



Cambridge English: First Speaking

Sample test with examiner's comments

This document will help you familiarise yourself with the Speaking test for *Cambridge English: First*, also known as *First Certificate in English (FCE)*. It accompanies [this video](#), where you can see Angela, from Italy, and Agustina, from Argentina, 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 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 will speak to you and your partner and the other will be listening.

Part 1 (3 minutes)

The examiner asks you and your partner questions about yourselves. You may be asked about things like 'your home town', 'your interests', 'your career plans', etc.

Part 2 (a one-minute 'long turn' for each candidate, plus a 20-second response from the second candidate)

The examiner gives you two photographs and asks you to talk about them for one minute. The examiner then asks your partner a question about your photographs and your partner responds briefly.

Then the examiner gives your partner two different photographs. Your partner talks about these photographs for one minute. This time the examiner asks you a question about your partner's photographs and you respond briefly.

Part 3 (approximately 3 minutes)

The examiner asks you and your partner to talk together. You may be asked to solve a problem or try to come to a decision about something. For example, you might be asked to decide the best way to use some rooms in a language school. The examiner gives you a picture to help you but does not join in the conversation.

Part 4 (approximately 4 minutes)

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



How the Cambridge English: First 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* level? When your test is complete, the examiners give you marks for each of these things: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, Interactive Communication and Global Achievement. 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

Part 1	
Angela	Agustina
<p>Angela gives a shorter answer than Agustina to the second question, but her answer is clear and appropriate.</p> <p>Her response to the question about favourite food is short, and the examiner has to ask her to say more.</p> <p>Although the answer to the final question (how much TV she watches) could have been very short, she gives a detailed answer, starting with 'It depends on the job that I have to do because ...'.</p> <p>It's fine to respond to questions in a more detailed way like this, starting with a phrase like 'It depends on ...'.</p>	<p>Agustina begins her answer to the second question with 'Well ...', which gives her a moment to think about what to say, so this can be a helpful strategy to use. She hesitates a little while choosing language for her answer, but gives a clear, extended answer.</p> <p>She responds to the question about parties with an extended and accurate answer, talking about her experience both now and in the past.</p> <p>In the final question, she supports her answer 'the BBC news' with a clear reason: 'because people say it's good for you to practise English ...'.</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. 	

Part 2	
Angela	Agustina
<p>Angela uses a range of simple grammatical structures and attempts some complex sentences, such as '... because they have to work really quickly and be always ready ... because the guests always ask to eat new things'. She also uses vocabulary appropriate</p>	<p>Agustina uses a range of simple grammatical forms and attempts some complex ones, e.g. 'the people are going sightseeing maybe in the jungle or somewhere, so they are in a different context ...'; '... so there are two different ways of enjoying the animals'.</p>



for the task, e.g. ‘museum’, ‘new dishes’, ‘guests’.

Angela does quite well in Discourse Management, starting with [‘In these two pictures, we can see two different kind of jobs’](#); this gives her a moment to think about how to compare them. She then describes the first picture, followed by the second picture. [‘She then answers the second part of the task with reasons: ‘I guess the most difficult job it’s in the kitchen because ...’](#). Altogether, her talk is clearly organised.

Angela’s Pronunciation is generally intelligible, even though there are sometimes errors with: sentence stress, e.g. ‘two (unstressed) different ...’; individual sounds, e.g. the sound /h/ in ‘hotel’, ‘house’, ‘animals’ and groups of consonants, e.g. ‘guests’; and often rising intonation at the end of sentences.

Response to question after Agustina’s talk: Angela’s answer is clear, but she could have given a reason for her choice.

She uses a good range of Vocabulary appropriate for the task, e.g. ‘staring’, ‘sightseeing’, ‘jungle’, ‘context’, ‘wildlife’.

Agustina hesitates a little while choosing language, but otherwise does well in Discourse Management. Her talk is clearly organised; she starts by referring to both pictures and then compares them using cohesive devices to link her ideas: ‘... both pictures ...’; but the first picture ...’; while in the second one the horse or the animal here is only ...’; so ...’.

Agustina’s Pronunciation is always intelligible.

Response to question after Angela’s talk: Agustina’s response is clear and [supported with two reasons](#): ‘because I don’t like cooking and I find it difficult’; this is a good length of answer to the question asked after the 1-minute talk.

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 that the second 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

Angela

Agustina

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In terms of Grammar and Vocabulary, Angela uses mostly simple structures and makes some errors, e.g. with verb forms and prepositions: '[it would be really interesting watch ...](#)'; 'with horse', 'with doing some shopping', 'travel by the horse'. However, her language is good enough to express her ideas.

In terms of Discourse Management, she [explains her ideas and gives reasons](#), e.g. 'because the children would like it ...', but sometimes she is not very clear, e.g. '... but because maybe you can be helped by someone else that know properly how to drive ... ride the horse ...', and occasionally her contributions are a little repetitive, e.g. 'travel by the horse'.

