

Exam format

Total exam time: 15 minutes

The exam consists of three assessed phases:

- ▶ Candidate-led discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- ▶ Interactive phase (up to 4 minutes)
- ▶ Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 5 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grades, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- ▶ Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately
- ▶ Communicate facts, ideas, opinions and explain viewpoints about a chosen topic linked across a series of extended turns
- ▶ Maintain coherence and cohesion throughout the phase by organising discourse
- ▶ Highlight significant points
- ▶ Paraphrase where necessary in order to maintain the discourse
- ▶ Engage the examiner in discussion of the topic
- ▶ Handle interruptions without undue effort by recapping and recovering

In the Interactive phase

- ▶ Take control over the interaction
- ▶ Maintain the discourse by asking for information and expanding on the responses obtained
- ▶ Develop the discussion by encouraging comment and opinion from the examiner
- ▶ Take, keep, give up and offer turns when appropriate to do so
- ▶ Where appropriate to the individual task, include exponents of the language functions as listed opposite

In the Conversation phase

- ▶ Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately
- ▶ Share responsibility for the maintenance of the interaction with the examiner
- ▶ Follow up on comments from the examiner in order to develop the conversation
- ▶ In case of a breakdown in communication, use paraphrasing and circumlocution

Language requirements

Language functions

- ▶ Expressing abstract ideas
- ▶ Expressing regrets, wishes and hopes
- ▶ Expressing assumptions
- ▶ Paraphrasing
- ▶ Evaluating options
- ▶ Hypothesising
- ▶ Evaluating past actions or course of events

Grammar

- ▶ Mixed conditionals
- ▶ Verbs followed by gerund and/or infinitive, eg *forget, stop, go on, remember*
- ▶ More complex forms of the passive with modals
- ▶ *Should/must/might/could*+ perfect infinitive
- ▶ Correct verb patterns after wish and hope

Lexis

- ▶ Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- ▶ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- ▶ Cohesive devices to recap and recover, eg *as I was saying, anyway ...*
- ▶ Hesitation fillers, eg *I mean, you know*
- ▶ Stock phrases to gain time for thought and keep the turn, eg *well, let me think ...*
- ▶ Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

- ▶ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- ▶ Rising and falling intonation for keeping, giving up and offering turns
- ▶ Stress and rhythm to highlight and emphasise main points and ideas
- ▶ Intonation and pitch to convey attitude

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

Two subject areas will be selected by the examiner from the list below.

- ▶ Education
- ▶ National customs
- ▶ Village and city life
- ▶ National and local produce and products
- ▶ Early memories
- ▶ Pollution and recycling

Please note, Grade 9 candidates should not select their topic from the list of subject areas above (see guidance notes on page 31 of the full specification).

Grade 9 communicative skills and language requirements have been mapped to CEFR level B2.3.