

# How to prepare for ISE Digital C1-C2

**ISE Digital**



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# Introduction to ISE Digital C1-C2

This publication provides examples of expansion activities for teachers using the ISE Digital practice tests as a teaching tool. The activities are designed to help you prepare your students for ISE Digital by developing the advanced skills and strategies they need to demonstrate mastery in the test and to thrive in demanding academic, professional and social contexts. Each activity reflects the authentic communicative demands of the exam, ensuring that classroom practice is meaningful, intellectually challenging and relevant.

Alongside test preparation, the activities promote high-level transferable skills such as critical evaluation, synthesis of perspectives, mediation, knowledge transformation, public speaking, structuring and extending complex ideas, adapting messages for diverse audiences, and responding flexibly to unpredictable questions or situations. By fostering a collaborative yet academically rigorous classroom environment, they help students recognise how the ISE Digital test mirrors authentic real-world communication and equips them with skills for lifelong success.

## ISE Digital

- ▶ Fully online adaptive digital test
- ▶ Levelling test
- ▶ Four individual modules
- ▶ 105 minutes

You can find more information about the ISE Digital exam in the [Examination information booklet](#).

### **Speaking module (15 minutes including instructions and listening time; individual speaking times are shown below)**

- ▶ Part 1: Responding to questions (1 min 30 sec)
  - Describe objects, people or places and express opinions on a topic
- ▶ Part 2: Delivering a prepared talk (2 min 30 sec)
  - Give a prepared talk on a topic of the candidate's choice and answer a follow-up question
- ▶ Part 3: Interacting (1 min 30 sec)
  - Listen and respond to a scenario; respond to new information
- ▶ Part 4: Summarising a talk or conversation (2 min)
  - Listen to a talk or conversation and give a summary with an opinion

### **Listening module (20 minutes)**

- ▶ Part 5: Listening to a conversation (3-6 questions)
  - Listen to an informal conversation between two people
  - Answer multiple-choice questions
- ▶ Part 6: Listening to a discussion (4-8 questions)
  - Listen to a discussion between invited panellists and a host
  - Answer multiple-choice questions
- ▶ Part 7: Listening to a talk (4-8 questions)
  - Listen to a talk followed by a retelling of the talk by a second speaker
  - Answer multiple-choice questions

**Reading module (20 minutes)**

- ▶ Part 8: Reading a single text (3-7 questions)
  - Read a single text on a topic
  - Answer multiple-choice questions
- ▶ Part 9: Reading a paired text (5-10 questions)
  - Read two texts on the same theme
  - Answer multiple-choice questions

**Writing module (40 minutes)**

- ▶ Part 10: Written online communication (5 minutes)
  - Write a short contribution to an opinion-based discussion, give suggestions or feedback, or respond to a group chat
- ▶ Part 11: Writing from sources (35 minutes)
  - Read two or three source texts and write an essay/report in response to a prompt, synthesising relevant information from the source texts and adding own ideas and stance on the topic

# Speaking module

The Speaking module of the ISE Digital test at C1-C2 assesses students' ability to engage in extended, authentic spoken interaction across a range of contexts. The activities in this section are designed to prepare students for each part of the test while developing advanced skills such as sustaining complex arguments, evaluating perspectives and adapting responses for different communicative purposes.

These activities focus on the four task types assessed in the exam: responding to questions, delivering a prepared talk, interacting in a real-world situation and summarising a talk or conversation. Students practise Task fulfilment (fully addressing the prompt with relevant, well-developed ideas), Language (using precise and varied grammar and lexis), Delivery (speaking fluently and persuasively with appropriate stress and intonation) and in Part 4, Mediation of source text (selecting, synthesising and reformulating key information for a new audience).

By working through these activities, students also refine transferable communication skills such as articulating abstract concepts, structuring complex ideas logically, evaluating and integrating evidence, and responding flexibly to unpredictable questions or challenges. These skills support strong performance in the test and equip students for advanced academic, professional and intercultural communication.

## Exam strategies:

For all tasks, students can only record their responses once. They should begin speaking promptly when the timer starts.

- ▶ Use the full time to develop ideas; avoid short or superficial answers.
- ▶ Monitor the timer so you can bring your response to a natural conclusion before it stops.
- ▶ For the prepared talk, focus on delivering a clear, well-structured argument in a natural style; avoid memorisation.
- ▶ For the interaction, address both bullet points fully, then engage actively with the follow-up by expanding, questioning or evaluating rather than repeating.
- ▶ For the summary, cover both bullet points and reformulate the main ideas of the talk or conversation clearly, showing how they connect.

# Part 1: Responding to questions

**Rationale:** These activities train students to move beyond short personal answers and to develop flexible, well-supported responses to more abstract or challenging questions. They promote skills in Task fulfilment (answering all parts of the prompt), Language (varied and precise grammar/vocabulary) and Delivery (clear, fluent and contextually appropriate). Students practise shifting register, questioning assumptions and extending answers with reasons, examples or counterpoints – skills vital both for the exam and for authentic academic or professional interaction.

## Activity 1.1: Audience shift

**Classroom note:** This activity shows students that the same idea can be expressed in different ways depending on audience and context. It trains them to control register and pragmatic choices, a key skill at higher levels.

**Step 1:** Write one of the actual exam questions on the board (eg 'I'm not sure if social media is a good source of information. What do you think?').

1. My young children keep asking me to get a family pet. Do you think that's a good idea?
2. I regularly use several different apps. Which social media do you like the best?
3. I'm not sure if social media is a good source of information. What do you think?

**Step 2:** In pairs, one student answers first as if speaking to a friend (informal, personal, eg 'Honestly, I think it's fine most of the time because...').

**Step 3:** Their partner answers the question as if in a formal debate (formal, structured, eg 'While social media provides immediacy, it often lacks reliability; therefore, it cannot substitute for more curated sources.').

**Step 4:** Students discuss differences in register, vocabulary and organisation in their responses.

**Step 5:** With the class, discuss which choices make the response more formal, which make it more personal and why this matters in the test.

## Activity 1.2: Questioning assumptions

**Classroom note:** At C1-C2, students should show critical thinking, not just state opinions. This activity teaches them to look for hidden assumptions behind a question and respond more thoughtfully.

**Step 1:** Use the exam question: 'My young children keep asking me to get a family pet. Do you think that's a good idea?'

**Step 2:** Ask students to brainstorm hidden assumptions (eg 'Everyone has enough space for a pet', 'Children are always responsible', 'Pets are only positive influences').

**Step 3:** In groups, students prepare a one-minute answer that challenges one assumption (eg 'While pets can be wonderful, not all families have the resources to care for them properly.').

**Step 4:** Partners listen and note: Did the answer address the question while also questioning an assumption?

## Activity 1.3: Reformulate and extend

**Classroom note:** This activity strengthens flexibility by forcing students to adapt their original answers and expand them in new directions. It mirrors the quick thinking needed when follow-up questions shift focus.

**Step 1:** In pairs, students answer an exam question, eg 'Which social media do you like the best?'

**Step 2:** The teacher gives a cue card to each pair:

- ▶ 'Add an example.'
- ▶ 'Change the register (make it more formal).'
- ▶ 'Give the opposite view.'

**Step 3:** Students reformulate their answers according to the cue.

- ▶ Original: 'I like Instagram because it's visual.'
- ▶ Reformulated with 'opposite view': 'Some people argue Instagram is superficial; in fact, I sometimes find it distracting.'

**Step 4:** Students reformulate their responses and repeat; partners give quick feedback on clarity and adaptability using the form in **Appendix A**.

### Activity 1.4: Effective vs ineffective answers

**Classroom note:** This activity helps students critically evaluate the effectiveness of different types of responses and understand what makes a strong answer. It shows them what 'not enough' looks like at this level and helps them become more aware of common pitfalls.

**Step 1:** Provide three model answers to the question: 'I'm not sure if social media is a good source of information. What do you think?'

- ▶ Too short: 'No, not really.'
- ▶ Unfocused: 'Well, social media is everywhere. I use it a lot. But it depends. Some things are true, some not. I don't know.'
- ▶ Effective: 'I think social media can be a useful source of information if you approach it critically. For example, I often find breaking news on X (formerly Twitter) faster than on traditional websites. However, because there's so much misinformation, it's important to cross-check with reliable sources. So I'd say it's helpful but only if you evaluate what you read carefully.'

**Step 2:** In pairs, students diagnose problems. Why are the first two answers weak? (eg too short, vague, no support, no clear stance).

**Step 3:** In pairs, students discuss ways to improve the weak answers using the Answer → Reason → Example format.

- ▶ Answer the question directly.
- ▶ Give a reason (why you hold that view).
- ▶ Add an example (specific evidence or illustration).

**Step 4:** Each student plans then delivers their own improved answer to the original question.

**Step 5:** Partners listen to each other's responses and use **Appendix B** to give feedback (focusing on clarity, development and support with examples).

**Step 6:** With the class, select a few students to share their revised responses. Discuss what made these stronger and what features mark a high-level C1-C2 response.

# Part 2: Delivering a prepared talk

**Rationale:** These activities develop students' ability to plan, organise and deliver extended talks on complex or abstract topics with confidence and clarity. They promote the skills needed to perform well in Task fulfilment (presenting a clear, coherent and well-supported argument), Language (using precise, varied and sophisticated grammar and vocabulary) and Delivery (maintaining fluency, expressiveness and audience engagement). Students also practise structuring ideas logically, integrating examples and perspectives, and adapting their talk to suit context and audience. Beyond the test, these are essential skills for academic presentations, professional communication and effective participation in debates or discussions.

## Activity 2.1: Choosing a strong topic

**Classroom note:** At C1-C2, the strength of a talk often depends on the topic. A good choice is one that is specific, debatable and rich enough to sustain a clear argument with evidence and examples. This activity helps students practise evaluating potential topics before committing to one.

**Step 1:** Provide students with a few sample prompts (eg 'Is creativity more important than knowledge in education?', 'Should cities ban private cars?', 'Does social media help or harm democracy?'). Ask them to rate each on a 1-5 scale for:

- ▶ Depth (Can I develop more than 3-4 strong points?)
- ▶ Interest (Will this engage my audience?)
- ▶ Range (Will it allow me to show varied language and register?)

**Step 2:** In small groups, students share their own ideas and use the same scale to evaluate them. Encourage peers to question each other's topics ('What evidence could you use?', 'How would you make this relevant to others?').

**Step 3:** Students refine or narrow broad topics (eg instead of 'Technology' → 'AI in healthcare'). Each student then drafts a working title plus three key points for their talk.