Her Pronunciation is generally clear.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Angela starts the discussion and communicates well; she responds to Agustina's ideas, adds her own ideas and [asks her partner questions](#), e.g. 'But don't you think you can ...?'.

She also [tries to keep the discussion going after Agustina has asked her for a decision](#), by adding: 'but sometimes the best way to enjoy a winter festival ...'.

Agustina's Grammar is generally accurate and she uses a range of structures, e.g. '[... when it's cold it's good to have a big meal ...](#)'; 'this group seems to be for teenagers ...'. She also uses a good range of Vocabulary appropriate for the topic, e.g. 'air balloon', 'landscape', 'winter clothes'. [She corrects herself occasionally](#), which it is fine to do, e.g. '... it can also be good to make ... to do shopping with winter clothes'.

In terms of Discourse Management, she contributes to the discussion and [uses a range of cohesive devices](#), e.g. '[but](#) I think that another good idea would be this air balloon [because](#) ...'. She could improve her fluency; if she hesitated less, she would be able to show more of her English in the limited time available.

Her Pronunciation is clear in everything she says.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Agustina responds appropriately and helps maintain and develop the interaction: 'Yes, I agree with you, but ...'; 'yes, it can also be possible'; '... but what do you think about this?'; 'Yes I agree with you ... yes, but it can take a lot of time ... because the horse goes very slow'. [She moves the discussion towards the outcome decision \(though this is done too soon\)](#): '... so which two would you not include?'.

General comments on Part 3

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Angela and Agustina generally interact well in this part, and they discuss the pictures in relation to the questions, but they say very little about some of them. For example, they say an activity would not be popular, but do not say why. This means that they make a decision (which two not to include) after only about 2 minutes of discussion, and it is then difficult for them to think of what to say for the last minute.

Part 3 tips

- Remember that the questions you are discussing are printed above the pictures.
- Discuss each picture together before you try to make a decision.
- Remember it is not essential to make a decision if you are still involved in the discussion at the end of the 3 minutes you have for this task.
- 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.

Part 4

Angela	Agustina
<p>In terms of Grammar and Vocabulary, Angela again uses mainly quite simple structures. Her response to the first question about the popularity of festivals like this is clear and quite accurate, but her answers to the other questions have a number of errors which sometimes make it hard to follow what she is saying. For example, her answer to the second question: ‘... people can know by the time about this festival and it can be like normal appointment, normal meeting for people ... can be really easy to find this festival’.</p> <p>Angela attempts a complex sentence in her answer to the final question, but has problems with the structure; this results in an awkward response: ‘... especially for people they are not it’s not their</p>	<p>Agustina’s responses in this part show good control of Grammar and a range of Vocabulary.</p> <p>She also does well in terms of Discourse Management. Her answer to the second question, for example, is clear and extended: ‘Well, I think it would be better with two or three friends because when you are in a big group it’s more difficult to decide what to do ...’. Her other answers are well organised too, e.g. for the last question, she adds some detail to explain her initial response: ‘It wouldn’t be good ... that’s why ...’.</p> <p>Agustina’s Pronunciation is intelligible throughout this part of the test.</p> <p>Her Interactive Communication is good</p>

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habit ... get used to cold weather’.

In terms of Discourse Management, Angela responds to all the questions, but grammatical errors make some of her points unclear. She often has a lot to say, but there is some repetition and it is not always well organised.

Angela’s Pronunciation is intelligible. There are some problems with individual sounds, e.g. ‘village’, ‘year’, and with sentence stress, but these don’t stop us understanding her – the problem is more with Grammar.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Angela responds appropriately to the interlocutor’s questions, and clearly listens to what Agustina says too.

too. When Angela finishes her answer to the question about summer or winter activities, Agustina adds ‘[Yes, I think most of the people like going to the beach rather than going skiing or that kind of activity](#)’, using language effectively to contrast different activities, and showing that she can link her ideas to those of other speakers.

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.

Overall	
Angela	Agustina
<p>Grammar and Vocabulary Angela should aim to improve the range and accuracy of her language, especially in the last part of the test.</p> <p>Discourse Management Some of her contributions are relevant and clear, but some are less clear and repetitive, especially in Part 4.</p> <p>Pronunciation</p>	<p>Grammar and Vocabulary Agustina is frequently accurate in simple and complex sentences and she uses a good range of vocabulary.</p> <p>Discourse Management Despite some hesitation, her ideas are logical and clear. She also uses a range of language to link her ideas. To improve her score in Discourse Management, she would need to develop her fluency</p>

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Angela is mostly intelligible, but could improve her pronunciation of some individual sounds and intonation in sentences.

Interactive Communication

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

Global Achievement

Angela can communicate some ideas on familiar topics and she is able to produce some extended language, but there are quite a lot of errors which means that at times what she says is not clear.

by hesitating less.

Pronunciation

Her pronunciation is always clear.

Interactive Communication

Agustina communicates her ideas well, responds to her partner and moves the discussion forward. She could develop the interaction a little more, especially in Part 3.

Global Achievement

Agustina uses mostly accurate language which is appropriate for the tasks. She produces extended language to express her ideas in a clear way.