



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In English as a Second Language (4WES4_01)

Unit 4: Speaking

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Paper Overview

The speaking assessment consists of three tasks:

Task 1 Role play (1–2 minutes; 10 marks)

Candidates and teacher/examiners engage in a role play, using the prompt card for Task 1. Candidates interact with the teacher/examiner following five given prompts. They are expected to say a few words or a short phrase/sentence in response to each prompt. One-word answers will not be sufficient to gain full marks. The – ! – indicates an unseen question and candidates must respond to something they have not prepared, whereas – ? – indicates candidates must ask a question.

Task 2 – Topic talk (5 minutes; 20 marks)

Before the day of the assessment, candidates should choose an area to research and, with appropriate guidance from a teacher, prepare a 2-minute topic talk on a subject of their choice. The teacher (or centre) must not choose the topic talk title or topic talk content; candidates must choose the topics by themselves. The subject must relate to one of the three subtopic options from Topic 5 Global Issues (The Environment, Equality, The Media). Candidates must prepare topic talks independently. During the assessment, candidates will deliver their 2-minute topic talk. The teacher/examiner will then lead a follow-up discussion of the topic by asking a series of questions about the topic. The follow-up discussion will last no longer than 3 minutes.

Task 3 – Picture-based conversation (5 minutes; 20 marks)

The teacher/examiner will lead the candidate into an extended conversation using the prompt card for Task 3. The first question will ask the candidate to describe the picture (up to 2 minutes). A list of prompt questions for the further conversation is available to teacher/examiners but this list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. The conversation should develop naturally to allow for spontaneous interaction. The remaining conversation (after the picture description) should last no more than 3 minutes.

Performance on the Speaking Paper:

Task 1

Candidates found Task 1, the role play, to be an accessible task. Many candidates scored full marks. However, those who did not score full marks were often trying to be too inventive, and this did not work in their favour. Responses were often overly long which gave more opportunities for errors and ambiguity to appear. Role play 1 asks candidates to say what day they want to go to the restaurant. Sometimes replies given did not answer the question e.g., oh, I'm not very busy, so how about we go next week? This does not score full marks, as the day has

not been specified. Similarly, with the question, *What time do you want to go?*, when candidates said things like 'I'm not really sure, maybe in the afternoon or in the evening' we are left with partial communication with some ambiguity. We do not know the answer to the question. Candidates need to explicitly answer/ask what is in the prompt. The main issue encountered by examiners, which could be beneficial for centres to be aware of, was the fact that a very large proportion of candidates did not ask the question that was proposed on the role play cards and instead just asked a random question.

Task 2

This aspect of the speaking test was mostly tackled well, with some development and thoughtful justification of ideas given, using ambitious vocabulary and grammatical structures. The best responses demonstrated some imaginative ideas. Most candidates were aware of the timing of the presentation and could make developed points. The follow up questions differentiated well amongst candidates as some were able to develop their answers well and others just gave short answers or didn't understand the questions asked. The most successful candidates could give well-structured answers and used complex structures in speech discussing challenging ideas. As a general point, most candidates could benefit from slowing down the rate at which they deliver their topic talk.

Task 3

This task proved to be the most challenging task with many candidates simply describing the picture very briefly and not extending their description to aspects of the picture that are not immediately obvious. Even the best responses relied on a significant number of phrases that could be repeated, and candidates sometimes gave personal reflections instead of focusing on factual information about the picture. The follow up questions were usually answered well, but centres are reminded that candidates should be developing their responses to questions for around 3 minutes to be awarded marks in the highest mark bands. Examiners reported that some candidates had difficulties when expressing ideas using past time frames and they often resorted to using the present tense in answer to questions in the past.

Advice to Centres:

- Make sure candidates are confident using past, present and future time frames.
- Ensure that candidates know that they will be expected to speak spontaneously to create a natural interaction between the examiner and themselves.
- Share the mark grids with candidates, so that they are aware of what is being assessed.
- Make sure that candidates know questions words, so that their answer is relevant to the question being asked.
- Make sure that candidates listen out for the key verbs in the question, so that they answer in the appropriate time frame.
- Work at keeping to the timings outlined in the paper overview at the beginning of this report.
- Ensure that the microphone is placed closer to the candidate rather than the examiner.
- Check the audibility of the recording equipment before the test begins, making sure that the candidate is audible on the recording is paramount. Examiners can only credit language that they can hear.