**Step 4:** Volunteers pitch their refined topic to the class in one sentence. As a group, decide which topics sound strongest and why.

## Activity 2.2: Research and outline

**Classroom note:** Talks at this level need depth, evidence and logical structure, not just fluent delivery. This activity shows students how to move from broad ideas to a clear, organised outline that can sustain a full talk. Breaking the talk into steps, they practise building arguments with a clear opening, development and conclusion.

**Step 1:** Provide a sample prompt (eg 'What is the role of creativity in education?').

**Step 2:** Students brainstorm what they already know and what they might need to research (eg creativity helps problem-solving, supports innovation, is undervalued in standardised testing etc).

**Step 3:** Allow 10 minutes for quick research using online resources or pre-selected texts. Encourage them to collect at least 2-3 facts or expert opinions they can use.

**Step 4:** Students create a 5-step outline:

- ▶ Hook: 'Imagine a world where no one thinks outside the box...'
- ▶ Position: 'I believe creativity is as important as knowledge in education.'
- ▶ Point 1: Creativity supports problem-solving.
- ▶ Point 2: Creativity prepares students for unpredictable futures.
- ▶ Close: Restate position and connect to broader relevance.

**Step 5:** In pairs, students exchange outlines. Partners give feedback: Is the stance clear? Do the points build logically? Is there enough content for a 2-minute talk?

### Activity 2.3: Signposting rehearsal

**Classroom note:** Signposting helps listeners follow complex talks, especially when ideas are abstract or multi-layered. This activity develops students' awareness of how to guide the listener by using explicit transitions. They also learn which phrases sound natural in spoken English compared to overly formal or written expressions.

**Step 1:** Provide a bank of signposting phrases (eg 'To begin with...', 'Let's now turn to...', 'What this really shows is...', 'To conclude...').

**Step 2:** Students practise delivering their outline with signposts included. Example:

- a. 'I'll begin with why creativity is essential for innovation.'
- b. 'Now, let's turn to how creativity builds resilience.'

**Step 3:** Partners listen and note whether the talk is easy to follow. Did the signposts clarify progression or were they overused?

**Step 4:** As a class, collect useful signposting phrases on the board and discuss which are more natural for spoken English and which sound too academic or written.

### Activity 2.4: Evidence and reliability

**Classroom note:** Strong talks rely on evidence, but not all evidence is equally persuasive. This activity encourages students to go beyond simply adding facts by questioning the reliability and relevance of their sources. This critical step helps them sound more authoritative and ensures their arguments are well supported, not just opinion-based.

**Step 1:** Ask students to add one statistic, study or quotation to support one of their points (eg 'A 2021 OECD report found that schools with more arts-based classes showed higher levels of creative problem-solving.'). They can use **Appendix C** to record their source material.

**Step 2:** In pairs, students share their evidence and discuss: Who is the source? Is it recent? Does it support the argument strongly?

**Step 3:** Students revise their outlines to integrate the evidence smoothly.

**Step 4:** In pairs, students deliver a short section of their talk (just one point plus evidence). Partners give feedback using **Appendix D**. Did the evidence make the point stronger? Was it explained clearly?

### Activity 2.5: Follow-up drill

**Classroom note:** Being able to answer follow-up questions shows flexibility and depth of understanding. This activity trains students to respond quickly and coherently while maintaining their position. By using a simple response frame, they can give structured, persuasive answers rather than hesitating or repeating themselves.

**Step 1:** In pairs, students deliver their 2-minute talks and after each talk, their partner asks a follow-up question. They can write these themselves, or the teacher can provide a few prompts.

- ▶ 'Can you give an example from real life?'
- ▶ 'How would you respond to people who disagree?'
- ▶ 'What are the limitations of your argument?'

**Step 2:** Speakers answer in 20-30 seconds using the frame:

- ▶ Acknowledge ('That's a fair question...')
- ▶ Answer ('I think creativity prepares us for unpredictable situations.')
- ▶ Justify ('For example, companies like Google actively test this in hiring.')
- ▶ Conclude ('So while it may not replace knowledge, it is equally vital.')

**Step 3:** Partners give feedback using **Appendix D**. Did the speaker respond directly? Did they justify their view? Was the conclusion clear?

**Step 4:** Rotate roles so everyone practises both delivering their talk and answering the follow-up question.

### Activity 2.6: Recording and reflection

**Classroom note:** Self-recording helps students hear their performance in a new way, noticing strengths and weaknesses that are hard to detect while speaking. This activity develops their ability to self-monitor for pacing, clarity and expressiveness. By combining reflection with peer feedback, students build strategies to refine their delivery in a focused and practical way.

**Step 1:** Students record their talk (2 minutes) on their phone or laptop.

**Step 2:** They listen back twice:

- ▶ Content check: Did I cover all points? Did I include evidence and examples?
- ▶ Delivery check: Was my pace natural? Did I use pauses, intonation and emphasis effectively?

**Step 3:** Students complete a reflection checklist (**Appendix E**), noting:

- ▶ One strength (eg 'I gave a clear example.')
- ▶ One area to improve (eg 'I spoke too fast in the conclusion.')

**Step 4:** If time allows, students re-record with the improvement in mind.

**Step 5:** In pairs, they share their reflections and give each other one concrete suggestion for the next attempt.

# Part 3: Interacting

**Rationale:** These activities develop students' ability to respond appropriately in dynamic, unpredictable exchanges where both task completion and pragmatic appropriacy are crucial. In this task, students must not only explain and suggest solutions but also adapt to follow-up challenges, showing flexibility and interpersonal awareness. They practise Task fulfilment (addressing the scenario and follow-up fully), Language (using precise, context-appropriate grammar and vocabulary) and Delivery (speaking fluently, politely and with clear structure). These skills mirror real-world communication, from professional negotiations to collaborative problem-solving, where clarity, adaptability and critical thinking are essential.

## Activity 3.1: Analysing the prompt

**Classroom note:** At advanced levels, strong interactive responses are planned around communicative moves, not just content. Students need to evaluate and refine their interactive responses, developing awareness of what makes workplace communication effective.

**Step 1:** Display the full scenario and follow-up on the board.

Here is your situation. You were late to work and missed the monthly sales meeting.

Talk to your boss and:

- ▶ explain why you missed the meeting
- ▶ suggest something you could do to help your team members.

You have 15 seconds to think about your response then you will have up to 1 minute to talk.

[Boss] Hello, we missed you at the meeting today. I hope things are okay.

Follow-up: 'This isn't the first time you have missed a meeting. What can we do to be sure this does not happen again?'

**Step 2:** Ask students to underline task words (explain, suggest, help), content words (late, missed meeting, team) and context words (boss, formal).

**Step 3:** In groups, students discuss: What are the communicative goals in the first part? What new challenge does the follow-up add?

**Step 4:** Elicit a list of useful strategies (apology, mitigation, proposing solutions, showing accountability).

## Activity 3.2: Structured response frames

**Classroom note:** Students practise organising their ideas with clear rhetorical frames for both the initial task and the follow-up, ensuring their responses are coherent and professional.

**Step 1:** Provide frames on the board:

- ▶ Initial: Apology → Reason → Suggestion/Support for team
- ▶ Follow-up: Acknowledge → Action plan → Justification → Conclude positively

**Step 2:** In pairs, students create short notes (not sentences) for each step.

**Step 3:** The 'employee' responds to the 'boss's' opening line, using the initial frame. The 'boss' delivers the follow-up. The 'employee' then responds with the second frame.

**Step 4:** Swap roles. Partners give feedback using *Appendix F*. Did the response include all elements? Was the tone professional?

### Activity 3.3: Adaptation and variation drill

**Classroom note:** This activity pushes students to handle unpredictable variations of the follow-up, building flexibility and resilience under pressure.

**Step 1:** The teacher prepares 3-4 possible follow-ups (eg 'Your colleagues are frustrated - how will you regain their trust?'/ 'What if this happens during a client meeting?').

**Step 2:** In pairs, the 'employee' delivers their initial response. The 'boss' selects a follow-up at random. The 'employee' adapts their response in 20-30 seconds, maintaining politeness and focus.

**Step 3:** Rotate roles. Each time, the 'employee' should give a slightly different response and the 'boss' asks a different follow-up question.

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss what strategies helped make responses sound flexible but credible.

### Activity 3.4: Peer review and redrafting

**Classroom note:** High-level performance requires pragmatic finesse such as appropriate apologies, non-defensive explanations, concrete offers and audience-aware closing moves. Analysing a weak model makes these features salient.

**Step 1:** Give two short models (project/print on slide).

- ▶ Weak A (deflecting): 'Trains here are terrible so there was nothing I could do. I'll try harder next time.'
- ▶ Weak B (incomplete, informal): 'Sorry I missed it; I'll catch up later.'

**Step 2:** In pairs, students identify what's missing/misaligned (no responsibility, no team-help offer, vague timing, no alignment check, casual register).

**Step 3:** Individually, students produce a revision of A or B, including at least one specific, time-bound action (remedy).

#### Example stems:

- ▶ Acknowledge: 'You're right to raise this - I missed the meeting, and I take responsibility.'
- ▶ Reason (concise): 'My train was cancelled last minute; I informed reception but should have escalated sooner.'
- ▶ Remedy: 'I'll share a one-page summary by 2pm and brief the team at 4pm. I'll also set a backup commute plan.'
- ▶ Alignment: 'Does that cover what you need, or would you prefer an earlier briefing?'

**Step 4:** Partners respond as the 'boss' using *Appendix F*. Is the response acceptable? What still needs tightening?

**Step 5:** With the class, elicit effective C1-C2 phrases:

- ▶ Accountability: 'I take responsibility for.../'You're right to flag this.'
- ▶ Concise reasons: 'Due to a last-minute cancellation...'
- ▶ Remedy: 'I'll produce a one-page summary by 2pm and brief the team at 4pm.'
- ▶ Alignment: 'Would you like me to include action owners as well?'

### Activity 3.5: Optional intercultural interaction

**Classroom note:** This activity helps students reflect on how communication style varies across professional and cultural contexts. By experimenting with different types of responses, they see how word choice, hedging and politeness markers affect interpretation. This develops intercultural awareness, an essential skill for global workplaces, and builds flexibility in tone and register so students can adapt to different expectations while staying professional.

**Step 1:** In groups of three, give samples of Direct, Neutral and Softened versions of the same response.

#### Sample responses:

**Direct:** 'You're right, I missed the meeting, and I'll take responsibility. From now on, I'll leave home earlier and prepare notes the night before. I'll also send you and the team a summary of my updates in advance, so even if there's a delay, the information won't be lost.'

