



VI Symposium

ASSESSING MATHS AND ENGLISH

Assessing Writing, Assessing Speaking (Secondary)

David Bradshaw & Ben Fedigan



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Nafarroako Gobernua
Departamento de Educación
Hezkuntza Departamentua



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ASSESSING MATHS AND ENGLISH

Assessing Writing



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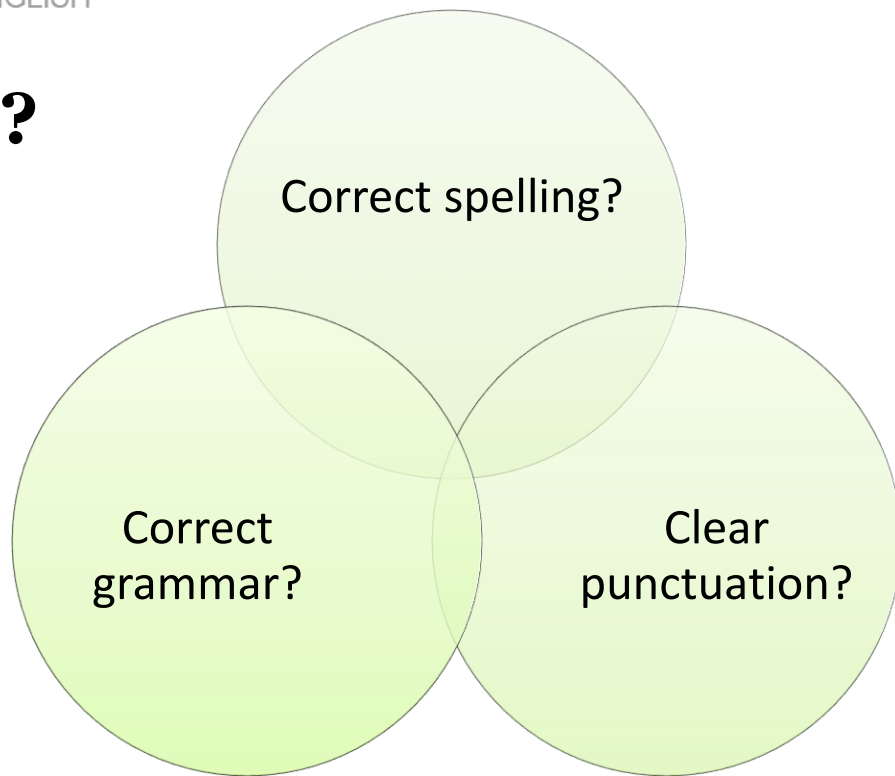
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Overview

- What do we mean by ‘writing’?
- The Writing task
- How do we assess?
- Assessing at B1 – B2

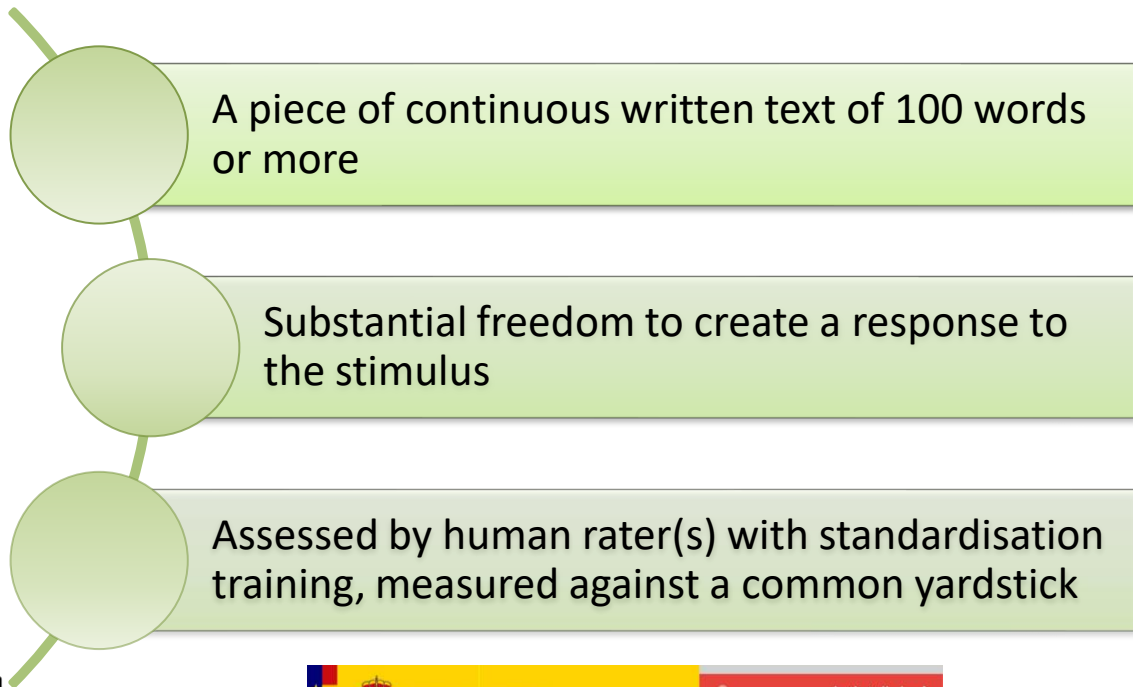


What is 'good' writing?





What do we mean by ‘Writing’?

