

## Getting to grips with the GCSE (9-1) sequencing grid

A sequencing grid has been produced to ensure that the GCSE (9-1) speaking tests conducted in schools cover all of the five themes\* prescribed in our specification:

1. Identity and culture
2. Local area, holiday and travel
3. School
4. Future aspirations, study and work
5. International and global dimension

Each individual speaking test must cover a series of tasks allocated to candidates on a 'random allocation' basis and which relate to four of the above themes. The sequencing grid, which must be applied on the day of the test, minimises potential for students to predict the themes and also prevents any direct overlap of themes across the speaking test.

Please note that different grids will be provided for **each tier** and **each language** GCSE and that these will **change from year to year** to further reduce any predictability.

At first sight, the grids may seem quite daunting due to the various pathways through the speaking tests dependent on each candidate's choice of topic for the first conversation. This guidance document aims to explain how the prescribed sequences should be applied and features colour-coded illustrations of the different routes that you should follow with your students based on a mocked-up sequence grid.

The grid below is in a similar format to those found in the sample assessment materials and to those that will be included in the live assessment packs. It shows two possible routes through the speaking test for the first candidate to be tested and uses arrows to indicate the required 'direction of travel'. The first is for a candidate who has chosen a conversation topic that links to theme 3 (School) and the second is for a first candidate who has chosen a topic that links to theme 2 (Local, holiday and travel) which is the same theme as the allocated role play. This grid refers to higher tier speaking tests so there are references to HR (higher roleplay) and HP (higher picture-based task) but the same general sequencing approach must be applied to the foundation tier test.

Candidate Order	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	
	Pearson Allocated	Pearson Allocated	Candidate Selection	Teacher Selection
	Role Play	Picture Based	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Candidate 1	HR1 (Theme 2)	HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4
		HP8 (Theme 5)	Theme 1	Theme 2 OR Theme 3
Candidate 2	HR2 (Theme 4)	HP9 (Theme 3)	Theme 2	Theme 1 OR Theme 5
		HP3 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 2 OR Theme 5
		HP10 (Theme 2)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 1	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
Candidate 3	HR3 (Theme 2)	HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP7 (Theme 4)	Theme 2	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
Candidate 4	HR4 (Theme 1)	HP5 (Theme 2)	Theme 3	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP8 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 2 OR Theme 3
		HP9 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 2 OR Theme 4
		HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 2 OR Theme 5
Candidate 5	HR2 (Theme 3)	HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 2	Theme 1 OR Theme 4
		HP3 (Theme 1)	Theme 4	Theme 2 OR Theme 5
		HP6 (Theme 2)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5

## Different pathways for Candidate 1

When consulting the sequencing grid, it's important to **focus first on the 'Candidate selection' column**. This is shaded grey and appears under the 'Task 3' heading. You should **then focus on the 'Candidate 1' row**.

**NB: It's the candidate's choice of topic for Conversation 1 that determines the exact tasks to be allocated.**

### Chosen topic linked to theme 1

If a candidate has chosen to refer to a topic in Conversation 1 that links to Theme 1 (Identity and Culture), the cards allocated must conform to the following pathway:

Candidate Order	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	
	Pearson Allocated	Pearson Allocated	Candidate Selection	Teacher Selection
	Role Play	Picture Based	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Candidate 1 →	HR1 (Theme 2)	HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4

### Chosen topic linked to theme 3

If a candidate has chosen to refer to a topic in Conversation 1 that links to Theme 3 (School), the cards allocated must conform to the following pathway:

Candidate Order	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	
	Pearson Allocated	Pearson Allocated	Candidate Selection	Teacher Selection
	Role Play	Picture Based	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Candidate 1 →	HR1 (Theme 2)	HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4

### Chosen topic linked to theme 4

If a candidate has chosen to refer to a topic in Conversation 1 that links to Theme 4 (Future Aspirations, work and study), the cards allocated must conform to the following pathway:

Candidate Order	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	
	Pearson Allocated	Pearson Allocated	Candidate Selection	Teacher Selection
	Role Play	Picture Based	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Candidate 1 →	HR1 (Theme 2)	HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4

### Chosen topic linked to theme 5

If a candidate has chosen to refer to a topic in Conversation 1 that links to Theme 5 (International and global dimension), the cards allocated must conform to the following pathway:

Candidate Order	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	
	Pearson Allocated	Pearson Allocated	Candidate Selection	Teacher Selection
	Role Play	Picture Based	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Candidate 1 →	HR1 (Theme 2)	HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4

You'll note that, in the above scenarios, any 'Candidate 1' who has chosen a conversation topic linked to themes 1, 3, 4 or 5 must undertake the higher tier role-play task HR1. You'll also see that the required picture-based task and the second conversation theme appear in a straight line alongside the theme linked to the student's chosen first conversation topic.

### Chosen topic linked to *theme 2*

An issue only arises if the first candidate has chosen a topic that links to theme 2 for the conversation 1 since the role-play card HR1 is linked to theme 2. In such a case, this first candidate must follow the 'Candidate 2' sequencing of tasks (as this is the next available grid down) and the potential scenarios for 'Candidate 1' must be disregarded. Please see the following pathway indicated by the **blue arrows**:

Candidate Order	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	
	Pearson Allocated	Pearson Allocated	Candidate Selection	Teacher Selection
	Role Play	Picture Based	Conversation 1	Conversation 2
Candidate 1	HR1 (Theme 2)	HP2 (Theme 4)	Theme 1	Theme 3 OR Theme 5
		HP4 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 4 OR Theme 5
		HP1 (Theme 5)	Theme 4	Theme 1 OR Theme 3
		HP6 (Theme 3)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 4
Candidate 2	HR2 (Theme 4)	HP8 (Theme 5)	Theme 1	Theme 2 OR Theme 3
		HP9 (Theme 3)	Theme 2	Theme 1 OR Theme 5
		HP3 (Theme 1)	Theme 3	Theme 2 OR Theme 5
		HP10 (Theme 2)	Theme 5	Theme 1 OR Theme 3

In the situation above, the next candidate would then become candidate three (or four if there is a conflict of conversation theme and the set role-play in the 'Candidate 3' sequencing) and so on. **It's important to note that you must not go backwards when using the grid.** You should only go back to the top of the grid once the full sequence has been completed.

### Recording guidance: All candidates

In terms of the recordings, you'll need to provide the centre number and, for each test, the candidate, their name and number as well as announcing the role-play (eg HR3) followed by the prescribed task 'introduction'/scene setting and then later introduce the picture based task (eg HP4) with the 'describe the photo' command. The whole oral, including transitions between tasks, should be conducted in the target language. Transitions between tasks can be very simple, e.g. *Maintenant, on va faire la conversation.*

\* Please consult the specification for a fuller description of the five themes, linked subthemes and content.