**Neutral:** 'I understand your concern, and I take full responsibility for missing the meeting. To prevent this happening again, I've already adjusted my schedule so I can arrive earlier, and I'll also prepare written updates for the team in advance. That way, the meeting can continue smoothly even if something unexpected comes up.'

**Softened:** 'Thank you for raising this - it's important, and I do apologise. I realise this has happened before, and I want to make sure it doesn't happen again. One step I'll take is leaving earlier to avoid travel issues, and I'd also be happy to share a written summary with the team beforehand. Would that be an acceptable approach?'

**Step 2:** Using *Appendix G*, the group compare the responses and decide which fits a UK/US corporate context vs a more formal/hierarchical context, justifying their choices (politeness markers, hedging, mitigation).

**Step 3:** Students write their own version of the response in two styles:

- ▶ Direct: Clear, efficient, to the point.
- ▶ Softened: More indirect, with politeness strategies and hedging.

**Step 4:** Students exchange with their partners and give feedback using the questions in *Appendix G*.

# Part 4: Summarising a talk or conversation

**Rationale:** These activities develop students' ability to mediate spoken texts by identifying, selecting and restructuring the most important points. At this level, students must go beyond accurate recall to show insight, evaluation and the ability to integrate information from multiple sources. They practise Task fulfilment (covering all required points clearly and fully), Mediation of source text (condensing, paraphrasing and adapting for a new listener) and Delivery (clear organisation, fluent pace and natural intonation). They also develop strategies for balancing fidelity to the source with adaptation to the new context. These skills support academic tasks such as summarising lectures, as well as professional communication.

## Activity 4.1: Summary and follow-up

**Classroom note:** This activity prepares students for the full mediation task, including the follow-up question. It helps them practise summarising key points from a spoken source, reformulating them for a specific listener, and then extending the discussion by adding their own ideas. This encourages flexibility and higher-order thinking, as students must both mediate information and generate new, relevant contributions.

**Step 1:** Project or hand out the prompt. Then play the podcast extract. Ask students to take notes under two headings:

- ▶ Benefits of planting trees in cities
- ▶ Practical advice for the friend's project

Your friend is working on a class project about improving urban environments. Today you hear part of a discussion on a podcast about trees in cities.

Listen to the discussion, then tell your friend about what you heard. Use these questions to help you summarise the conversation. After you listen, you have 30 seconds to think about what you want to say.

- ▶ According to the discussion, what are the benefits of planting trees in cities?
- ▶ What advice would you give your friend about his project?

**Man:** Welcome to today's podcast, 'Greenwise'. This is your host, Colin Davies. My guest today is Aisha Ganup, head of 'CityTrees' an international organisation focused on tree planting in urban areas. Welcome, Aisha.

**Woman:** Hello Colin. Thanks for inviting me.

**Man:** So, Aisha, we're all aware that trees can improve a city's appearance, but can you tell us more specifically about the benefits of city trees?

**Woman:** I'd say the most important benefit is that large trees can make our cities cleaner. They can filter urban pollutants caused by vehicle emissions. In fact, a tree can absorb up to 150 kilos of CO<sub>2</sub> in a year.

**Man:** That's a significant statistic - so important in terms of mitigating global warming. And in connection with that, trees can also reduce temperatures in cities.

**Woman:** You're right. Basically, trees provide shade, and if they are planted strategically around buildings in hot countries, they can reduce air conditioning needs by about 30 per cent.

**Man:** Can you say a bit more about that?

**Woman:** Well, as an example, an urban tree planting project in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, where temperatures frequently go above 40 degrees, found that planting trees six metres apart in built-up areas lowered temperatures by nearly one per cent. In addition, the shade the trees provided meant residents could socialise outside, which further reduced the time they had their air conditioning on.

**Man:** It's great to hear of such projects. Let's move on to benefits to wildlife now.

**Step 2:** In pairs, Student A summarises the podcast for Student B ('the friend'). The summary should include both bullet points (benefits + advice) and be phrased naturally, not copied from the notes.

**Step 3:** Student B then asks:

'What other steps could be taken to reduce pollution in cities?'

Student A must give at least two new ideas (eg promoting cycling, improving public transport, reducing car use, encouraging renewable energy).

**Step 4:** Students switch roles, so both practise mediating. Students give feedback to their partners using *Appendix H*.

**Step 5:** With the class, discuss:

- ▶ How well did students reformulate the original podcast ideas?
- ▶ Did their additional ideas connect logically to the podcast theme?
- ▶ Which strategies helped them extend the conversation confidently?

## Activity 4.2: Reformulation practice

**Classroom note:** This activity trains students to rephrase and condense information from a spoken source, avoiding verbatim repetition. It develops mediation by encouraging them to find alternative ways of expressing the same idea, an essential skill for summarising naturally.

**Step 1:** Play or read short extracts from the podcast (eg the Abu Dhabi project or CO<sub>2</sub> absorption).

**Step 2:** Students write two reformulations for each extract: one concise (10-12 words) and one elaborated (20-25 words).

Examples:

- ▶ Original: A tree can absorb 150 kilos of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.
- ▶ Concise: A tree absorbs 150 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.
- ▶ Expanded: Each mature tree can remove about 150 kilos of carbon dioxide every year, which highlights their crucial role in reducing pollution.

**Step 3:** In pairs, they compare their versions and decide which sounds more natural for explaining to a friend.

**Step 4:** Students deliver their reformulated versions orally, focusing on clear and fluent delivery, then give each other feedback:

- ▶ Does the concise version capture the main ideas without extra detail?
- ▶ Does the expanded version add clarity or examples naturally?
- ▶ Does the reformulation sound original (not copied from the text)?
- ▶ Is the oral delivery smooth and clear?

**Step 5:** With the class, have a brief discussion: Which strategies (paraphrasing, using synonyms, reordering information) made reformulation effective?

## Activity 4.3: Layered summaries

**Classroom note:** At higher levels, summaries should adjust in detail depending on audience and purpose. This activity develops flexibility by asking students to produce summaries of different lengths for the same input.

**Step 1:** Play the podcast extract again.

**Step 2:** Ask students to create:

- ▶ a one-sentence summary (gist only)
- ▶ a 30-second summary (covering main benefits + advice)
- ▶ a 60-second summary (detailed with examples).

**Step 3:** In groups of three, students present all three versions. Listeners check using *Appendix H*. Did each version feel appropriate for its length and purpose?

**Step 4:** Whole-class reflection: How does adjusting the level of detail help in real-world communication (eg quick updates vs formal briefings)?

### Activity 4.4: Critical extension

**Classroom note:** This activity extends the follow-up stage by requiring students not only to add new ideas but also to critically evaluate the original talk. It builds higher-order thinking by balancing agreement with critique.

**Step 1:** After summarising, students respond to the follow-up question:

What other steps could be taken to reduce pollution in cities?

**Step 2:** Encourage them to:

- ▶ acknowledge one strength of the podcast (eg good evidence on CO<sub>2</sub> absorption)
- ▶ introduce one limitation (eg trees take time to grow)
- ▶ propose another solution (eg investment in public transport).

**Step 3:** Students deliver their extended responses in pairs, while partners note: Did the speaker balance agreement and critique? Did they provide a relevant new idea?

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss how critical extension makes a summary more persuasive and suitable for advanced contexts (eg academic seminars, workplace reports).

# Listening module

The Listening module of the ISE Digital test assesses students' ability to process complex spoken English across a variety of contexts, including academic lectures, professional discussions and multi-speaker interactions. At this level, students must not only understand explicit information but also interpret nuance, evaluate perspectives and synthesise meaning across different sections of input. The activities in this section are designed to help students prepare for each part of the test while developing strategies for higher-level listening and critical engagement.

These activities focus on key listening skills: identifying specific details, understanding gist and speaker purpose, recognising stance and attitude, making inferences, evaluating the strength of evidence, and synthesising information from different contributions. Students also practise following extended discourse, noting how ideas are organised and developed, and distinguishing between fact, opinion and interpretation.

By working through these activities, learners build advanced listening strategies such as predicting speaker direction, tracking interaction across multiple voices and verifying interpretations against the recording. These skills support success in the test and transfer directly to real-world contexts such as academic study, professional collaboration and critical engagement with media, where careful listening, evaluation and integration of ideas are essential.

## Exam strategies:

For all tasks, students are given time to read the questions before the recording starts. They will hear the information twice.

- ▶ Before listening, skim the questions and answer choices quickly but also think about the kind of information you'll need (detail, main idea, inference). Pay attention to key words and phrases but be prepared for paraphrasing rather than exact word matches.
- ▶ During the first listening, mark correct answers when you are confident, or strike through options that are clearly incorrect. Listen for both explicit detail and implied meaning, noting any contrasts or evaluations.
- ▶ During the second listening, confirm your first choices and focus on questions you left unanswered. Pay attention to nuance (eg the speaker's stance, evidence used or tone) as these often distinguish correct answers from distractors at higher levels.

# Part 5: Listening to a conversation

**Rationale:** These activities help students develop the advanced skills needed to follow and interpret complex conversations. At this level, the focus is not only on understanding main ideas and details but also on identifying nuance, stance and interaction between speakers. Students practise distinguishing between explicit and implied meaning, evaluating language functions such as concession or recommendation, and synthesising ideas across turns to build a coherent picture. This prepares them for success in the test and for authentic communication where subtle tone, perspective and interaction are as important as factual content.

## Activity 5.1: Listening for gist and explicit/implicit meaning

**Classroom note:** This activity helps students practise identifying not only the explicit information in a conversation but also the underlying attitudes of the speakers. At C1-C2, this involves distinguishing between what is stated directly and what is implied. These skills transfer directly to real-world communication, where understanding nuance is as important as recognising content.

**Step 1:** Students listen to the conversation once without notes for overall gist. They should answer the question, 'What are the two speakers generally discussing?'.

### Conversation

**Liz:** Good afternoon, Jack. Would you like to take a break?

**Jack:** Hello, Liz. Good idea. Proofreading this paper has become quite laborious, especially with the deadline looming. I could benefit from a more efficient approach.

**Liz:** Have you considered leveraging AI for this task? I've been integrating it into my workflow regularly.

**Jack:** Really? I had assumed AI was confined to handling more basic tasks and couldn't manage the nuanced elements of writing.

**Liz:** In fact, modern AI tools are far more advanced. They can detect issues such as misplaced punctuation, improper word choice and redundancy, significantly expediting the proofreading process.

