

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

March – May 2025

Time 10–12 minutes

**Paper
reference**

4ES1/03

English as a Second Language

PAPER 3: Speaking

Instructions for the conduct of examinations

You do not need any other materials.

Turn over ►

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Introduction and general overview

This document should be read carefully by centre staff and interlocutors before any speaking test is conducted.

The Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (4ES1) Speaking Examination (Paper 3) is a **scripted interview** between an interlocutor and the candidate which lasts approximately 10–12 minutes. The interview is recorded by the centre and assessed by a Pearson Edexcel appointed examiner.

The format and structure of the speaking test is described in the main body of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Specification on pages 21–23.

Before the test

Interlocutors

The speaking test will be conducted by an interlocutor appointed by the centre. The person must be an experienced teacher of English who is familiar with the requirements of the speaking test. In most cases, the interlocutor will be a teacher within the centre, but centres that do not have a suitably qualified teacher may arrange for someone from outside the centre to conduct the speaking tests. It is solely the responsibility of the centre to find such an outside person. The centre is also responsible for ensuring that such a person is suitably qualified to carry out the examination and is familiar with the demands and format of it. If there is any doubt regarding the suitability of an interlocutor, please contact Pearson Edexcel for advice.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are a large number of candidates, there may be more than one interlocutor conducting tests, but the number of interlocutors should be kept to a minimum.

Timetabling

For the Summer exam series, the speaking test window begins in either late March or early April, based on the published exam dates. For the Winter exam series, the speaking test window begins in either late October or early November, based on the published exam dates. The dates for speaking windows can be found on the Pearson website at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/news-policy/subject-updates/languages/2025-speaking-windows-confirmed.html>

Centres should aim to timetable all speaking tests on the same day or, where numbers are large, on consecutive days.

Recordings of candidate speaking tests should be submitted via the digital Learner Work Transfer (LWT) portal within 48 hours of centres completing the oral examinations.

Examination room

As quiet a room as possible is required for the tests, preferably away from the noisier parts of the school and from busy roads. It is also important that the room has good acoustic properties.

Only one candidate is examined at a time. Normally, no other person other than the interlocutor conducting the test and the candidate should be present in the examination room. However, where a chaperone is required, this person may also be present in the room.

No one should enter or leave the examination room during the course of the speaking test.

Recording methods

Tests should be recorded in one of the following digital audio formats:

.mp3	.wav	.m4a	.wma	.aif	.aiff
.mpeg	.vlc	.ogg	.oga	.mid	.midi

If the oral assessment is recorded in a different format, please convert the recording to one of the above digital formats.



Complete, unedited recordings of all assessments must be submitted to Pearson Edexcel for external marking. These must be submitted via Learner Work Transfer (LWT). There is no need to encrypt the files you are uploading as the LWT portal is secure. Please do not use zip files.

Submissions using USB/CDs will no longer be accepted. Centres can access the LWT portal via Edexcel Online. For further information on LWT, see guidance posted under 'Forms and administration' on the subject page of the Pearson website.

Recording equipment

All recording equipment, including microphones, is supplied by the centre.
All equipment must be tested before use.

Pearson Edexcel cannot recommend equipment to use for recording purposes, nor can it provide technical advice.

Question cards

Interlocutors may have access to the question cards used in the examination **three working days** prior to the date of the test. This is to allow them to prepare themselves for the test. Candidates may not have any access to the questions or question cards prior to the test.

It may be useful for interlocutors to have a conversation with teachers at the centre before the speaking tests so that they are aware of any issues which may affect the selection of topics/tasks.

Timers

It is recommended that timers be used during the test.

On the day of the test

The following materials are required for the speaking tests:

- **Attendance register**

There is one attendance register for each paper.

It is essential that each candidate is accounted for on the attendance register by indicating either Absent or Present.

- **Candidate Cover Sheets**

You must use the Pearson Edexcel cover sheets. A sample copy is included at the back of this handbook. The top part of the Candidate Cover Sheet is to be completed by the interlocutor.

You can find a digital version of the form under 'Forms and administration' on the subject page of the Pearson website.

