

Topic task: Talking about various topics from healthy eating to extreme sports

Level: ISE II

Focus: Topic task

Aims: Talking about various topics in a natural and spontaneous way

Objectives: Generating ideas and asking and answering questions about various topics

Topic: Communicate facts, ideas, opinions and explain viewpoints about a chosen topic linked across a series of extended turns

Language functions: Highlighting advantages and disadvantages, speculating, and describing past actions in the indefinite and recent past

Lexis: Various – health, technology, sports, society, news and lifestyle

Materials needed: Blank paper, topic cards and question cards (one set of each per group of 4–8 students)

Timing: 1 hour

Preparation

Print or copy and cut out topic cards and question cards (one set per group of four to eight students).

In class

1. Explain to the class that at ISE II, candidates are expected to communicate facts, handle interruptions and engage the examiner in their topic. This lesson will help them with this. If necessary, explain the meaning of each of these areas to the students and give examples.
2. Write '**TOPIC**' on the board in large letters. Elicit some ideas from students about good ideas for topics that they themselves can talk about. Write some ideas on the board. These should be taken from a wide range.
3. Explain to the students that their topic must be a *personalised* topic, on a subject they are personally interested in, knowledgeable about and are able to talk about. Tell them they are going to practise talking about various different topics.
4. Write '**interrupt**' on the board. Ask students for examples of how they can interrupt someone (eg *Could I just...?, So what you're saying is...?, Can I just interrupt you for a second...?*). Ask them to practise these expressions with a partner.
5. Divide students into groups of four to eight, and give each group a set of topic cards and question cards. Pre-teach any unfamiliar vocabulary – *vegetarianism, veganism, extreme sports, and chess*. Tell them to place the topic and the question cards face down on the table in two sets. Ask them to pick one topic card from the pile and to pick up one question card. Someone in the group has to answer the question they have picked up relating it to their topic card. The group can help formulate the question if it is incomplete. Model an example of what you want the students to do in open-class. Once one student has answered the first question, repeat the process with a different student, picking up a different question, until all of the questions have been answered.
6. While the students are carrying out this activity, walk around each group listening to their ideas and encouraging them to speak more, making sure everyone is involved. Also, make a note on the board of any recurring errors.
7. Once the students have completed all of the topic cards (around 20–30 minutes), give the students some feedback on how well they completed the task.
8. Now ask the students to either choose their favourite topic card or to think of another topic and prepare to talk about it and to write down some questions. Encourage them to use the language requirements and grammar of the level. (Elicit or explain what they are from the current syllabus).
9. As an example, for 'new technologies' some questions could be '*If you had a thousand Euros (change to your currency as relevant), what item of technology would you buy?*' or '*If you had had a thousand*

Preparation activities for ISE II Speaking & Listening

Euros in your parents' generation, what item of technology would you have bought? Elicit some more questions based on the grammar of the level.

10. Now give each student a piece of paper and ask them to write the topic they have chosen in the middle. Draw lines from the topic, writing their questions down. Explain they are going to present their topic to the group for approximately 10 minutes. Walk around checking everyone is involved and motivated.
11. Bring this activity to a close, ask for the names of the topics and write them on the board. Ask each student to think of a question to ask about each of the topics and write it down. Now each group presents their topic to the class. Make sure everyone in the group takes part in this. Ask various students to ask each group questions about their topic. Encourage dialogue and interaction between groups.

Extension activity

More advanced students can prepare their own topic for the exam.

Further support activity

Students finding the task more challenging can be encouraged to think of vocabulary related to a topic of their choice.

Homework

Ask students to choose someone to talk to outside of class (a friend or family member for example). They should ask this person questions about a topic which they are interested in and be ready to tell the class about it.

Topic cards

Veganism and vegetarianism

Extreme sports

The value of university education

Chess

The importance of work experience

Multicultural societies

The economic side of football

New technologies

Latest top news stories

Why are some people so rich, others so poor?

The importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle

How our generation can make the world a better place

The best thing that has happened to me is...

Question cards

What is it?	Why have people chosen to do...?
Would it be difficult to do...?	What are the advantages and disadvantages of...?
In the past, would people have done...?	What do you think of...?
In the future, will people still do...?	Ask someone a question about this.
Talk for 1 minute about this.	Interrupt someone when they are speaking about this.
How long have you been doing...?	If you could, would you do...?
When you were younger, did you used to do...?	What have people just been saying about...?