**Jack:** That's interesting, but I still believe AI lacks the ability to fully grasp the subtleties of language. It might struggle with more abstract aspects, like tone, creativity and understanding the context in which the text will be used.

**Liz:** You raise a valid point. While AI has made impressive advancements, it's still not capable of replicating the complex decision-making and contextual judgement that human editors provide. AI excels in error detection and proofreading, but editorial decisions - particularly those involving style, tone and audience - are best left to humans. Nonetheless, for tasks such as yours, it could be a valuable asset.

**Jack:** Is there a specific tool you would recommend?

**Liz:** ProofMaster. It has free and premium versions. The free version addresses basic errors, while the premium version includes advanced features like context-aware suggestions and more refined language analysis.

**Jack:** So, as expected, you get what you pay for.

**Liz:** Exactly. It's intuitive to use, and it consistently ranks highly in professional reviews. I can let you use my account to try it out, and if it meets your needs, you can set up your own subscription.

**Jack:** That sounds excellent. I'll give it a try - it could save me considerable time.

**Liz:** I'm confident you'll find it an invaluable tool.

**Step 2:** Students listen again, using *Appendix J* to take notes and focus on the speakers' attitudes. They complete a chart similar to this:

Speaker	What they say explicitly	What this shows about their attitude
Jack	eg 'AI lacks the ability to fully grasp subtleties...'	Hesitant/cautious about relying on AI
Liz	eg 'AI excels in error detection and proofreading...'	Positive but realistic about limitations

**Step 3:** In pairs, students compare their charts and highlight where the speakers agree (AI is useful but limited) and where they differ (Jack doubts, Liz recommends).

**Step 4:** Students answer the questions and underline in their notes which words or phrases from the conversation support their answer.

### Questions

**Q1:** Why is Jack hesitant about using AI for proofreading?

- a. He believes only humans can correct punctuation.
- b. He finds new technologies hard to learn.
- c. \*He thinks AI has difficulties with complex ideas.
- d. He is concerned about the cost of AI.

**Q2:** What does Liz think about the use of AI in writing?

- a. \*She acknowledges that AI has shortcomings in understanding nuances.
- b. She believes AI can fully replace human editors.
- c. She thinks AI cannot expedite the proofreading process.
- d. She believes editorial decisions should be completely handled by AI.

**Q3:** Which feature of ProofMaster is highlighted as an advantage of its premium version?

- a. It offers a free trial for an unlimited time.
- b. \*It includes more advanced language analysis and suggestions.
- c. It automatically corrects all errors in the text.
- d. It provides detailed explanations for every error detected.

**Q4:** Based on the conversation, what is Jack's general attitude towards technology?

- a. He is convinced it will solve his problems.
- b. He believes it is ineffective for academic tasks.
- c. He wants to rely on it for creative work only.
- d. \*He remains cautious about its capabilities.

**Step 5:** Students role-play a short continuation of the dialogue: one plays Liz, one Jack, each adding one new argument about AI in proofreading.

## Activity 5.2: Tracking interaction

**Classroom note:** This activity develops students' ability to follow how speakers interact and build meaning together, not just what they say individually. Students learn to trace the flow of the exchange, and analysis of functional language (eg hedging, concession, recommendation) deepens their understanding of speaker intent.

**Step 1:** Explain that interaction codes help track moves in a conversation. Write these codes on the board:

- ▶ A = Agree
- ▶ D = Disagree/Challenge
- ▶ E = Expand
- ▶ R = Redirect/Shift topic

**Step 2:** Play the conversation and ask students to take notes.

**Step 3:** Students listen again and annotate their transcript/notes with interaction codes at key points (eg 'That's interesting, but...' = D; 'You raise a valid point...' = A + E). Refer to **Appendix K** for the list of interaction codes and functions.

**Step 4:** Project or highlight phrases such as:

- ▶ 'I had assumed...' (hedging)
- ▶ 'That's interesting, but...' (soft disagreement)
- ▶ 'You raise a valid point.' (concession)
- ▶ 'Nonetheless, for tasks such as yours...' (recommendation/qualification)

Students categorise them into functions (hedging, conceding, disagreeing, recommending).

**Step 5:** In pairs, students discuss:

- ▶ Where did the speakers agree?
- ▶ Where did they differ?
- ▶ What is their final shared position?

**Step 6:** The pairs write a 2-3 sentence synthesis (eg 'Jack doubts AI can handle nuance, while Liz acknowledges this but emphasises its strengths in proofreading. They both conclude that AI is a useful tool with clear limits.').

**Step 7:** With the class, discuss:

- ▶ How did noticing interaction codes help you follow the dialogue?
- ▶ How did functional language affect the tone of the conversation?
- ▶ Why is it useful to summarise not just what was said but how the speakers related to each other's ideas?

### Activity 5.3: Mini-presentation synthesis

**Classroom note:** This activity consolidates listening and analysis skills by asking students to reconstruct the conversation in their own words and explain how the speakers' interaction shaped the outcome. It requires students to integrate explicit content (what was said), implicit meaning (attitudes) and interactional dynamics (agreeing, disagreeing, conceding). Presenting a synthesis in this way mirrors real-world skills such as briefing a colleague, reporting on a meeting or presenting both sides of a discussion in academic contexts.

**Step 1:** In pairs, assign the roles of 'reporter' and 'listener'. The 'reporter' prepares a short 60-90 second oral presentation answering two questions:

- ▶ What did the speakers discuss and what were their positions?
- ▶ How did they interact to reach their final shared stance?

**Step 2:** Give students five minutes to draft brief notes. They should not copy full sentences but organise their points under three headings:

- ▶ Content (facts/ideas mentioned)
- ▶ Attitudes (what the speakers believed or doubted)
- ▶ Interaction (how they responded to each other)

**Step 3:** Each 'reporter' delivers their synthesis to their partner. The 'listener' takes notes and asks one clarifying question at the end (eg 'So why did Liz recommend ProofMaster if she admitted its limits?').

**Step 4:** Swap roles so both students practise reporting and questioning.

**Step 5:** Ask members of the class to volunteer examples of strong synthesis. Highlight features such as conciseness, balanced coverage of both speakers and linking phrases (eg 'Initially Jack doubted... but Liz acknowledged this while...').

### Activity 5.4: Reflection questions

**Classroom note:** Reflection helps students consolidate listening strategies and build awareness of their strengths and areas to develop.

**Step 1:** After the listening activities, ask students to reflect briefly in writing:

- ▶ Which listening strategy did I use most effectively today?
- ▶ What clue helped me most in understanding the speaker(s)?
- ▶ What will I try to do differently next time I listen to a complex discussion or lecture?

# Part 6: Listening to a discussion

**Rationale:** These activities train students to process multi-speaker input where perspectives are nuanced and overlapping. Learners practise identifying stances, evaluating evidence and synthesising contributions across turns, not just recalling details. They also work on recognising functional language (hedging, concession, evaluation) and how it signals speaker attitude. This prepares them to handle the complexity of the ISE Digital test discussion task, while building transferable skills for academic seminars, professional meetings and other real-world group discussions.

## Activity 6.1: Predicting speaker stance

**Classroom note:** This activity develops anticipation skills by training students to predict viewpoints before listening. This primes them to listen critically for alignment and divergence in speaker opinions.

**Step 1:** Share the topic: 'The role of birth order in shaping personality.'

**Step 2:** Ask students to predict each speaker's stance:

- a. Dr Gupta (psychologist) → ?
- b. Tim (author) → ?
- c. Jane (moderator) → ?

**Step 3:** Students listen once to check if their predictions were accurate.

**Step 4:** In pairs, they list linguistic evidence for stance (eg 'While these patterns provide valuable insight, we mustn't oversimplify them' → cautious/critical).

## Activity 6.2: Mapping interaction and functions

**Classroom note:** Students move beyond what was said to track how speakers interact and build meaning. Coding interactional moves sharpens awareness of evaluation, concession and balance.

**Step 1:** Write these interaction codes on the board:

- ▶ A = Agree
- ▶ D = Disagree/Challenge
- ▶ E = Expand
- ▶ Q = Qualify/Limit a claim

**Step 2:** Play the discussion. Using *Appendix L*, students take notes and annotate them with codes. Example:

- ▶ 'That's fascinating.' → A
- ▶ 'We mustn't oversimplify.' → D + Q

**Discussion**

**Jane:** Hello, and welcome to 'Family Dynamics', the radio show where we delve into the intricate dynamics of family life. Today, we're exploring the role of birth order in shaping personality traits among siblings. Joining me are Dr Helen Gupta, an esteemed child psychologist, and Tim Anderson, a renowned author of several parenting books. Dr Gupta, Mr Anderson, thank you for being here. Dr Gupta, to begin, could you elaborate on how birth order influences a child's personality development?

**Dr Gupta:** Of course, Jane. The study of birth order has been a focal point in developmental psychology for decades, and research consistently indicates that birth order can shape various aspects of a child's personality, from their temperament to their long-term career aspirations. Each birth position - whether first-born, middle child or youngest - carries distinct advantages and challenges.

**Jane:** That's fascinating. Tim, how do you interpret these findings?

**Tim:** While these patterns certainly provide valuable insight, I would argue that we mustn't oversimplify them. Family dynamics are deeply complex, and while birth order can suggest certain trends, it is not a deterministic framework. The nuances of individual family structures and parenting styles often blur these lines, making it important to see birth order as an influence rather than a strict rule.

**Jane:** That's a great point, Tim. Dr Gupta, could you give us some examples of how first-born children might differ from their younger siblings?

**Dr Gupta:** Certainly. Eldest children tend to be more compliant with rules and exhibit a perfectionistic streak, often because they internalise the higher expectations placed on them by their parents. This can drive them to push themselves academically, but it may also result in undue pressure or stress. They often feel a pronounced obligation to succeed, which can significantly impact their self-esteem, particularly if they fail to meet the high standards they or their parents set.

**Tim:** I see your point, but I think it's essential to recognise the role of external factors, such as the level of parental involvement or the family environment. For instance, parents may treat each child with the same expectations as the first-born when there's a significant age gap. In other cases, middle children might take on leadership roles, especially if the eldest child is less dominant or prefers to step back.

**Dr Gupta:** Absolutely. Tim raises an important point. The family environment - especially shared experiences - often plays a pivotal role in shaping personality. These environmental factors can significantly modify different personality traits. However, we must be careful with that because we can't measure their impact.

**Tim:** Well, a child nurtured in a positive, supportive environment is likely to develop strong emotional resilience and interpersonal skills, regardless of their position in the family hierarchy.