- **Recording equipment and microphone**

These are to be tested before use. It is essential to check the following:

- the microphone and recorder are connected correctly and that recording is taking place;
- the position of the microphone favours the candidate;
- extraneous noise is kept to a minimum;
- the recording level is correct and not set too high;
- the recorder is switched on at the start of the test and switched off at the end.

- **Recording/Audio file**

Each candidate's test is to be recorded as a separate audio file.

- **Paper and pens**

These are required for Part 2 of the speaking test.

- **Question cards**



Conduct of the test

General comments

Structure and timing of the test

The structure of the test must be followed.

The timings of the elements of the speaking test must be respected, although timing to the precise second is not expected.

Recording

All tests must be recorded and each candidate's test must be recorded on a separate audio file. A candidate may be recorded **once only**. However, in the event of a recording failure, the candidate may be recorded again. Where this is required, a completely different set of task cards must be used in the re-recording.

Stopping of recording

The recording should on no account be stopped during a test. If an emergency makes this unavoidable, a report should be written immediately to the Head of International GCSE ESL Assessment at Pearson Edexcel. This should be sent via Customer Services. A copy of the report must be included with the recording(s) sent to the examiner.

Selection of task cards

The interlocutor should decide which task cards to use for a candidate at the start of the examination.

Question cards

The only card that the candidate is allowed to see during the test is the Part 2 Student's Card.

Use of notes

The only time that the candidate may make notes before speaking is in Part 2 of the test.

Mobile phones

All mobile phones (interlocutor's and candidate's) must be switched off during the test.

Summary of procedures

Complete the top part of the Candidate Cover Sheet.

Ensure that the recording equipment is switched on. Announce the unit title and number (e.g. International GCSE English as a Second Language 4ES1/03), the centre name, centre number and the interlocutor's name. Following a brief introduction, the candidate is asked to give his/her full name and candidate number and the interlocutor should repeat these details for clarity.

Part 1

The interlocutor announces the start of this part of the test. The interlocutor selects one of the topics on the cards for this part. **All the wording for the questions is provided by Pearson Edexcel.** The interlocutor asks the questions on the card. This is a warm-up activity and the purpose of this part of the test is to get the candidate used to speaking in English and to become familiarised with the voice of the interlocutor. Candidates are expected to respond to the questions asked and to expand where appropriate. Where the candidate is less forthcoming, the interlocutor should ask the follow-up question provided on the card.

This part of the test will take AT LEAST 3 minutes.

Where the candidate has answered all the questions on the topic card before three minutes have elapsed, the interlocutor should select a second topic card and ask further questions.

The interlocutor brings this part of the test to a close.

Part 2

The interlocutor introduces Part 2. **All the wording for this part of the test is provided by Pearson Edexcel.** The interlocutor selects a task card and passes this to the candidate. It introduces the topic for this part of the test. The task card also includes **a question which the candidate must address** and some bullet-pointed items which the candidate may choose to use in his/her response. The candidate is also given a pen and some paper to make notes if he/she wishes. These notes must be collected by the interlocutor at the end of the test and must be retained by the centre until 20th September in the year of the test for the Summer exam series, and until 20th February for tests held in the Winter exam series; however, they are not assessed. **The candidate has one minute to prepare and then is expected to speak for one to two minutes on the given topic.** This part of the test must be timed by the interlocutor. If two minutes have elapsed and the candidate is still speaking, the interlocutor should gently interrupt the candidate at an appropriate point (e.g. at the end of a sentence). The interlocutor should then bring this part of the test to a close and introduce Part 3.



Part 3

In Part 3, the interlocutor uses a set of questions intended to expand on the topic which the candidate talked about in Part 2. **All the wording for the questions is provided by Pearson Edexcel.** The aims of this part are to stretch the candidate in terms of the language he/she is able to produce and to encourage the candidate to talk about a given topic in more complex and abstract terms. Where the candidate is less forthcoming, follow-up questions are provided to encourage the candidate to talk further on the topic.

