

Pearson English Guide: Speaking Listening & Communicating Lesson Plans

Functional Skills : English Level 1

This Planning document is to aid in teaching and learning and should be used as a guide only.

Approaches to teaching Speaking, listening and communication

Students are assessed in two separate but related areas: formal discussion and informal discussion. The two areas must be designated for assessment purposes rather than as 'opportunistic' assessments. This is a requirement for Functional English assessment, but also emphasises the importance of this component in terms of students being functional users of English in all the language modes.

Introduction

Use the introductory pages to this section to share the skills standards, coverage and range and areas of assessments with your students. As soon as possible, take them through the assessment grids which are drawn from the criteria to reinforce what is expected of them when they are assessed in this component.

The lessons

Use pair/group activities in the Reading and Writing lessons as opportunities to develop Speaking, listening and communication skills. Share this with students by reassuring them that they are using their speaking, listening and communication skills in discussions related to their reading and writing so that they can grow in confidence in this component through their pair/group work. Discuss with students the types of contexts for each discussion and link with the texts and related reading and writing activities in terms of functionality. Discussions must be grounded in reality/real-life contexts. Ensure that students understand the differences between formal and informal discussion, and that preparation is essential for both.

Participation in discussions

Use activities where students research a topic and think of questions to ask/contributions to make in discussions.

Through their preparations for the assessments, direct students to ensure that:

- their contributions to discussions are relevant and extended where this is appropriate
- they allow for the input of others and respond to their contributions showing that they have been listening, for example 'the point you just made about...'
- they prepare fully, researching and recording ideas for contributions
- they have something to contribute in both formal and informal discussions of ideas and opinions

- they prepare to make different kinds of contributions such as a question for clarification, a comment, a particular role such as chairing a discussion, interviewer, interviewee
- they present information and ideas clearly
- their body language is positive – good eye contact, facing those in discussion and avoid folding arms, gazing into space or reading/writing if this is not part of the activity
- they use appropriate language – use Reading and Writing lessons to reinforce the importance of form, tone, audience.

Wherever possible, emphasise that these are life skills we need to function successfully in real-life situations where it is essential that we demonstrate speaking, listening and communication skills and related, positive behaviours.

It is important that students understand the differences between formal and informal discussions. Elicit from students how both require preparation, turn-taking, questions, contributions, bringing others into the discussion and using questions to move the discussion forward. Discuss with students the specific roles that are required in formal discussions, such as chairing a discussion, and how there is usually an agenda and an outcome such as reaching a decision.

You might want to take some of these areas and target them for further development. For example, encourage students to think about the questions that they ask and how to revisit points. Through pair/group work, students could list different ways to contribute in response to the views and opinions of others. At Level 1, students are assessed regarding allowing others to provide input and then responding appropriately. They could construct the types of phrases/sentences that could be used to develop/demonstrate the ability to allow the contributions of others and make their own responses. Students could record their ideas and display them on posters to reinforce their learning and for revision purposes. They could also design display posters to show:

- 1 How an agenda is constructed
- 2 The different roles in a discussion
- 3 Identification of the features of formal and informal discussions.

Additional points

Emphasise the importance of:

- using notes as prompts only; students should resist using them as scripts
- demonstrating good listening skills in follow-up questions/comments
- expressing their own views, ideas, opinions and balancing these with listening to others and demonstrating respect for their contributions.

Reinforce the different aspects of this component.

Speaking is active participation, follow-up questions/comments show evidence of participation as a listener and body language and other non-verbal communications are also important parts of the communication process.

Using these different approaches, while making links with functionality in reading and writing, should help students to become confident in their application of speaking, listening and communication skills and to appreciate the importance of applying them not only for assessment purposes but also in real-life situations.

Taking part in an informal discussion

Aim

- Make relevant and extended contributions to informal discussion, allowing for and responding to others' input.
- Present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language.

Lesson learning objectives

- Prepare for a discussion. Make clear, relevant contributions. Listen to others.

Lesson starter: whole class/pair work

Share the skills standards with the students, then provide them with statements for an informal group discussion.