**Jane:** Without question, every family is unique in that regard. Tim, your latest book explores these topics in depth, doesn't it?

**Tim:** Yes, Jane. My book synthesises insights from interviews with parents, offering a nuanced view that echoes many of the complexities we've discussed today.

**Jane:** Well, that wraps up today's episode of 'Family Dynamics'. Join us next time for another thought-provoking discussion. Goodbye!

**Step 3:** Students highlight functional phrases (eg 'absolutely', 'I see your point, but...') and categorise them as agreement, concession, challenge, hedging.

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| ▶ 'I had assumed...'                        | Hedging               |
| ▶ 'That's interesting, but...'              | Challenge             |
| ▶ 'You raise a valid point.'                | Concession            |
| ▶ 'Nonetheless, for tasks such as yours...' | Agreement/Realignment |

**Step 4:** In pairs, students write a 2-3 sentence synthesis that captures not just the content but also the dynamic between the speakers.

### Activity 6.3: Comprehension and synthesis

**Classroom note:** In this activity, students practise synthesising ideas across speakers to form a coherent understanding of the discussion. By linking details, comparing perspectives and spotting agreement or disagreement, they move beyond single turns of talk and develop the ability to integrate viewpoints into a fuller picture.

**Step 1:** Distribute the six multiple-choice questions. Play the recording once. Students answer individually, circling or ticking their choices.

#### Questions

**Q1:** What can be inferred about Tim's view on birth order and personality?

- a. Birth order is the main determinant of a child's personality.
- b. Birth order has no influence on any kind of development.
- c. Siblings often have similar personalities regardless of birth order.
- d. \*The family environment is more important than birth order.

**Q2:** According to Dr Gupta, what trait is often observed in eldest children?

- a. tendency to be more rebellious
- b. \*perfectionism due to high expectations
- c. higher levels of emotional instability
- d. increased level of risk taking

**Q3:** Why does Tim mention cases of middle children in his discussion?

- a. \*to illustrate the different family dynamics
- b. to show the leadership tendencies of middle children
- c. to argue that middle children are more likely to be ignored
- d. to emphasise that middle children are well behaved

**Q4:** According to Jane and Tim, what is the focus of Tim's latest book?

- a. an attempt to change how children are raised
- b. how parenting styles affect children's academic achievements
- c. the emotional challenges faced by first-born children
- d. \*how birth order and family dynamics shape children's development

**Q5:** What do Tim and Dr Gupta agree on throughout the conversation?

- a. Eldest children usually have more dominant personalities.
- b. Parenting styles have little impact on a child's personality.
- c. \*There are many complexities in researching a child's personality.
- d. The relationship between siblings shapes their personalities.

**Q6:** Who is the likely audience for this discussion on birth order and personality development?

- a. \*parents, educators and child development professionals
- b. children and teenagers interested in family dynamics
- c. college students studying economics and sociology
- d. general listeners seeking entertainment on family issues

**Step 2:** Play the recording a second time. Students underline in their notes the words/phrases that justify each answer (eg 'perfectionistic streak' → Q2, 'not deterministic' → Q1).

**Step 3:** In pairs, students compare answers and discuss:

- ▶ Where did you find the answer in the discussion?
- ▶ Did it come from Dr Gupta, Tim or both?
- ▶ Was it stated directly, implied or did you have to combine ideas?

**Step 4:** Each pair writes a 2-3 sentence synthesis of the speakers' views.

**Example:** 'Dr Gupta emphasises consistent research suggesting birth order affects traits like perfectionism in eldest children. Tim agrees these patterns exist but stresses that family environment and parenting styles are stronger influences. Together, they conclude that personality is shaped by both birth order and external factors, making the issue complex.'

**Step 5:** With the class, discuss:

- ▶ How did answering the comprehension questions help you prepare for the synthesis?
- ▶ What strategies helped you balance accuracy with conciseness?
- ▶ Why is synthesis more powerful than listing separate answers?

### Activity 6.4: Evaluating perspectives

**Classroom note:** This activity encourages students to go beyond understanding what was said and critically evaluate the strength of each speaker's perspective. By reasoning about stance, evidence and logic, students learn to weigh competing arguments, recognise persuasive strategies and assess credibility.

**Step 1:** Pose the evaluative prompt: 'Which speaker's view is more convincing, Dr Gupta or Tim? Why?'

**Step 2:** Individually, students write a short justification (2-3 sentences).

**Step 3:** In pairs, they share and challenge each other's judgements.

**Step 4:** With the class, highlight what makes an evaluation strong: evidence, balance, explanation.

# Part 7: Listening to a talk

**Rationale:** These activities help students process extended talks and retellings by focusing on the overall message, organisation of ideas and how information is reformulated. Learners practise recognising key themes, evaluating evidence and noticing emphasis, stance and tone. This builds the ability to interpret and communicate ideas critically and coherently – an essential skill for the exam and for academic or professional contexts where complex information is often presented in different ways.

## Activity 7.1: Macro-structure mapping (Talk vs Retelling)

**Classroom note:** Advanced listeners should track how a lecture is structured (sections, sequencing, signposts) and how the retelling repackages that structure. This builds synthesis (combining sources) and helps students judge what information is preserved, simplified or distorted.

**Step 1:** Before listening, give students four empty headings:

- ▶ Position in sleep cycle and features
- ▶ Neural regulation (hypothalamus/REM-on)
- ▶ Dreams and emotion/recall
- ▶ REM (benefits/hypothesis/degree of certainty)

**Step 2:** Play the talk and the retelling. Students take bullet notes under the headings, adding any signposts (eg 'In conclusion...', 'Unlike non-REM...').

### **Presentation**

Continuing in our lecture series, Rapid Eye Movement or 'REM' sleep is the final stage of the four phases of sleep, following the deep sleep phase known as N3. Unlike non-REM stages, REM sleep is characterised by increased brain activity, resembling patterns seen during wakefulness. This phase is also marked by a rise in heart rate, signalling that the body is preparing to transition out of deep sleep. Despite the increased mental and physiological activity, REM sleep involves paralysis of the body's limb muscles, preventing us from physically acting out our dreams. REM sleep typically lasts up to two hours and, in newborns, is initially less frequent. However, it gradually accounts for about 25% of an adult's total sleep.

The regulation of REM sleep is primarily controlled by the hypothalamus, a region of the brain responsible for various physiological functions. Within the hypothalamus, 'REM-on' cells play a key role in initiating REM sleep by releasing hormones that trigger the muscle paralysis and heightened brain activity associated with this phase.

REM sleep is often linked to vivid dreams, particularly those involving intense emotions such as fear or anxiety. These emotions contribute to the vividness of dreams, explaining why people tend to recall their dreams more clearly if they wake during REM sleep.

While the essential role of sleep is widely understood, the specific benefits of REM sleep remain debated. Although REM sleep deprivation does not result in immediate negative effects, one prevailing hypothesis - one I support - suggests that REM sleep plays a crucial role in processing and regulating emotions. In this sense, it may help us 'work through' intense emotions through our dreams.

In conclusion, while the exact functions of REM sleep continue to be explored, it's clear this phase is vital for both emotional well-being and overall health.

**Step 3:** Play the retelling. With a second colour, students note where the retelling matches, compresses or adds personalisation (eg 'That explains why I...').

### Retelling

Hey! I'll fill you in on the REM sleep lecture.

So, the main thing we learnt is that REM sleep is the final phase of sleep, coming after deep sleep (called N3). It's different from the earlier stages because, during REM, the brain becomes much more active, almost like when you're awake. You can even see your heart rate go up. But here's the weird part: even though the brain is active, your muscles get paralysed, which stops you from acting out your dreams. REM sleep usually lasts around two hours, and while newborns don't spend much time in this stage, it eventually makes up about 25% of an adult's total sleep.

The lecturer also said that REM sleep is controlled by the hypothalamus, a part of the brain. This area has special cells called 'REM-on' cells that release hormones to trigger the muscle paralysis and the brain activity we see in REM sleep.

One interesting thing is that REM sleep is closely linked to vivid dreams, especially those with strong emotions. So, if you wake up during REM sleep, you're more likely to remember your dream. That explains why I always seem to remember my dreams when I wake up during that phase - they're so intense that they stick in your memory.

Now, here's the tricky part: while it's clear that sleep is important, the benefits of REM sleep specifically aren't fully understood. The professor mentioned that not getting enough REM sleep doesn't cause immediate effects. But I agree with one theory she mentioned: that REM sleep helps us process emotions. Dreams give us a chance to work through our feelings, which makes sense to me.

Even though there's still a lot to figure out, it's clear that REM sleep plays a big role in our health.

**Step 4:** Students compare the notes from both talks. For each section, they should label the retell effect: = preserved / - simplified / ≠ reframed / + personalised.

**Step 5:** With the class, discuss which sections suffered most from simplification and which remained accurate. What strategies helped them retain the original structure in their own notes?

### Activity 7.2: Claim-Evidence-Stance analysis

**Classroom note:** At higher levels, students must distinguish established facts from hypotheses and notice hedging/stance. This supports evaluation and precise mediation.

**Step 1:** Provide students with the three-column grid in **Appendix M**. One example has been provided ('REM involves muscle paralysis' | physiological description | established).

**Step 2:** Play the talk and the retelling, and students complete 6-8 rows, including:

- ▶ REM = final sleep stage; increase in brain activity and heart rate; paralysis
- ▶ Hypothalamus and 'REM-on' cells trigger paralysis/brain activity
- ▶ Vivid dreams and recall during REM
- ▶ Function hypothesis: REM supports emotional processing; debated, but lecturer endorses hypothesis

**Step 3:** In pairs, students discuss: Where is evidence stated vs implied? Where does the retelling shift status (eg sounding more certain or adding personal anecdote)?

**Step 4:** Mini-output (30-40 sec): Each student explains one established fact and one debated claim, explicitly signalling stance (eg 'One widely accepted finding is...; by contrast, a competing view suggests...').

### Activity 7.3: Precision paraphrasing - awareness of audience

**Classroom note:** The mediation task demands accurate reformulation for a specific listener. This activity targets lexical precision (no over-claiming), audience fit and cohesion.

**Step 1:** Give four technical snippets from the talk (eg 'REM is characterised by increased brain activity resembling wakefulness'; 'REM-on cells in the hypothalamus...').

**Step 2:** Students paraphrase each for a non-specialist friend (concise, accurate, no dropped qualifiers).

**Step 3:** In pairs, partners mark scope shifts (too strong/weak), missing conditions or added speculation.

**Step 4:** Each student gives a 60-75 second spoken summary to the friend (task audience). They should include the two bullets implied by the text (core content and purpose) and signal stance of the function hypothesis.