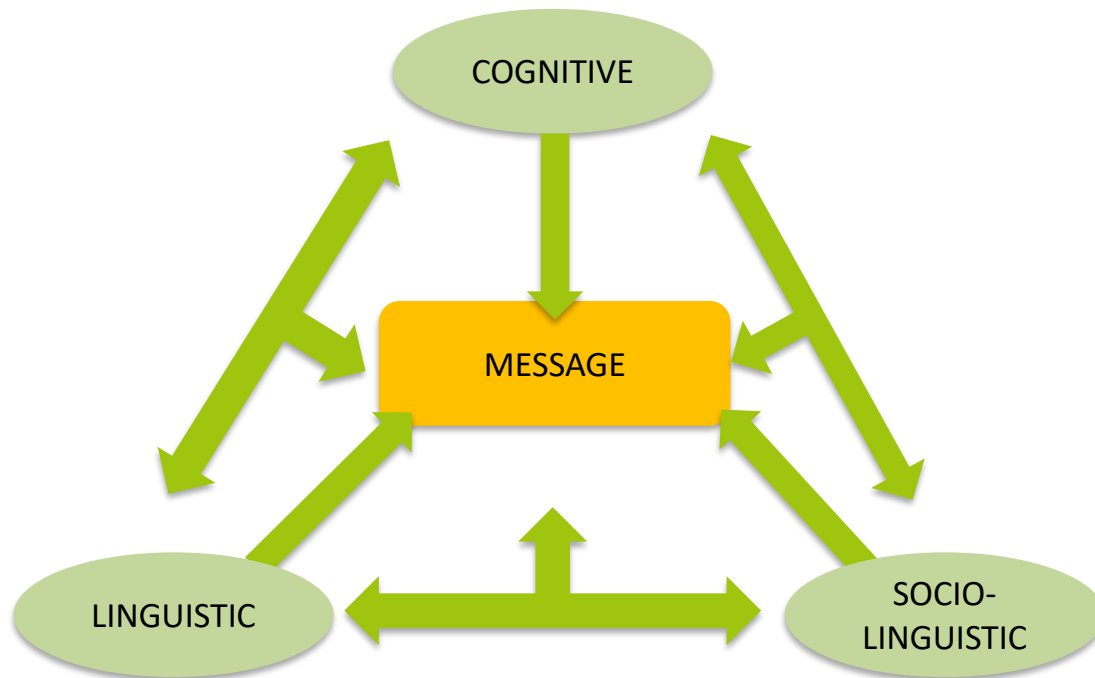


Hamp-Lyons (1991)





Cambridge English Model of Writing





The writing task

Language testers are especially interested in sampling from a specific domain of writing in a written test and it is, therefore, useful to first of all describe the domain.

Jones & Shaw (2003:11)





What do we need from a writing task?

ENGLISH ESSAY

(two hours)

Write an essay on **one** of the following subjects:

- (a) The effect of political movements upon nineteenth century literature in England.
- (b) Elizabethan travel and discovery.
- (c) The Indian Mutiny.
- (d) The development of local self-government.





What do we need from a writing

Part 3

Write an answer to one of the questions (7 or 8) in this part.
Write your answer in about 100 words on your answer sheet.
Tick the box (Question 7 or Question 8) on your answer sheet to show which question you have answered.

Question 7

- This is part of a letter you receive from an English friend.

topic

target
reader

context

My grandmother has given me some money.
There's enough to buy a really good camera or go
on holiday with my friends. My parents want me
to save the money. What do you think I should
do?

purpose

text type

- Now write a letter giving your friend some advice.
- Write your letter in about 100 words on your answer sheet.






What do we need from a writing task?

topic

140 – 190 words

context

You see this advert in an international fashion magazine:




Reviews Wanted

Teenage Clothes Shop

We are looking for reviews of a clothes shop for teenagers where you live. Your review should include information about what the shop looks like, the kind of clothes it sells and the shop assistants. Would you recommend this shop to other people your age?

The best reviews will be published in next month's magazine.



Write your review.