Questions are arranged in themed groups and they become increasingly difficult. The interlocutor is not expected to work through all of the questions with all of the candidates, but it is recommended that interlocutors do not split question groups and that they work through questions within a question group in order, as far as candidate ability allows.

This part of the test will take BETWEEN 5–6 MINUTES.

The interlocutor should then bring this part of the test to a close and announce the end of the test.

Guidance on conducting the test

When conducting the test		
At this point	Record this	Do this
At the start of each new candidate test	"This is the International GCSE Examination in English as a Second Language" [<i>state examination session</i>] "Paper 3, Interlocutor" [<i>state name</i>] "Centre Name" [<i>state centre name</i>] "Centre Number" [<i>state centre number</i>].	Make sure the Candidate Cover Sheet is complete with relevant details.
At the start of each candidate's test	"Hello, my name is and I will be interviewing you today. Please tell me your name and candidate number." [<i>Interlocutor repeats name and number for clarity</i>]	Start the test. Do not stop or pause the recording during the test.
At the start of Part 1	"First I would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Let's talk about" [<i>state topic for Part 1</i>]	Do not pause or stop the recording. Ask the questions on the card. Use the follow-up questions provided on the card when the candidate is less forthcoming. If the candidate is not very talkative, you may use more than one topic area for this part of the test. This part of the test should last at least three minutes.
At the end of Part 1	"Thank you. That is the end of Part 1."	

At the start of Part 2	"Part 2. Now I am going to give you a task card with a topic and ask you to talk about this topic for one to two minutes. You will have one minute to think about what you want to say. Here is some paper and a pen for you to make notes if you want to, and here is your task card." <i>[Give the candidate the task card, some blank paper and a pen.]</i> You are going to talk about" <i>[Read the introduction to the task card as written on the task card.]</i> "You can use some or all of the ideas listed below in your talk but you must answer this question" <i>[Read the question on the task card as written on the task card.]</i> "You have one minute to prepare. You may begin your talk when ready." <i>[Please time the candidate as s/he prepares his/her talk.]</i> <i>[When one minute is over]</i> "That is the end of your preparation time. You should begin your talk now." <i>[If the candidate has not finished speaking at the end of the two minutes of allocated time, stop the candidate at an appropriate place, e.g. the end of a sentence, by saying]</i> "Thank you. You have been speaking for two minutes." <i>[If the candidate finishes before the end of the allocated time, bring this to an end by saying]</i> "Thank you." <i>[If the candidate has not addressed the question on the card, please make sure that you ask the candidate this question yourself.]</i>	You must choose a task card which does not overlap with the topic you selected in Part 1. The candidate may be unhappy with the given topic. If they ask to change topics, give them a second task card; however, the candidate may not have access to any further topics. Please do not stop the recording at any point, but do not include the time taken for this interaction in your overall timing of this part of the test. The purpose of the list of bullet points is to give the candidate some ideas. The candidate does not need to address any of the bullet points in his/her talk, but they must address the question on the task card. If s/he does not, please ensure that you ask this question before you bring this part of the test to a close. Should the candidate ask you for an explanation of the words on the task card during the one-minute preparation time, you may give simple explanations without going into any unnecessary detail. Do not interrupt the candidate during his/her two-minute talk. However, should the candidate continue talking beyond the two-minute allocation, interrupt the candidate gently at an appropriate point in the talk.
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At the end of Part 2	"That is the end of Part 2."	
At the start of Part 3	"Part 3. We have been talking about [<i>state topic used in Part 2</i>] and I would like to ask you some more questions on this topic."	Each Part 2 topic is accompanied by a set of questions to be used in Part 3. These questions are generally grouped around three related topics and range from the familiar to the complex and abstract. This part of the test should last 5–6 minutes. You may choose to explore one or more of these related areas depending on the ability and range of the candidate's responses. You should aim to stretch the candidate, to encourage him/her to use all the linguistic resources s/he has and to achieve his/her maximum potential. All the wording for the questions is provided on the card. Ask the extension questions, where relevant, to encourage the candidate to explore the subject further.
At the end of Part 3	"Thank you. That is the end of the speaking test."	