**Step 5:** Their partner gives feedback: Did the speaker (a) cover all core points, (b) avoid personal anecdotes that distort the message, (c) use linking/signposting to keep the structure clear?

### Activity 7.4: Multiple-choice question validation & distractor analysis

**Classroom note:** Rather than 'test-wiseness', this activity develops evidence-based listening. Students must locate the support for correct answers (talk vs retelling) and explain why distractors fail (echo/contradiction/out-of-scope).

**Step 1:** Students answer the multiple-choice questions under timed conditions.

#### Questions

**Q1:** What was the previous lecture about?

- a. \*one of the stages in the sleep cycle
- b. a scientific explanation of REM
- c. the effects of light on deep sleep
- d. an introduction to health research

**Q2:** What happens during REM sleep?

- a. There are periods of deep sleep.
- b. Muscles become more active.
- c. \*Heart rate becomes higher.
- d. The heart starts to beat steadily.

**Q3:** What does research suggest about the benefits of REM?

- a. The benefits are minimal.
- b. REM is detrimental to health.
- c. Research gave consistent results.
- d. \*Studies are inconclusive.

**Q4:** Which part of the lecture did the student find challenging?

- a. the discovery that deep sleep is more important
- b. \*the fact that REM sleep is not well understood
- c. that people only recall dreams during non-REM sleep
- d. that the brain is less active during REM sleep

**Q5:** What do both speakers agree on?

- a. the problems with vivid dreams
- b. the scientific explanation for REM
- c. \*the benefit of REM sleep
- d. the depth of research into REM

**Q6:** What is the aim of this lecture?

- a. \*to analyse a phase of the sleep cycle
- b. to examine recent research into the brain
- c. to explain chemical reactions during sleep
- d. to describe hormone irregularities in the brain

**Step 2:** In pairs, students pick two items they were unsure about. For each:

- ▶ Locate the exact line(s) in talk or retelling that justify the key
- ▶ Label distractors as Echo (surface match, wrong meaning), Contradiction or Out of scope

**Step 3:** With the class, discuss which items needed both versions to be confident and what phrasing in the retelling made something seem more certain/uncertain than in the original.

**Step 4:** Rewrite challenge: Students convert one distractor into a true statement by making the minimal accurate change (eg add a hedge, change scope or re-anchor to the right stage).

### Activity 7.5: Chronology map

**Classroom note:** This activity trains students to follow the chronological sequencing in the lecture and compare how it is mirrored or altered in the retelling. It develops note-taking and structuring strategies for extended academic input.

**Step 1:** Before listening, give students a blank timeline divided into periods: Old English - Middle English - Early Modern English - Modern English - Global English.

**Step 2:** Play the lecture once. Students jot down 1-2 key features per stage (eg inflections/ Norman French/printing press/Empire/globalisation).

#### Lecture

The English language has undergone profound transformations, shaped by historical events, sociopolitical shifts and cultural exchanges. From its Germanic origins in Old English (5th to 12th centuries), it was a language marked by intricate inflections and a rich syntactic structure. When I reflect on Old English, exemplified in works like Beowulf, I find it striking how distant it seems from the English we speak today.

A pivotal moment in English's development occurred after the Norman Conquest of 1066, ushering in the Middle English period. The infusion of French vocabulary, particularly in legal, administrative and cultural spheres, significantly enriched the lexicon. Personally, I consider this one of the most transformative phases in the history of the language as it broadened English's expressive capacity. The simultaneous simplification of grammar laid the foundation for English's distinctive flexibility.

The Renaissance marked the emergence of Early Modern English, a phase characterised by the lexical expansion driven by Latin and Greek influences. The advent of the printing press in the late 15th century standardised spelling, facilitating the language's widespread dissemination. I find it fascinating how this period set the stage for a more uniform and accessible language, enabling broader literacy and intellectual exchange.

In the Modern English period, starting in the 18th century, English further simplified its grammatical structure and gained global prominence, largely due to the British Empire and, more recently, globalisation. Today, English's role as a global lingua franca continues to expand, driven by technological innovation and cultural interaction. While some argue that this global spread has led to a loss of linguistic purity, I believe it is precisely this adaptability that has ensured English's enduring relevance.

Ultimately, the evolution of English underscores the dynamic nature of language - constantly evolving in response to the shifting needs and identities of its speakers.

**Step 3:** Play the retelling. Students add new or differently expressed details to their timeline.

### Retelling

The lecturer began by explaining how the English language has undergone significant diachronic changes, shaped by historical events and cultural interactions. They pointed out that Old English, spoken from the 5th to the 12th centuries, was a highly inflected Germanic language, with complex syntactic structures and a rich morphology. I found it intriguing how the language of Beowulf seems almost unintelligible to modern speakers.

The lecturer then discussed the pivotal moment of the Norman Conquest in 1066, which brought an influx of French vocabulary, particularly in legal, administrative and cultural domains. This, they emphasised, was a transformative period for English, enriching its lexicon and expanding its expressive capacity. I agree with this assessment – this infusion of French made English far more versatile. They also noted that the grammar of English simplified during this phase, which I think is crucial to understanding its current flexibility.

Next, the lecturer talked about the Renaissance, which saw the rise of Early Modern English, characterised by an influx of Latin and Greek terms, especially in scientific and philosophical fields.

The invention of the printing press was also highlighted as a key factor in standardising spelling and grammar, thereby making the language more uniform and accessible. I hadn't fully realised the extent of the printing press's role, but it's clear how it helped standardise English.

By the 18th century, the lecturer explained, English had simplified even further and expanded globally due to the British Empire. Today, it serves as the dominant global lingua franca, heavily influenced by technology and globalisation. While some argue that this has led to linguistic dilution, I share the lecturer's view that English's adaptability is a key reason for its continued global relevance.

In conclusion, the lecturer emphasised that the evolution of English highlights the dynamic, ever-changing nature of language.

**Step 4:** In pairs, compare timelines and highlight:

- What points appear in both versions?
- What was emphasised differently?
- Did the retelling simplify or expand any stage?

### Activity 7.6: Stance spotting

**Classroom note:** At this level, students should not only track content but also speaker evaluation. This task trains them to pick out attitude markers that reveal stance and to compare them across lecture and retelling.

**Step 1:** Play the lecture again. Students underline evaluative phrases in a transcript or note down markers using **Appendix N** (eg 'one of the most transformative phases', 'I find it fascinating', 'some argue ... but I believe').

**Step 2:** Do the same for the retelling (eg 'I agree with this assessment', 'I hadn't fully realised...').

**Step 3:** In groups, classify markers into categories: positive evaluation, scepticism, agreement, personal reaction.

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss how these stance markers shape the listener's interpretation of historical facts.

### Activity 7.7: Source comparison

**Classroom note:** This activity develops synthesis skills by pushing students to identify which details are clearer in the lecture, the retelling or both.

**Step 1:** Project 3-4 of the comprehension questions. For each, ask students to decide:

- a. Is the answer clearer in the lecture?
- b. In the retelling?
- c. Or only by combining both?

#### Questions

**Q1:** How might the lecturer view technology's role in the evolution of English?

- a. It has caused a degradation of the original English language.
- b. It is irrelevant to the development of language.
- c. \*It has facilitated the rapid spread and adaptation of English globally.
- d. It contributes primarily to the technical and scientific lexicon.

**Q2:** What is the lecturer's purpose in discussing English's evolution?

- a. to persuade listeners of the benefits of English as a global lingua franca
- b. to argue against the simplification of English grammar over time
- c. to prevent other languages from changing in the future
- d. \*to highlight some positive instances of cultural interactions on language adaptability

**Q3:** Which of the following best describes the structure of the lecture?

- a. a thematic comparison between Old and Modern English
- b. \*a chronological exploration from Old English to Modern English
- c. a focus on technological impacts on English
- d. a speculative forecast about the future changes in the English language

**Q4:** What do the two speakers agree on regarding the impact of the printing press?

- a. \*Both believe the press played a role in widening the dissemination of English.
- b. Both highlight how the press made English grammar more sophisticated.
- c. Both consider other periods more transformative in the history of English.
- d. Both express concerns about the dilution of English due to more written texts.

**Q5:** What can be inferred from the global spread of English?

- a. English is less adaptable in modern contexts.
- b. Older forms of English are preferred for international communication.
- c. Globalisation has had little impact on the linguistic structure of English.
- d. \*English has become less complex over time.

**Q6:** How do the speakers summarise English's overall evolution?

- a. It was primarily driven by political forces.
- b. \*It has become a flexible and adaptable language.
- c. Its spread resulted in a loss of cultural significance.
- d. It has retained a rigid grammatical structure over time.

**Step 2:** In pairs, students discuss and justify their choice with specific evidence.

**Step 3:** Working with their partner, students choose one question that was challenging and discuss why the distractors caused difficulty. Rewrite the distractors to make them correct.

**Step 4:** With the class, build a table of examples from the two texts (eg printing press → clearer in retelling; impact of Norman French → equally strong in both).

**Step 5:** Discuss strategies for handling overlapping but not identical versions in the exam.

### Activity 7.8: Critical synthesis task

**Classroom note:** The aim is to move students beyond comprehension into evaluation and synthesis, showing how test practice links to higher-level academic skills.

**Step 1:** Students work in groups to draft a 3-4 sentence 'mini-conclusion' about the history of English, combining ideas from both the lecture and the retelling.

**Example stems:** 'The lecturer emphasised... whereas the retelling added... Together, this shows that ...'

**Step 2:** Groups present their mini-conclusions to the class.

**Step 3:** As a final reflection, ask students how combining two voices gives a fuller understanding than either version alone.

# Reading module

The Reading module of the ISE Digital test assesses a range of skills needed to understand and process written English in different contexts. The activities in this section are designed to help students prepare for each part of the test while developing strategies to identify key information, interpret meaning and connect ideas across one or more texts.

These activities help students develop the skills needed to perform well in the Reading module of the ISE Digital test. They focus on retrieval of specific details, understanding overall meaning, analysing language, drawing inferences, making evaluations, and synthesising and integrating information. Students practise locating and selecting key factual information, recognising the main purpose or message of a text, working out meaning from vocabulary and structures, judging the relevance and reliability of information, and connecting ideas within and across texts to build a coherent understanding.