target
reader

text type

purpose

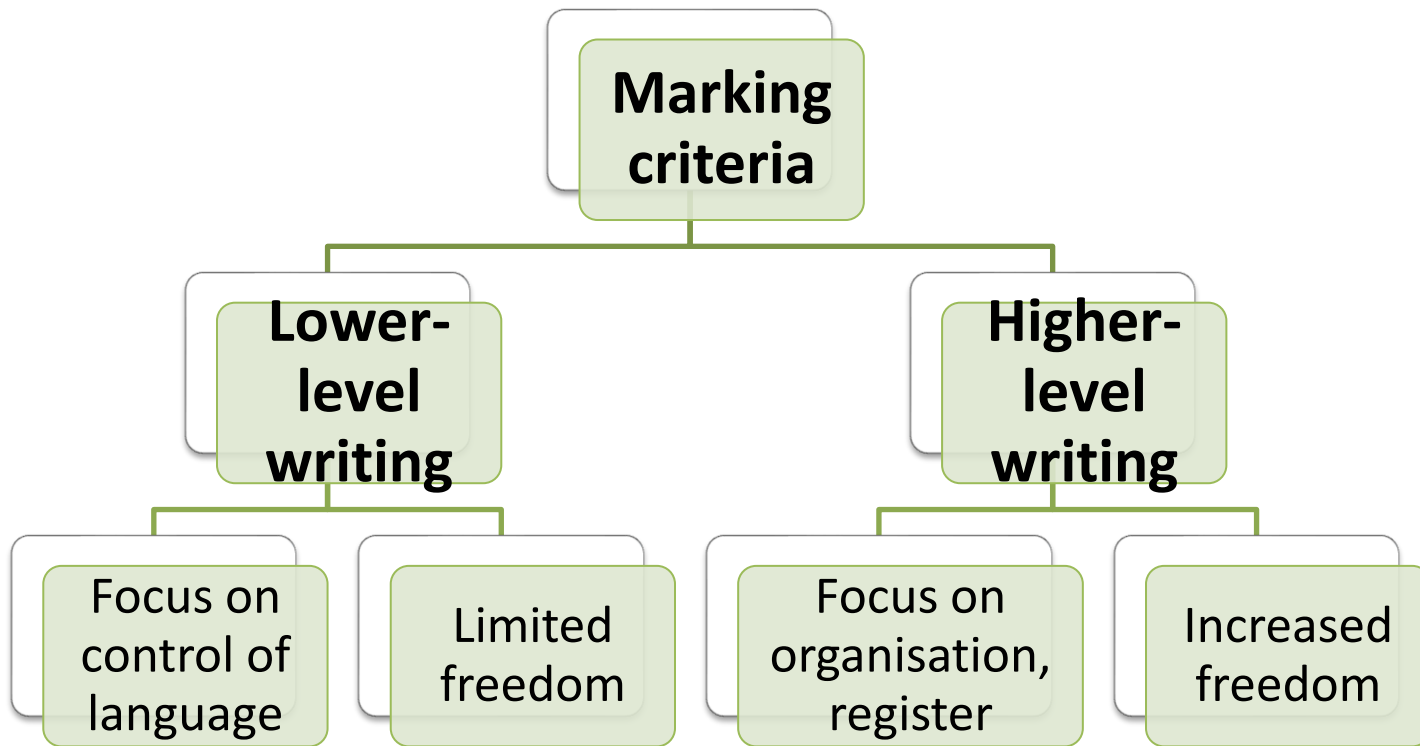




PARSNIPS

POLITICS
ALCOHOL
RELIGION
SEX
NARCOTICS
ISMS
PORK







Assessing writing

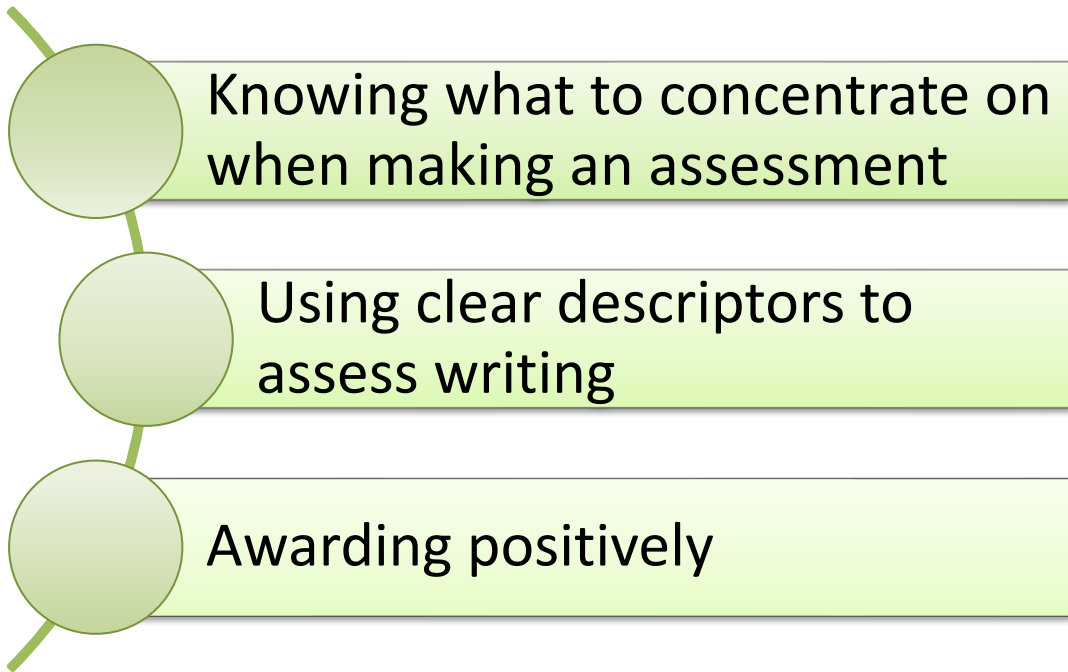
*What are some of the
challenges faced when
assessing writing?*

