 'Most of people love study new things'; 'it's much fun than ...'. She has occasional problems with more complex forms e.g. 'they might worry about someone might laugh at them ...'.</p> <p>She uses appropriate Vocabulary e.g. 'make new friends', 'muscles', 'tons of homework'.</p> <p>She produces some longer contributions in this part of the test, expressing her ideas clearly e.g. 'Yes, I think so ... It's better to have a class, learn some new things and make some new friends'; 'some of them may enjoy playing computer games; but most of us don't</p> |

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[clearly](#) e.g. ‘... you can use your time efficiently and not waste time and just lay on the bed at home and do nothing looking at the ceiling’; and talking about why people don’t like to try new things and [what students in Malaysia do after school](#).

His Pronunciation is generally intelligible.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Kok Wee responds appropriately to the interlocutor’s questions, and listens and responds to what Chris says e.g. his response to Chris’s comment about people being laughed at.

[have the choice to do this because ...](#)’.

Chris’s Pronunciation is similar to the previous parts of the test, but with some good examples of sentence stress e.g. ‘doing the same thing over and over again’.

Chris interacts more in this part of the test, giving longer answers and developing the discussion with her ideas e.g. in her answer to the first question, she explains why she would like after-school classes; when [talking about why people don’t like to try new things](#) and also sport after school.

Part 4 tips

- Make sure you extend your answers with, e.g. reasons, examples.
- Remember you can respond to what your partner says in their answers.
- Sometimes the examiner will ask you to discuss a question together. This may lead to a discussion between you which may last more than one turn each, which is fine.

| Overall | |
|---|---|
| Kok Wee | Chris |
| <p>Grammar and Vocabulary Kok Wee is frequently accurate in simple and complex sentences and he uses a good range of vocabulary.</p> <p>Discourse Management His ideas are logical and clear. He also uses a range of language to link his ideas, usually with very little hesitation.</p> <p>Pronunciation His pronunciation is always clear.</p> | <p>Grammar and Vocabulary The range and accuracy of Chris’s language is appropriate for this level, but she could improve her accuracy, especially in simple forms.</p> <p>Discourse Management Her contributions are often relevant and clear, but some are less clear and repetitive, especially in Part 2. She could improve in this area by working on her fluency to reduce hesitation, and thinking about the kinds of things she can say</p> |

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**Interactive Communication**

Kok Wee communicates his ideas well, responds to his partner and moves the discussion forward.

Global Achievement

Kok Wee uses mostly accurate language which is appropriate for the tasks. He produces extended language to express his ideas in a clear way.

about two pictures in 1 minute.

Pronunciation

Chris is mostly intelligible, but could improve her pronunciation by varying the pitch of her voice (i.e. making her voice go up and down) rather than always speaking at one level. She also needs to speak with a little more confidence.

Interactive Communication

She usually communicates well with her partner, adding ideas and responding appropriately with comments. She could, however, develop the interaction a little more, especially in Part 3.

Global Achievement

Chris can communicate some ideas on familiar topics and she is able to produce some extended language.