By working through these activities, students also strengthen their ability to read strategically under time pressure, use prediction and skimming to prepare for reading, and check answers by linking evidence in the text to the task. These are valuable skills for success in the test and real-world reading situations such as reading articles, reports and webpages, comparing sources or making decisions based on written information.

## Exam strategies:

- ▶ Before reading, skim the questions and answer choices carefully, paying attention to key words and anticipating the type of information required.
- ▶ Skim the text first to get an overview of topic, structure and purpose.
- ▶ Then read more carefully to answer inference, evaluation and synthesis questions, while using scanning techniques to locate specific detail.
- ▶ Always check your answers against evidence in the text, not just surface word matches.
- ▶ Manage your time effectively; the Reading module should take around 20 minutes.

# Part 8: Reading a single text

**Rationale:** These activities help students engage critically with extended texts, moving beyond detail retrieval to analyse structure, argument and stance. Learners practise evaluating reliability, interpreting tone and recognising how language shapes meaning. They also synthesise information across sections to form a coherent interpretation. Such skills prepare students for the exam and for advanced academic or professional reading, where nuanced understanding of a single source is essential.

## Activity 8.1: Predicting focus and purpose

**Classroom note:** At this level, students should not only predict content but also anticipate how the text is structured and what its purpose might be. This helps them read with a critical orientation.

**Step 1:** Before reading, display the title “The Survivor’ wins Scotland’s Tree of the Year award’.

**Step 2:** Ask students to predict:

- ▶ What type of text is this? (eg news article, scientific report, opinion piece)
- ▶ What will its likely purpose be? (to inform, to persuade, to evaluate, to narrate)

**Step 3:** Students share predictions in pairs, then read the first paragraph only to confirm or adjust their guesses.

### Single Text

#### 'The Survivor' wins Scotland's Tree of the Year award

A long-surviving rowan tree in the midst of the Carrifran Woods in Southern Scotland has won this year's 'Tree of the Year' award, given every year to raise awareness of the importance of trees in the Scottish landscape. The rowan has been named 'The Survivor'.

The Carrifran Valley was always known for sheep farming, with grazing animals nibbling away at any emerging plant life. People had often wondered at the presence of the single rowan tree. Then, in 1990, an important discovery was made when a hill walker pulled a hunting bow from a peat bog. The perfectly preserved 6,000-year-old weapon suggested that the bleak Carrifran Valley had once been a fertile hunting ground. Scientists investigated the bog and found pollens from many trees, shrubs and flowers that had once flourished in the area. That lone rowan was the last remaining descendent of an ancient wood, cleared over time by settlers.

A decade after this discovery, the land was purchased by the Woodland Trust, who had a grand plan for the area: to regrow trees in a valley that had seen little but grass for hundreds of years. They were determined, however, not to grow the kind of sterile man-made woods of past decades: timber plantations of typically one or two imported tree species supporting little in the way of plants and animals. The Trust wanted to recreate the entire ecosystem that had existed in this remote Scottish valley so long ago.

The Trust selected over 20 different kinds of trees and bushes, all of which were species whose pollen had been found in the bog. Species were matched to the elevation of the valley that would suit them best, and a planting schedule was drawn up. Over the following years, supervised teams of volunteers planted the seven-kilometre valley with trees and bushes.

The Trust insists that they are only giving the wood a necessary helping hand and that they will eventually step back and let the wood grow itself. Indeed, that stage may already have been reached. As trees grow, birds and mammals have started making their homes in the woods, while tree roots draw minerals from deep underground into the soil, making it possible for more flowers and plant life to sprout without human help. 'The Survivor' is now surrounded by a rejuvenated forest.

**Step 4:** With the class, highlight textual clues to purpose (award, awareness-raising, conservation).

## Activity 8.2: Comprehension and evidence hunt

**Classroom note:** This task mirrors exam conditions but adds a 'justify with evidence' step, requiring students to show where in the text each answer is supported.

**Step 1:** Give students the four multiple-choice questions.

### Questions

**Q1:** What is the main topic of this text?

- a. \*the restoration of a forest
- b. a prize for important trees
- c. the effects of sheep farming
- d. a discovery of fertile land

**Q2:** Why were tree shoots unable to grow in the Carrifran Valley?

- a. They were strangled by weeds.
- b. They were removed by farmers.
- c. \*They were eaten by livestock.
- d. They died in the unhealthy soil.

**Q3:** What is the main purpose of paragraph 3?

- a. to justify the traditional way of planting trees
- b. to describe the features of a natural wood
- c. to compare the benefits of woods over pasture
- d. \*to explain the aim of replanting the valley

**Q4:** According to the passage, what is important to the Woodland Trust?

- a. to strengthen Scotland's supply of commercial wood
- b. \*to provide natural habitats for Scottish wildlife
- c. to maintain the profitability of Scottish farming
- d. to study the prehistory of Scotland's land

**Step 2:** Students answer individually, underlining in the text the phrase/section that supports their choice.

**Step 3:** In pairs, they compare answers and evidence. Where answers differ, they must defend their choice with direct reference to the text.

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss which questions required inference (eg Q3 about purpose) and which were straightforward retrieval.

### Activity 8.3: Distractor detective

**Classroom note:** Distractors at this level often appear plausible because they echo vocabulary or ideas in the text. Analysing them builds awareness of how superficial matches can mislead.

**Step 1:** Provide students with one incorrect option per question.

**Step 2:** Ask them to locate the phrase in the text that makes this distractor tempting.

**Step 3:** In pairs, students explain why the distractor is wrong in context (eg Q2: 'They were removed by farmers' echoes settlers cleared woods, but the cause in this text is grazing livestock).

**Step 4:** Students rewrite each distractor into a correct statement.

### Activity 8.4: Extending the discussion

**Classroom note:** Extension activities encourage higher-level evaluation and application of ideas from the text.

**Step 1:** Ask students to consider: 'What wider lessons does the Carrifran Valley project suggest about conservation practices today?'

**Step 2:** In groups, students brainstorm at least two implications (eg rewilding, the role of community volunteers, avoiding monoculture forests).

**Step 3:** Groups share their ideas with the class, and the teacher collects responses into categories (ecological, social, cultural).

### Activity 8.5: Framing the questions

**Classroom note:** This activity directs students' attention to how questions are worded and prepares them to anticipate the kind of evidence they'll need to find.

**Step 1:** Display the four questions for the text.

1. Why does the writer use the word 'literally', in paragraph 2?
2. According to the writer, how do people normally feel about ladybirds?
3. What does paragraph 3 mainly describe?
4. How does the writer make his story interesting for the reader?

**Step 2:** Ask students to underline key words.

**Step 3:** In pairs, students predict what evidence they'll need: a precise example, an inference or a comment about the writer's technique.

**Step 4:** As a class, discuss how Q1 and Q4 require evaluation of language/writer's craft, while Q2 and Q3 require comprehension of ideas.

## Activity 8.6: Reading with purpose

**Classroom note:** Students practise linking answers to evidence in the text, ensuring they can justify their response and not just guess from memory.

**Step 1:** Students read the autobiography extract silently.

### Single text

#### An extract from an autobiography

I was 11 years old back in 1976, the year of the great heatwave. It was a difficult time for many. Across the south of England, fields dried up, and farmers lost a lot of crops. Many factories too just couldn't operate without enough water. The government banned hosepipes and began rationing water. My parents grumbled as they watched their garden flowers wilt and had to have baths only 15 cm deep. For young boys like me, however, it was a great summer. I remember day after day of glorious warm sunny weather. After school, we would spend hours playing cricket. At weekends, we would go to the countryside to catch fish or frogs, but the ponds had half dried up, so we used our nets to catch dragonflies and butterflies, which were plentiful.

In the school holidays, my family took a trip to the seaside. We thought a dip in the sea would be the perfect relief from the boiling weather. Instead, there waited a truly bizarre spectacle. The coasts of England had been colonised by swarms of ladybirds, literally billions of them. They were crawling over every surface - every bench and beach towel, and even floating in the hotel pool. They were particularly drawn to my elder sister, clinging to her T-shirt and hair, and flying into her ice cream. She was horrified, but my Dad and I found it quite entertaining. These well-liked and usually harmless creatures even seemed to start biting people. For a while they became the most hated creatures in England.

The events of 1976 inspired me to make a career of studying six-legged creatures, and now I know what caused this strange 'invasion'. Tiny green flies called 'aphids' had flourished in the warm spring, and as their numbers multiplied, so too did the population of their main predator, the seven-spotted ladybird. When the vegetation withered in the drought that followed the sunny weather, the aphids died too, leaving ladybirds with nothing to eat. They flew off to look for food but found themselves stranded at England's coasts, too tired to fly over the seas, and so hungry that they resorted to nibbling the sweat from sunbathers' skin or gorging themselves on ice cream - always plentiful at England's seaside towns.

**Step 2:** Individually, they attempt the four questions. For each answer, they highlight the exact sentence/phrase that gave them the clue.

## Questions

**Q1:** Why does the writer use the word 'literally', in paragraph 2?

- a. to show he is being precise
- b. to show he is estimating
- c. to show he is not sure
- d. \*to show he is not exaggerating

**Q2:** According to the writer, how do people normally feel about ladybirds?

- a. They consider ladybirds a pest.
- b. \*They are fond of ladybirds.
- c. They think ladybirds are pretty.
- d. They are afraid of ladybirds.

**Q3:** What does paragraph 3 mainly describe?

- a. \*the events that led ladybirds to the coast
- b. the impact of ladybirds on the food chain
- c. the writer's journey to becoming an insect researcher
- d. the hunting method of the green fly species

**Q4:** How does the writer make his story interesting for the reader?

- a. He gives an accurate account of events.
- b. \*He describes personal memories.
- c. He makes thought-provoking comparisons.
- d. He asks searching questions.

**Step 3:** After answering, they annotate each question with the strategy used:

- ▶ Detail
- ▶ Language
- ▶ Inference
- ▶ Evaluation

**Step 4:** In small groups, students compare their highlighted evidence. Did they choose the same parts of the text? If not, why?

## Activity 8.7: Working with distractors

**Classroom note:** This task develops critical awareness of distractors, which at C1-C2 often rely on partial truths or superficial word echoes.

**Step 1:** Students fill in a table listing each incorrect option with space for where it is found in the text and why it's wrong. For example, for the Q2 distractor 'They think ladybirds are pretty', the text says ladybirds are fondly viewed, but it never says they are pretty.