e.g. knowing what to focus on



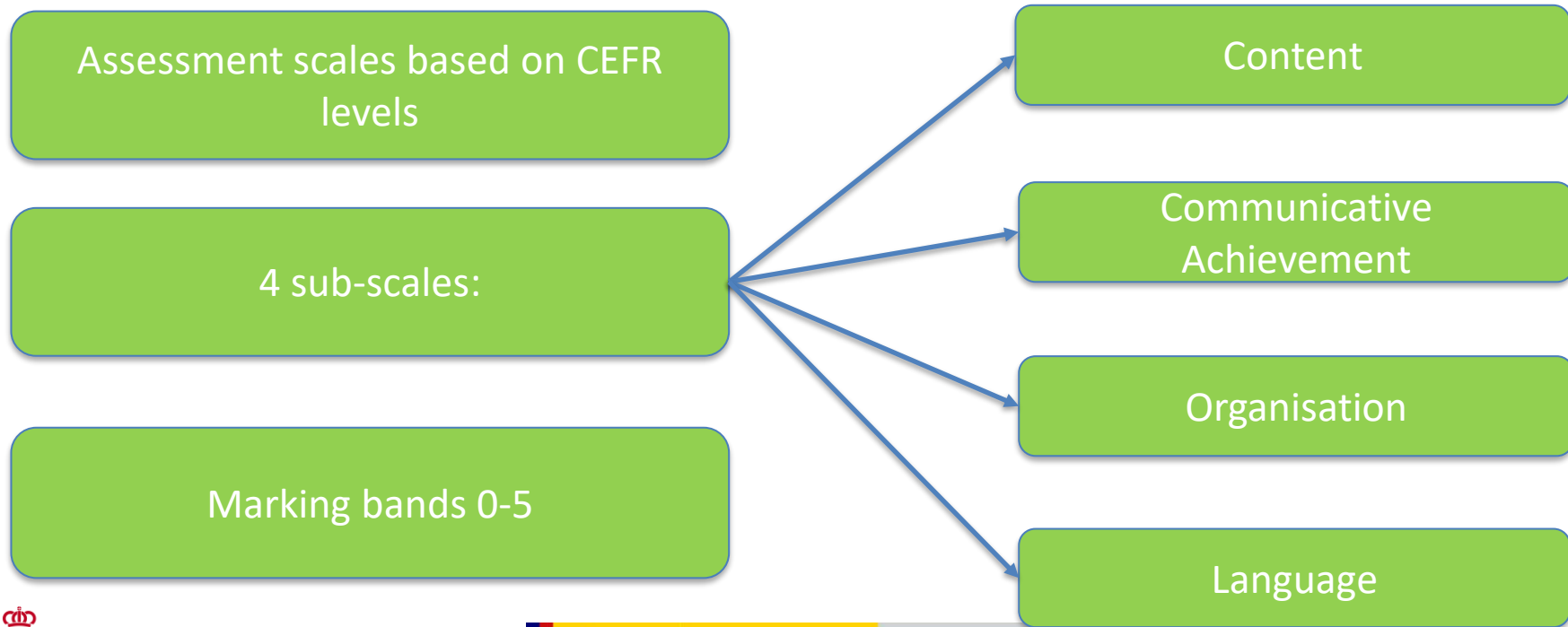


Challenges of assessing writing



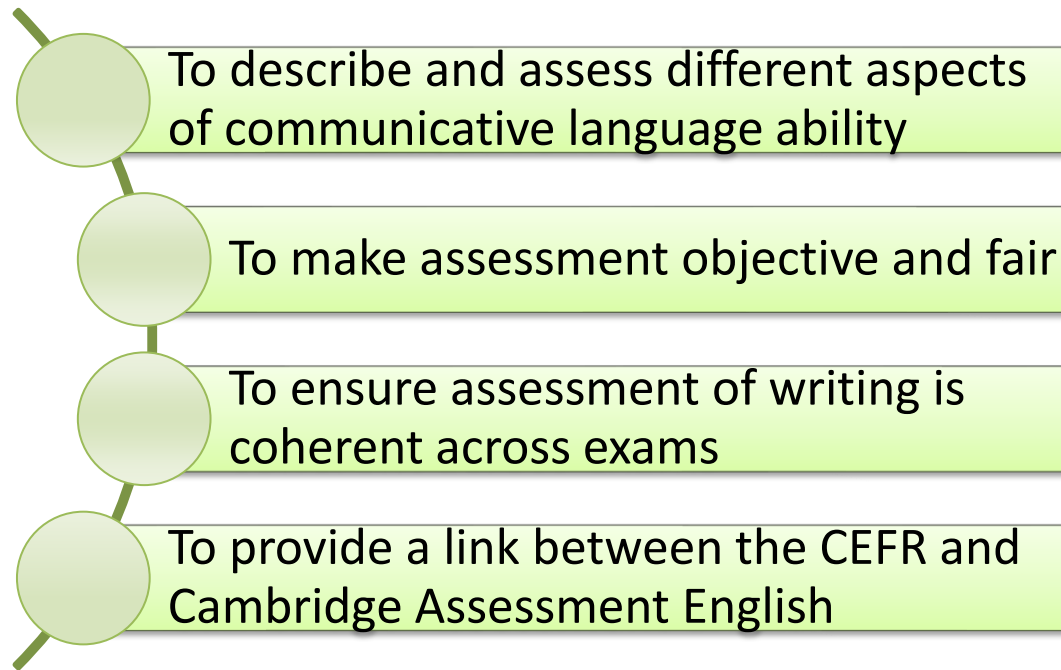


Assessment levels and criteria





Rationale for Assessment Scales



Gad Lim, *Research Notes* 49 (Aug 12)



B1 sample task

Question 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in about **100 words**.

Read this email from your English teacher Mrs Lake and the notes you have made.

EMAIL

From: Mrs Lake

Subject: End of year party

Dear Class,

I'd like our class to have a party to celebrate the end of the school year.

We could either have a party in the classroom or we could go to the park. Which would you prefer to do?

What sort of activities or games should we do during the party?

What food do you think we should have at the party?

Reply soon!

Anna lake

Great!

Explain

Suggest ...

Tell Mrs Lake

Write your **email** to Mrs Lake using **all the notes**.



Part 1 – Email

Candidate A

I'm very nervous for this party, to celebrate the end of the school year.

I think that the best place to do the party is the class, because in this way we can be all together. In the class we can do a lot of activities like play with the blackboard, or watch a film, or listen to music.

About the food, we can have pizza, fries and for the sweet people chocolate, sweets or something like this.

I'm sure the party is going to be very well, and we are going to have a very good time.

See you soon!