Advice to interlocutors on managing interaction during the test

It is important that candidates are tested in the same standard manner. Use the wording given on the cards.

At all times look interested and involved in what the candidate is saying. Try to look relaxed in order to put the candidate at ease.

Listen to what the candidate is saying and avoid asking a question that the candidate has already answered.

Aim at a natural conversation. Encourage the candidate to expand beyond a simple reply to each question. Use the follow-up questions on the cards if the candidate's answer is very short.

If the candidate is speaking quietly, ask him/her to speak up or move closer to the microphone.

Make sure that you use as wide a range of task cards as possible.

You may answer questions that the candidate may have about the task s/he has been given. You may explain the occasional word, but please refrain from giving long explanations or providing the candidate with a paraphrase of the question asked. You may repeat the question more clearly if you wish, but if the candidate clearly does not understand the question, you should move on to another question from the set you are working from.

If the candidate asks for a different topic in Part 2, you may choose a different one. However, the candidate may not have access to any further topics.

The use of a timer is encouraged, particularly for Part 2. However, please do not use it as a reason to cut off a candidate in mid-sentence. Allow the candidate to come to the end of a sentence and then bring the talk gently to an end.

Do not interrupt the candidate except if s/he talks for more than two minutes in Part 2 of the test.

Refrain from using words such as 'good', 'well done' or 'that's right' as this may give the candidate the wrong impression about his/her performance.

Never correct a candidate's language, however inaccurate, during a test.

Avoid finishing sentences for a candidate except where it would be in his/her interest to move on to something else.

At the end of the test do not give the candidate any indication of his/her performance. This is a task for the examiners.

After the test

Recordings

All candidates must be recorded. Immediately after each test, centres must check that a satisfactory recording has been made. It is recommended that centres make a copy of all recordings before submission.

Labelling of recordings

When labelling each candidate test audio file, please use the following convention:

Centre_Candidate Number_Surname_First Letter of First Name

e.g. 12345_7890_Smith_J

Further information can be found in the Learner Work Transfer (LWT) guidance document located under 'Forms and administration' on the subject page of the Pearson website.

Candidate Cover Sheets

Check that all sections at the top of the Candidate Cover Sheet have been completed.

The interlocutor must not enter any marks or comments in the lower part of the Candidate Cover Sheet. This part is reserved for use by Pearson Edexcel.

Attendance register

Check that each candidate has been accounted for on the attendance register.

Submission of materials onto Learner Work Transfer (LWT)

All recordings must be uploaded onto LWT for marking.

As soon as all materials are ready, and within 48 hours of the end of examining, the following documents must be submitted for each candidate:

- candidate recording
- completed Candidate Cover Sheet for Paper 3.



Candidate Cover Sheet for optional speaking test – International GCSE ESL (4ES1) only*This sheet should be photocopied as needed.***To be completed by the centre-appointed interlocutor:**

Centre Name		Centre N°	
Candidate Name		Candidate N°	
Date of speaking test (DD/MM/YY)	 / / 20	Name of interlocutor conducting test (Block capitals)	
Part One Frame Number:		Part Two Card Number:	
		Part Three Frame Number:	

To be completed by the Pearson Edexcel examiner:

Communicative ability and content (max. 10)		Pronunciation and fluency (max. 10)	
Pearson Edexcel Examiner	Senior Examiner	Pearson Edexcel Examiner	Senior Examiner
Lexical accuracy and range (max. 10)		Grammatical accuracy and range (max. 10)	
Pearson Edexcel Examiner	Senior Examiner	Pearson Edexcel Examiner	Senior Examiner

Pearson Edexcel Examiner name	Pearson Edexcel Examiner AA number	Senior Examiner name	Senior Examiner AA number	Pearson Edexcel Examiner	Senior Examiner
				/40	/40

CD/USB label templates*This page should be photocopied as needed.*

Summer/Winter* 20 speaking examination (*please circle as appropriate)		
International GCSE English as a Second Language (ESL) (4ES1)		
Centre no.		
	Candidate name	Candidate no.
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
Name of interlocutor		

