

Activity 2: Exam Familiarisation

Level:
Level 2

Time:
45 minutes x Activity

Resources:
✓ Access to Videos on TCL Website

Aims:

✓ To raise awareness about all tasks in the exam

Sub-skill focus: To develop skills and knowledge in speaking and listening at Level 2
To explore vocabulary and grammar at Level 2

Exam task focus: Components 1 & 2, all tasks

Procedure: Exam Familiarisation

Activity 1 – Presentation

Choosing a topic

- Explain to candidates that they need to choose a discursive topic which they are interested in and in which they can persuade the examiner. They should choose a topic which allows them to show both sides of the argument but they need to be able to make their stance clear. It's important not to make their presentation descriptive.
- The purpose of this activity is for candidates to decide whether particular topics lend themselves to being persuasive or descriptive. Ask candidates to put a ✓ or a X next to each one.
- a) My country – Romania – likely to be descriptive if it is full of facts about populations, history etc. The candidate could make it persuasive e.g why the examiner should go there but the language is likely to still be descriptive and below level. The examiner will need to challenge the candidate and give the opposite view so may be an uncomfortable conversation if the candidate feels the examiner is criticising their country.
- c) Why E-cigarettes should be banned – could be persuasive.
- d) The causes of climate change – likely to be descriptive, giving reasons which are difficult to argue against. The topic would be suitable if there was an angle eg. banning cars in city centres to reduce the effects of climate change.
- e) The festival of Eid – descriptive.
- f) The advantages of group exercise – persuasive.
- g) The negative impact of social media – persuasive.

Making your arguments

- Ask candidates to watch Sakila's presentation on 'The advantages of Communications Technology in the Classroom' <https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/english-language/ESOL-skills-for-life/ESOL-Skills-for-Life-Level-2-resources>. As you they watch, they should write down the arguments she puts forward.
- Answers:

1. Enhancing teaching and learning: methodologies, more interesting, keep up to date, different type of learners;
2. Globalisation: no geographical limitations, exposure, easier to exchange knowledge;
3. Produces independent learners: co-operation and communication skills for the future, increase motivation and engagement
 - Ask candidates to read the comment about Shakila’s presentation and think of any disadvantages Shakila could have mentioned? The purpose of the activity is to remind candidates that although the presentation is persuasive and they should take a stance, they still need to include some opposing arguments.

Activity 2 - Discussion

Language for agreeing, disagreeing, and supporting your argument

- Explain the format of the task: the examiner will pick up on some of the points in the presentation, challenge the candidate’s views and expect them to support their arguments with evidence.
- Ask candidates to put the phrases for each function in the appropriate category.

Agreeing

Yes, absolutely.
I couldn’t agree with you more.
That’s exactly my feeling.

Disagreeing

I understand what you are saying, but ...
I’m afraid, I see it a bit differently.
On the contrary, ...
I see your point, but ...

Supporting your argument

As I mentioned, ...
Let me explain, ...
In fact, I would go as far as to say...
I’d like to point out that ...
When I researched the topic, I found that ...

- Ask candidates to add more phrases and brainstorm ideas as a class. Focus on the formality of the phrases.
- When candidates have a rough plan of their presentation, ask them to think about the questions the examiner might ask and points they might challenge and prepare answers accordingly using some of the phrases.

Activity 3 – Role-play

Offering critical opinion constructively

- Explain the format of the role-play: the examiner will read a situation and they will need to make polite criticisms.
- Discuss the prompt with candidates and ask them to read the transcript of the subsequent conversation.
- Elicit that Robina is polite and formal and that there is a structure in her approach.
- Ask candidates to indicate the order in which Robina structures the conversation.
- Answers: c, a, b, d, e
- Elicit any alternative structures or phases that can be used in this part of the role-play.
- Ask candidates to prepare a structure and conversations for the role-play situations given.
- Check for politeness.
- Let candidates practise the conversations in pairs.

Responding to criticism constructively

- Remind candidates that during the role-play, the examiner will make a criticism of them. They need to respond politely and offer a compromise or ways to solve the issues.
- Go through the scenarios and give candidates time to think of possible responses and compromises.
- They can write notes and ideas rather than full sentences.
- Share ideas with the class.
- Ask candidates to work in pairs and practise responding to the criticisms.