Take students through the following guidance on key skills for discussions:

- Think about what your audience needs to know and prepare some points.
- Organise what you say. Begin with a main point, then give more detail.
- Listen carefully and actively when others are speaking.
- Speak clearly and politely. Use correct grammar and avoid slang words.
- Explain unusual words or difficult ideas. Explain technical terms (jargon).
- Check that your audience understands you. Ask: 'Is that clear?' or, 'Are there any questions?'

Present the task to the class: your local council wants to teach children aged 8 to 11 about road safety. You have been asked to discuss what road safety advice you think should be given to them. Direct pairs to look at the key skills needed for successful discussions. Discuss these skills as a class.

Direct students in pairs to come up with six points that children should learn about road safety, such as looking both ways before crossing a road. Ask them to share their ideas with another pair before feeding back to the whole class.

Main teaching and learning

Set the students a discussion topic and provide some information based around the topic that students can use in their research.

Explain to students that active listening means they should pay close attention to what is being said, respond to the speaker with their body language, make short comments to show they are listening, and ask questions to check their understanding.

Take students through the following guidance on having discussions:

- Play a full part, but don't do all the talking.
- Actively listen to others.
- Make relevant points that fit in with the task and what others are saying.
- Say when you agree with others, for example 'I agree that...' or 'I can see what you mean...'
- Say when you disagree with others and give your viewpoint, for example or 'I can see your point, but...'
- Speak politely and clearly. This is an informal discussion, but you should still try to speak correctly and to avoid too much slang.
- Help others by asking questions, for example 'Hamid, what do you think?'
- Remember the feedback you got earlier and use it to improve your skills.

Direct students to have the discussion. Ask groups to share key messages and things they have learnt about taking part in a discussion. Direct students to make notes of their views in preparation for the Plenary.

Plenary

Discuss the what students have learned during the lesson. Ask students what went well and what needs more work, and ask them to record one positive point and one requiring more work.

Homework

Ask students to look at a topic that interests them that they could use as the basis for a discussion. This could lead to further practice discussions in preparation for the assessment itself.

Taking part in a formal discussion

Aim

- Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions.
- Make different kinds of contributions to discussions.
- Present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language.

Lesson learning objectives

- Prepare for a discussion. Take part in a formal discussion, adopting different roles.

Lesson starter: whole class/pair work

Ask small groups to discuss the following:

- 1 What were the key messages/things learned in the previous lesson?
- 2 What do you think are the differences between formal and informal discussions?

Discuss their thoughts as a whole class.

Set the students a discussion topic and provide some information based around the topic that students can use in their research. Instruct students to prepare for the discussion by taking time to think about what to say, reading relevant information, planning what points to make, deciding who will chair the discussion, and preparing an agenda by deciding in what order the different parts of the discussion will happen.

Discuss the role of the chair and provide students with an example of an agenda so they know what it looks like.

Plenary

Discuss how well the discussions went. Ask the chair and other members of the group to give their feedback on what went well and what could be improved.

Homework

Ask students to research topics that could be used in a formal discussion assessment and work on preparing points for a discussion with a partner.

Main teaching and learning

Remind students that in order to get top marks, they must be able to contribute to a discussion by listening and responding to other people's ideas as well as by giving their own. They should try to ensure that everyone has a chance to give their opinion, and help the group come to an overall agreement or decision. Draw students' attention to the following guidance on effective contributions and encourage them to use this as a checklist for their discussions:

- Speak in standard English and avoid slang words.
- Give reasons for your views.
- Ask questions about others' views, such as 'Why do you think it's more important to...?'
- Support or politely criticise others' points. For example, 'I understand what you are saying, but...'
- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak. For example, 'Does anyone disagree?'

- Try to reach an agreement that suits most people, such as 'So, will everyone be happy if...?'

Small groups role-play a short discussion and take turns being the chairperson.

Ask students in groups to create an agenda, listing points for inclusion in the discussion, the order in which to address them, and who will introduce each point. Discuss with students how an agenda makes the discussion formal.

Finally the students should have the discussion. It is not recommended to spend any more than 10 minutes on this activity. The chair needs to end it and sum up any decisions. Students need to make a note of these decisions for reporting back in the Plenary.