SUBSCALE	MARK	COMMENTARY
Content	5	<p>All content is relevant to the task.</p> <p>The target reader is fully informed about all the points in the task. The first point has been addressed, although the word <i>nervous</i> has been used incorrectly for this context. However, the rest of the email is positively phrased, so this can be seen as a slip. There is a preference expressed, (<i>the class</i>), and suggestions are given regarding activities, <i>play with the blackboard</i>, and food, <i>pizza, fries; chocolate, sweets</i>.</p>
Communicative Achievement	3	<p>The conventions of an email, such as a friendly, polite tone, and a consistent register, are used in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas: <i>I think that; About the food; I'm sure the party is going to be very well; See you soon</i>. There is no opening salutation, but it is clearly directed towards Mrs Lake and the information is presented in a suitable format for a teacher to read.</p>
Organisation	3	<p>The text is connected and coherent. Paragraphs are used to good effect, each focusing on one aspect. The text is connected using linking words and some cohesive devices, such as referencing: <i>this party; because in this way; About the food; and for the sweet people</i>.</p>
Language	3	<p>Everyday vocabulary, suitable for the topic, is used generally appropriately: <i>the best place; together; blackboard; pizza; fries; chocolate; sweets; good time</i>. The use of <i>nervous</i> in the first sentence is slightly distracting as it does not convey the correct emotion.</p> <p>Simple grammatical forms are used with a good degree of control: <i>I think that the best place to do the party; we can be all together; listen to music; something like this; is going to be; we are going to have a very good time</i>.</p> <p>Errors are noticeable but meaning can still be determined: <i>I am very nervous for; and for the sweet people; to be very well</i>.</p>



B2 sample task

Questions 2–4

Answer **one** of these questions. Write **140–190 words** in an appropriate style.

You have received an email from your English-speaking friend.

Can you help me with a class project? I have to write about places which are special to people. Can you tell me about a place that is special to you? Where is it? What does it look like? It doesn't have to be a famous place. Just explain why it's important to you.

Write soon, Sam

Write your **email**.





Hey Sam!

What's up? Thanks for your last email, I really hope I'll be helpful. So, my special place is definitely my building's roof. I always go up there when I need to stay alone for a bit, take an important decision, or think carefully about something. Previously I didn't have a special place, this discovery dates back to when I was 13. I was looking for a place with a great view to take a picture for my grandparents, so I decided to climb the roof because this building is pretty high, and when I got there I was just speechless. From there you get the complete view of the entire city, because of the height there are no cars noises or other annoying noises. I brought a chair and a few pillows over there just to make it a little bit more comfortable. No one else comes there, cause the access is forbidden for some reasons, and, of course, nobody knows I climb there. At first it was just a place where I could be alone but then it got special. I gave my first kiss on that roof, and we are still together.

love

Camilla.





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Comments

SUBSCALE	MARK	COMMENTARY
Content	5	<p>All content is relevant and the target reader is fully informed.</p> <p>The candidate responds to all the questions asked in the input by describing a place which is special to them and explaining why. The email gives details about the location, the roof of the building, what the special place looks like and what you can see from it.</p> <p>The writer successfully describes discovering the space and how it has changed over time (<i>At first It was just a place where I could be alone but then it got special</i>).</p>
Communicative Achievement	4	<p>The email communicates straightforward ideas to the reader using an informal tone which is friendly and informative. The conventions of email writing are used (<i>Hey Sam!; What's up?; Thanks for your last email; love Camilla</i>).</p> <p>The main body of the email has certain narrative features, but these are appropriate to the subject. The writer's emotional attachment to the special place is clearly communicated.</p>
Organisation	3	<p>The text is generally well organised and coherent. The structure of the email is logical and the ideas are connected within sentences to show cause and effect and to clarify the sequence of events (<i>So; or; Previously; and when I got there; because; and, of course</i>).</p> <p>A variety of linking words and cohesive devices is used. Although there is an overall progression of ideas through the text, paragraphs would improve the organisation of the email.</p>
Language	4	<p>A range of vocabulary is used appropriately for emphasis and to show emotional attachment (<i>my special place is defenetly; I always go up there when I need to stay alone for a bit; I was just speechless; of course, nobody knows</i>). There is some good use of collocations (<i>important decision; think carefully; a great view; annoying noises</i>).</p> <p>A range of simple and some complex grammatical forms is used with a good degree of control. Although there are some errors or slips (<i>No one else come there</i>) these do not impede communication.</p>





Any questions?





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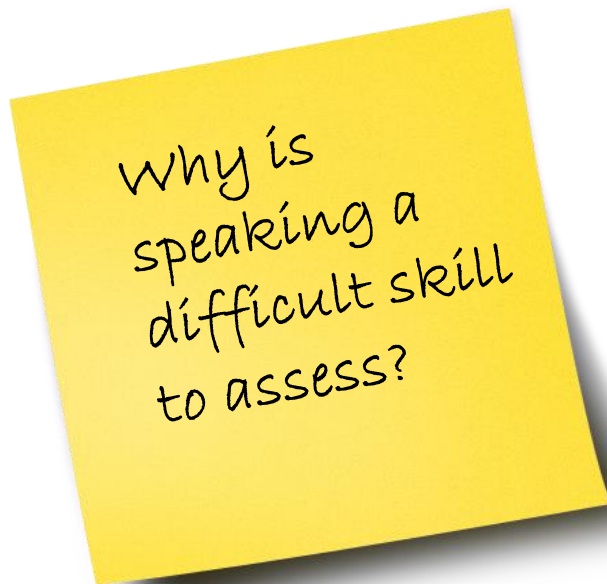
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Issues around assessing speaking



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Why is speaking a difficult skill to assess?

It is ephemeral, fast, easily lost, difficult to hold onto to analyse

There are many aspects to assess

There is often no right/wrong outcome

It is assessed over a block of performance, not sentence by sentence





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ASSESSING MATHS AND ENGLISH

Issues around assessing speaking

What practical problems are often involved when assessing speaking in class?