Activity 4 – Group discussion

Expanding on the topic

- Explain the format of the group discussion: they will be given an issue of national or global importance to discuss. They are expected to move the conversation forward and propose constructive solutions to any problems they might see. The examiner will not intervene so they need to be able to keep the conversation going.
- Point out possible themes for a discussion.
- Elicit mind maps covering possible ideas for how the conversations could pan out.
- The purpose of the activity is to get candidates thinking about how to widen the scope of the discussion topic.
- Elicit more potential themes and brainstorm further ideas.

Activity 2 - Discussion

Language for agreeing, disagreeing, and supporting your argument

In the discussion task, the examiner will make comments, ask you to expand on some of the points in your presentation and challenge you to support your arguments with evidence. Put the following phrases you can use for each function in the appropriate category.

Agreeing

Disagreeing

Supporting your argument

I understand what you are saying, but ...
I couldn't agree with you more.
Let me explain, ...
In fact, I would go as far as to say ...
I see your point, but ...
When I researched the topic, I found that ...

Yes, absolutely.
I'm afraid, I see it a bit differently.
As I mentioned, ...
On the contrary, ...
I'd like to point out that ...
That's exactly my feeling.

Can you add some more phrases?

When you have a rough plan of your presentation, think about the questions the examiner might ask you and prepare your answers using some of the phrases above.

Activity 3 – Role-play

Offering critical opinion constructively

In the role-play, the examiner will read a situation and you will need to make polite criticisms. Look at the example situation and read the tape script of part of the conversation which follows:

I am your landlord. I promised to repair your broken washing machine several weeks ago but have done nothing yet. You are not happy about this.

Examiner: Hi Robina, is everything ok?
Robina: Well, actually, there's something I'd like to talk to you about if don't mind.
Examiner: Of course, what can I do for you?
Robina: It's just that my washing machine hasn't been working for a while now, I mentioned it to you a few weeks ago and you said you would get it fixed.
Examiner: Oh yes, I'm sorry about that, I've just been really busy with other tenants.
Robina: I understand that but, it's really become a problem now, I have children and it's very difficult without a washing machine, I'm sure you understand. I really need you to fix it or provide a new machine as soon as possible. Could you please do it by tomorrow?
Examiner: Ok, I'll.....

What order does Robina do the following things?

- a) Recap the situation
- b) Show sympathy with the examiner's situation
- c) Politely introduces the need for a discussion
- d) Re-state her problem.
- e) Explain what she wants the examiner to do

Look at the following role-play situations and write some similar conversations. Remember to use polite words and phrases.

1. *I am your neighbour. I always have my television on so loud at night that your child finds it difficult to sleep. You are not happy about this.*
2. *I am your hairdresser/barber. I have recently increased all my prices significantly. You are not happy about this.*

Responding to criticism constructively

During the role-play, the examiner will make a criticism of you. You need to respond politely and offer a compromise or ways to solve the issues. Think about how you might respond to the following comments.

Write your ideas:

You often come late to the class and it disrupts my learning.

Response

-
-
-

Compromise

-
-
-

You often leave dishes in the sink and I have to wash up before I can cook.

Response

-
-
-

Compromise

-
-
-

Your visitors often park their cars in front of my house.

Response

-
-
-

Compromise

-
-
-

Your children often play games outside my flat.

Response

-
-
-

Compromise

-
-
-

You borrowed my text book and haven't given it back.

Response

-
-
-

Compromise

-
-
-

Activity 4 – Group discussion

Expanding on the topic

For the group discussion, you will be given an issue of national or global importance to discuss with another candidate. You are expected to move the conversation forward and propose constructive solutions to any problems you might see. The examiner should not need to help you, so you need to be able to keep the conversation going.

Look at the following themes for a discussion. Can you add to the list of possible things you could talk about? Add more ideas for the other themes below:

Mobile phones / technology for children

Ages – young, teenage – different?
Safety, ease of communication
Expensive, who pays, responsibility, theft?
Parental control, issues online
Health issue? Eyesight?
Solutions – rules, restrictions, school rules

Celebrity culture / role models

City living versus countryside living

Education / school curriculum