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Practical problems

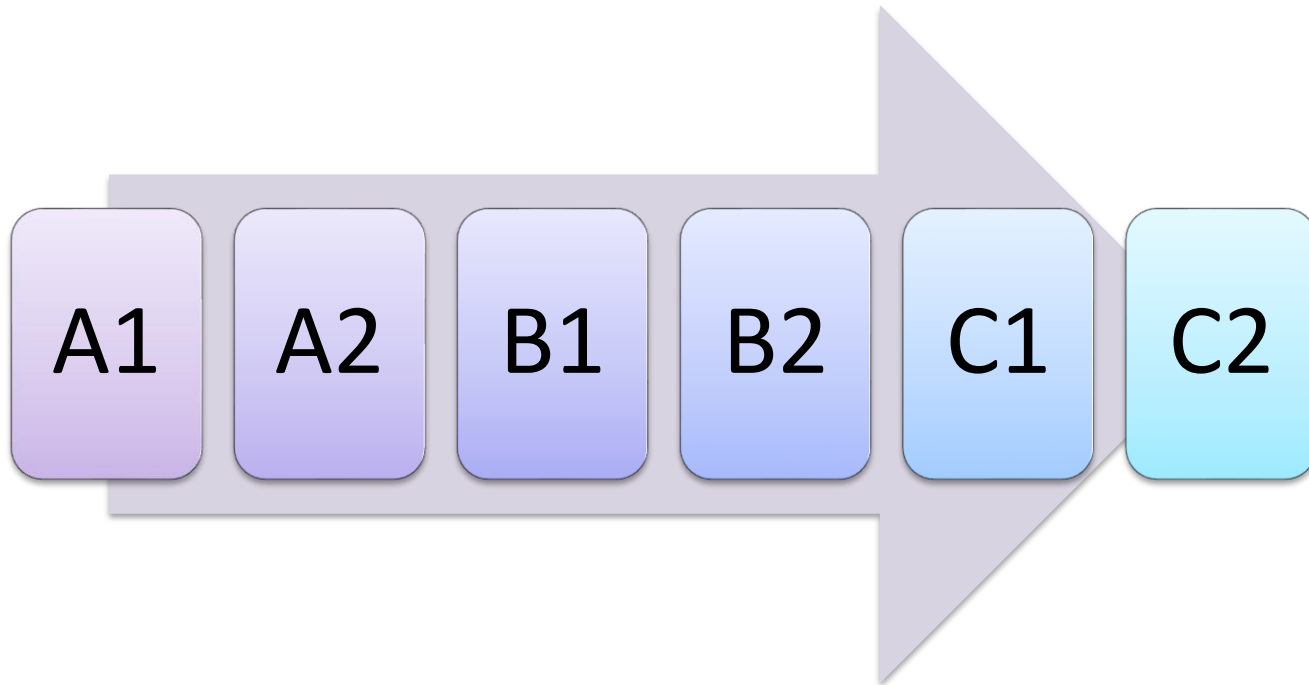
Teachers often have large numbers of students and little time to devote to speaking assessment

During speaking activities, many people are talking at the same time



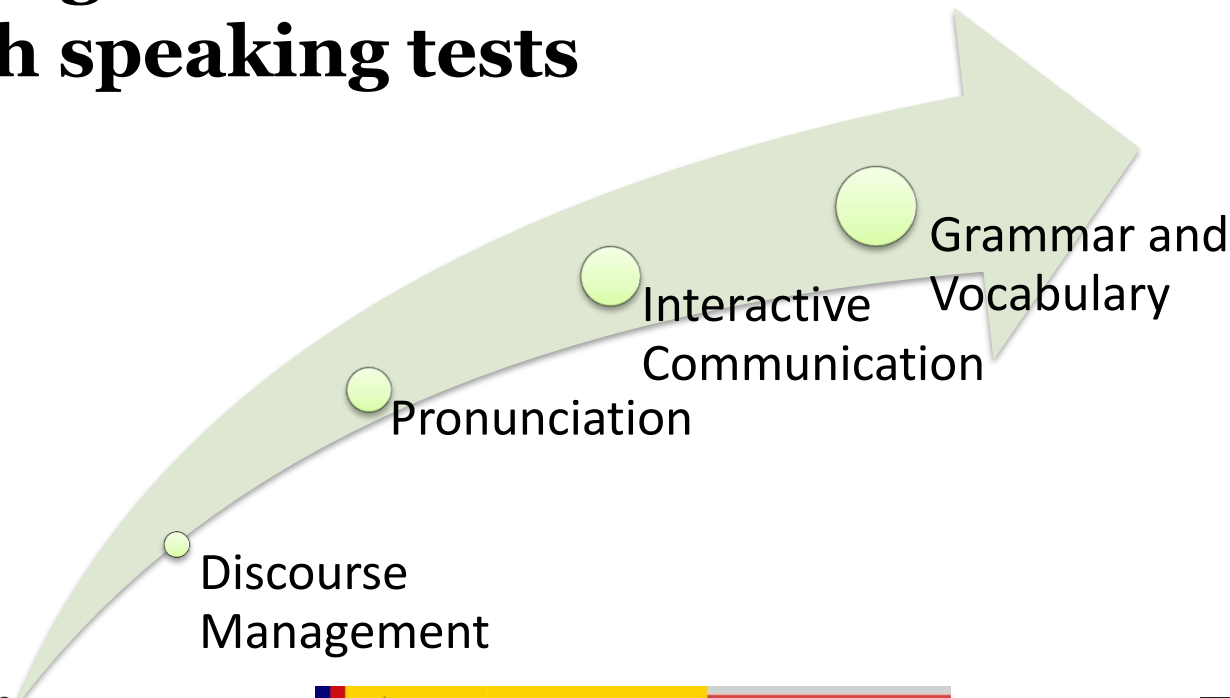


Assessment levels and criteria





Speaking assessment criteria in Cambridge English speaking tests





Rationale for Assessment Scales

- To follow the approach of communicative language teaching by assessing different communicative competences
- To make assessment objective and fair
- To provide a coherent whole, in which the levels “stack” to form a common scale
- To provide a link between the CEFR and Cambridge





Overall Speaking Assessment Scales

Which two sets of descriptors are identical? Why do you think this is?

How do the criteria categories change at different levels? Why?

What is not assessed at one level? Why?





Which level?

A) 1. B2 2. C2

B) 1. C1 2. B2

C) 1. B1 2. C2

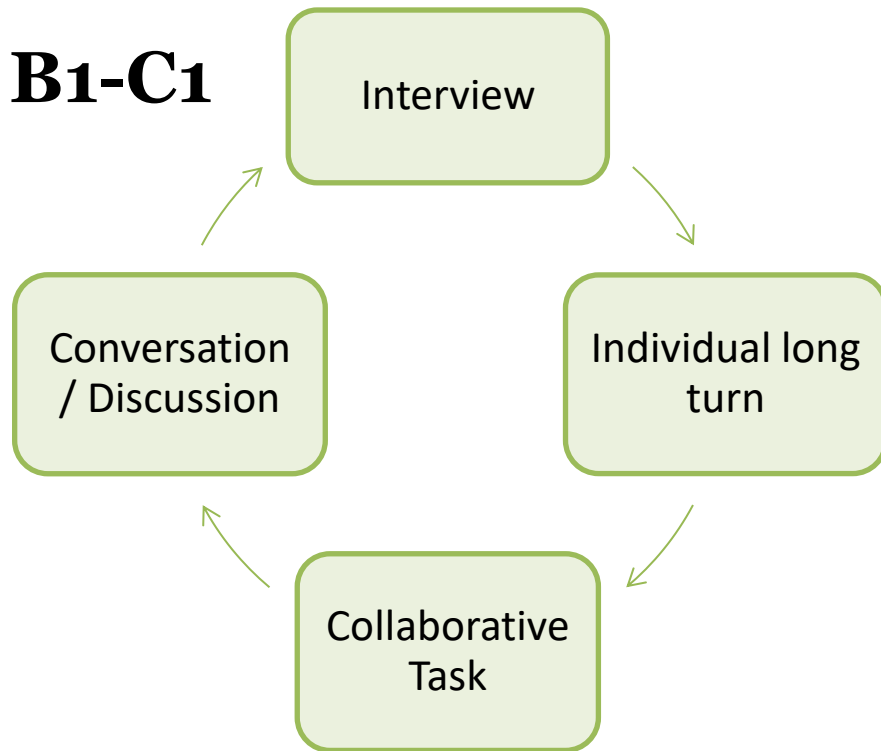
D) 1. A2 2. B1

E) 1. C1 2. A2





Speaking Test Format B1-C1





B1 Preliminary for Schools





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The image shows a YouTube video player interface. The background is teal. At the top left is the Cambridge logo. To its right, the text "B1 Preliminary for Schools Cristina and Andrea" is displayed. Further right, it says "Cambridge English Qualifications" and "Copy link" with a small icon. The main title "B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test" is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title, there is a red play button icon. To the right of the play button is a video thumbnail showing two young women sitting at a table, looking at a document. At the bottom left, there is a black bar with the text "Watch on" and the YouTube logo.

<https://youtu.be/KDCK-3gsxLY>



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Cristina: Part 3 (Interactive communication)

Cristina is a very effective communicator in this part of the test. She takes the initiative at the beginning of the discussion with a suggestion about the map: 'For me, the map it's very useful. You're in the mountains and you don't have Wi-Fi so you need to see the location on the map or maybe if you get lost...'. She also asks a question about one of the possibilities: 'What do you think about the chocolate bar?' After listening to Andrea's response, she reacts with clear enthusiasm for the idea. Towards the end of the discussion, she shows evidence of being able to negotiate towards an outcome: 'For you, what do you think is the most useful? Again, after listening to Andrea's reply she shows agreement: 'I agree with you, but the chocolate bar too!'





Andrea: Part 3 (Interactive communication)

In this part of the test Andrea mostly responds to Cristina's contributions by agreeing with her, for example when she makes the point that, 'It doesn't rain in the mountains'. However, she does ask a question about whether a ball is a good idea for a trip to the mountains and she does also initiate on a couple of occasions by making comments that invite a response, such as: 'Also the water is too important for your health and if you get tired' and refers back to the picture to suggest that it would be nice for the teacher to take a group photograph. Generally, however, she is more reactive than proactive.





 B1 Preliminary for Schools Laura and Claudia

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B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test



Watch on  YouTube

<https://youtu.be/SKwkmh8qExc>





B2 First for Schools





 B2 First for Schools Francesco and Emma

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B2 First for Schools Speaking test

Watch on  YouTube



<https://youtu.be/liJA-R9Riws>





Francesco: Discourse Management

He extends his utterances well, with little hesitation:

- So you just keep the same vibe that you have during school during the holidays so that when you return to school you are just as prepared.

All his contributions are relevant. He sometimes displays very strong cohesion and organisation:

- Now I do agree with you...maybe learning for your own knowledge is more important than having better grades (part 3).

He uses a range of appropriate cohesive devices and discourse markers:

- because, so, while, even if, in fact, also, and, especially, and then
- well, actually, well now, of course.





Francesco: Grammar & Vocabulary

He shows a good degree of control of simple forms and attempts some complex forms:

- Our brain is more developed when we're older (part 2)
- It's very difficult to win in [at]chess, especially when there is an age difference because our brain is of course more developed when we are more, when we are older. (part 2)

He uses a range of appropriate vocabulary:

- chess, age difference, running potential, speed, exercise your mind, velocity, vibe.





Emma: Discourse Management

She produces extended language with very little hesitation:

- The mum is teaching her daughter how to cook and cut herbs, and the daughter is writing everything that she needs to learn on a notebook (part 2).

All of her contributions are relevant.

She uses a range of appropriate cohesive devices/discourse markers (definitely, apparently, maybe, so etc.) to produce coherent utterances:

- I think it's important to get some time





Emma: Grammar & Vocabulary

She shows a good degree of control of simple forms and attempts some complex forms:

- I like that it's a city full of shops where I can go with my friends (part 1)
- The girl maybe will need to be able to cook when she grows (part 2)

although with some errors:

- We can see a mum with his daughter (part 2)

She uses a range of vocabulary: cut herbs, reset your mind, focus on other stuff, apparently.

With occasional errors: 'to keep your memory set', 'they just hint you what to do'.





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The image is a video thumbnail for a Cambridge English Qualifications B2 First for Schools Speaking test. It features a teal background with a white curved shape on the right. The Cambridge logo is in the top right, and the text 'Cambridge English Qualifications' is below it. The main title 'B2 First for Schools Speaking test' is in large black font. A video player window shows two young women, Malena and Julia, sitting at a table. A red play button is overlaid on the video. The names 'Malena and Julia' are written below the video. The tagline 'Where your world grows' is in the bottom left.

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Cambridge
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**B2 First
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Speaking test

Where your world grows

Malena and Julia

<https://youtu.be/l8MV5wb22jk>



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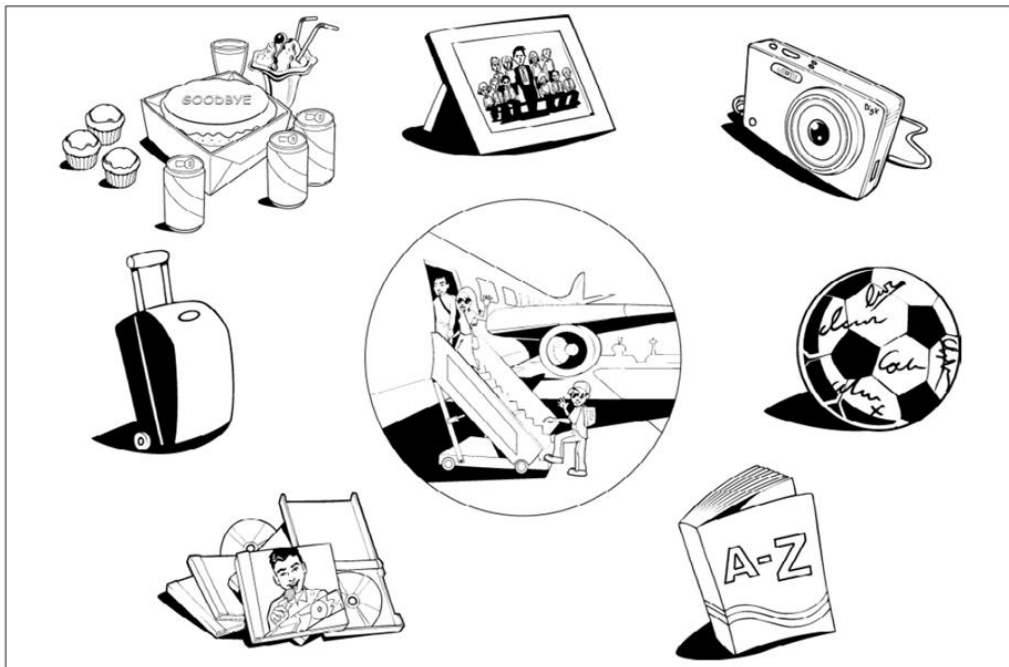
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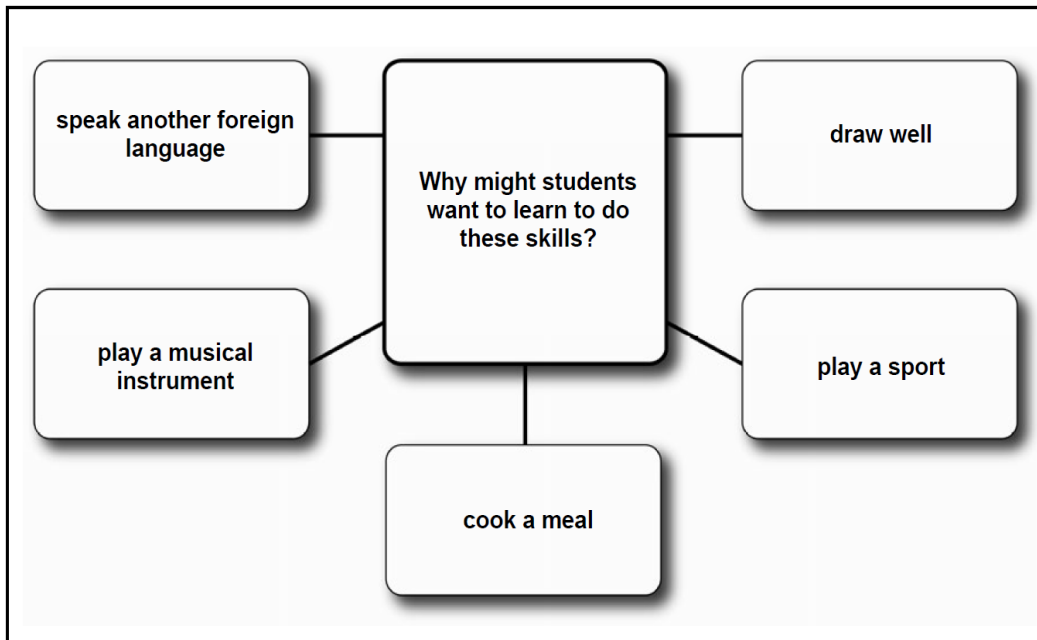


B1 Preliminary for Schools Prompt cards





B2 First for Schools Prompt cards





Thank you

Any questions?