Question	Incorrect answers	Where in text	Why it's wrong
<b>Q1: Why does the writer use the word 'literally', in paragraph 2?</b>	to show he is being precise		
	to show he is estimating		
	to show he is not sure		
<b>Q2: According to the writer, how do people normally feel about ladybirds?</b>	They consider ladybirds a pest.		
	They think ladybirds are pretty.		
	They are afraid of ladybirds.		
<b>Q3: What does paragraph 3 mainly describe?</b>	the impact of ladybirds on the food chain		
	the writer's journey to becoming an insect researcher		
	the hunting method of the green fly species		
<b>Q4: How does the writer make his story interesting for the reader?</b>	He gives an accurate account of events.		
	He makes thought-provoking comparisons.		
	He asks searching questions.		

**Step 2:** In pairs, students trace each distractor to where it might have come from.

**Step 3:** Groups rewrite each distractor into a correct statement.

**Step 4:** With the whole class, discuss what patterns they noticed about distractors (eg half-truths, exaggerated wording, irrelevant details).

### Activity 8.8: Extension - Authorial voice

**Classroom note:** This activity pushes students beyond comprehension into stylistic analysis, recognising how narrative techniques make a text engaging.

**Step 1:** Project paragraph 2 of the text (ladybird 'invasion').

**Step 2:** Ask students which words/phrases make the account vivid (eg literally billions, bizarre spectacle, clinging to her T-shirt).

**Step 3:** Students underline examples of descriptive, humorous or exaggerated language.

**Step 4:** In groups, students discuss how these choices shape the reader's reaction (entertainment, surprise, sympathy).

**Optional:** Students rewrite the same passage in a neutral, scientific style to compare the effect.

## Part 9: Reading a paired text

**Rationale:** These activities develop students' ability to integrate and evaluate ideas across two different texts. At this level, readers must go beyond retrieving details to compare perspectives, interpret tone and stance, and evaluate how arguments are supported. They also practise synthesising contrasting viewpoints into a coherent understanding, a skill vital not just for the test but for academic and professional reading, where weighing evidence from multiple sources is essential.

### Activity 9.1: Predicting perspectives

**Classroom note:** At advanced levels, prediction is not just about content but about stance. By anticipating how each writer might view painting, students activate prior knowledge and prepare to trace differences in tone and argument.

**Step 1:** Give students the topic: 'Is painting still an important art form?' Ask them to predict what stance each text might take (eg critical/supportive/balanced).

**Step 2:** As they read the texts, they should check their predictions and highlight phrases that reveal stance (eg 'painting's time as an important art form is over' vs 'the ability of art... to illuminate the hidden, irrational aspects of the human consciousness').

#### TEXT A

Painting has provided humanity with some of its most enduring artistic achievements. That's why most people can identify major painters and works from the last 600 years, whether that is Da Vinci's strange portrait of the *Mona Lisa* or *The Starry Night* of Vincent van Gogh. Far fewer people, however, can name a significant painter or work from the last half century or so, and the reason for this is very simple: painting's time as an important art form is over.

There is no doubt that, in its time, painting was a vital medium. The portraits of the 15th and 16th century are startling in their realism, while the complex dreamscapes of painters like Hieronymus Bosch and Pablo Picasso have beguiled countless viewers with their imaginative power. The paintings of the Far East impress us, meanwhile, with their delicacy and sparseness. And even the Lascaux cave paintings from 17,000 years ago are vivid and beautiful - able to transport us back to a completely different epoch.

Yet the Lascaux cave painters used their simple paints because that was all they had. Had they enjoyed access to a camera or smartphone, they would surely have been videoing buffalo instead of painting them. Portraiture was important hundreds of years ago because it was the only way to clearly record what someone looked like. With the availability of photography, the effort of creating a face through laborious fine brush strokes is unnecessary. The same is true of landscape painters, for no painter could dare to compete with images taken by satellites, drones and precision cameras. As for imaginative art, we can now use computer graphics to design detailed, sometimes interactive, three-dimensional worlds for films and video games that leave paintings looking static and unresponsive.

Technology is giving artists and designers powers we once could never have dreamed of. My advice to young artists is: put your palette and brush aside and embrace the future!

**TEXT B****An encounter with a genius**

Black and white photography was my thing in my first year at art school: I was fascinated by the way light and shadow could work together to build moods and suggest emotions. I was determined that I would one day be a professional photographer.

In the summer holidays, I travelled to Madrid to practise photography, imagining Spain's brilliant sunlight and deep shadows to be ideal for atmospheric photos. For much of the day, however, it was simply too hot to be outside, and so on one particularly hot day I took shelter in the city's famous art museum, the Prado.

There, I stumbled upon the exhibition of the 'black paintings' of Francisco Goya (1746-1828), and what I saw there challenged my view of art. The paintings were mostly of huddled masses of people. As the name suggests, the paintings were dark - rendered in a restricted palette of blacks, browns and greys, with just flashes of light falling on strange, distorted faces emerging from cloudy depths. The brushstrokes were heavy and smudged, sometimes indistinct, with the painter having used many layers of paint. But the artistic skill was amazing - the figures were as expressive as in any video or photograph. Unlike photographs, however, a Goya painting was not a mere snapshot, but a study, one at which the artist had laboured for days and weeks.

Nor was Goya limited to painting the real world; rather his paintings evoked the world of dreams and nightmares. Goya's paintings are not pleasant, but they are intriguing. They show the ability of art - and painting in particular - to illuminate the hidden, irrational aspects of the human consciousness. That day in Spain I was rattled, but I was hooked. I walked out of the Prado no longer a photographer, but an aspiring painter.

**Step 3:** In pairs, students share which linguistic markers signalled each stance.

### Activity 9.2: Comparative chart - Evidence and evaluation

**Classroom note:** This activity trains students to not only retrieve evidence but also evaluate its function (is it factual? illustrative? persuasive?). At this level, students should be analysing how arguments are constructed, not just what they are.

**Step 1:** Students make a three-column chart:

Claim/Evidence (quote or paraphrase)/Evaluation (fact, opinion, example, comparison, etc).

**Step 2:** Assign half the class to Text A, half to Text B. Each group completes the chart for their text.

**Step 3:** Put students in pairs (one from A, one from B) and compare their charts.

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss which text relies more on factual evidence and which on personal experience or emotional appeal.

### Activity 9.3: Comprehension plus evidence trail

**Classroom note:** In this activity, students practise answering test-style questions under exam conditions and then justify their choices with textual evidence. This builds precision, encourages close reading and helps them reflect on the reasoning behind their answers.

**Step 1:** Students answer the five multiple-choice questions individually under timed conditions.

#### Questions

**Q1:** Why does the writer say that recent painters are not well known?

- a. Modern society neglects the visual arts.
- b. \*Painting is not needed in modern culture.
- c. Historical painters are more talented.
- d. Painting was admired in past societies.

**Q2:** What is the main point that the writer makes about the Lascaux paintings?

- a. The paintings were done in a hurry.
- b. The painters are better than video cameras.
- c. \*The painters used the available materials.
- d. The paintings are simple by today's standards.

**Q3:** In Text B, paragraph 3, what does the writer mean when she says she 'stumbled upon' the Goya exhibition?

- a. It was very dark in the Prado Museum.
- b. Goya's paintings were not hung on the walls.
- c. She had seen advertisements around Madrid.
- d. \*She did not know about it beforehand.

**Q4:** What word best describes Goya's 'black paintings'?

- a. realistic
- b. precise
- c. \*powerful
- d. amusing

**Q5:** What do the writers of Text A and Text B agree upon?

- a. \*Painting takes skill and hard work.
- b. Photography has artistic limitations.
- c. Technology can transform art.
- d. Some art forms are out of date.

**Step 2:** After answering, students underline the words from the texts that led them to their choice.

**Step 3:** In pairs, students compare not just answers but the evidence they used and whether the question required detail, inference, evaluation or synthesis.

**Step 4:** With the whole class, discuss which questions needed both texts and which were the trickiest, and why.

**Step 5:** (optional) In pairs, assign students one or two distractors from the questions. Ask them to find the part of the text that might mislead someone and explain why it's wrong in context. Then rewrite it into a correct statement.

**Step 6:** Ask a few volunteers to share their revised distractors.

### Activity 9.4: Synthesis writing

**Classroom note:** Synthesising across texts is the highest-order skill in paired-text reading. Asking students to summarise both stances in one short paragraph encourages them to distil, integrate, and express nuanced understanding.

**Step 1:** Students write a 3-4 sentence synthesis of how the two texts present painting (eg contrast in relevance, agreement on skill required).

**Step 2:** In pairs, students exchange their syntheses and use *Appendix O* to give feedback.

- ▶ Does the synthesis include both texts?
- ▶ Is the contrast/agreement clear?
- ▶ Is there textual evidence or paraphrase to support it?

**Step 3:** Each pair discusses what could be improved and gives one suggestion.

**Step 4:** Students revise their synthesis briefly.

**Step 5:** Volunteers share their revised summaries with the class. The teacher highlights especially effective strategies for integrating perspectives.

### Activity 9.5: Predicting perspectives

**Classroom note:** This activity helps students anticipate author stance and purpose before reading, priming them to notice contrasts in perspective.

**Step 1:** Write the two titles on the board: (1) Prospects and Pitfalls: Community Supported Agriculture and (2) Sustainable Consumption Practices Blog.

**Step 2:** In pairs, ask students to predict:

- ▶ Who is the intended audience for each text?
- ▶ What will the stance be? (analytical? promotional? critical?)

**Step 3:** After reading, they revisit their predictions and adjust with textual evidence.

**Text A****Prospects and Pitfalls: Community Supported Agriculture**

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is becoming an increasingly accepted sustainable consumption strategy, garnering substantial traction in recent years. This concept entails community members investing in a local farm by purchasing a share of its anticipated harvest through contractual agreements spanning predetermined periods, usually per season (Sulistiyowati et al., 2023). Despite the numerous advantages associated with CSA, the endeavour poses some challenges that hinder sustained efforts to uphold its viability as a sustainable consumption practice.

One of the primary advantages of CSA lies in its capacity to mitigate the carbon footprint associated with food production and distribution. By locally sourcing produce, CSA operations eliminate the necessity for extensive transportation, thereby markedly reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Coley et al., 2009). Additionally, CSA farms typically prioritise organic and sustainable farming practices, with farmers demonstrating a specialised commitment to ecology, emphasising environmental preservation and resource conservation, and conscientiously limiting the application of synthetic inputs (Medici et al., 2021). By prioritising ecology and limiting synthetic inputs, CSA farms promote biodiversity, ultimately fostering agricultural systems that benefit both the environment and consumers.

For farmers, CSA presents a unique financial opportunity as they receive payments from shareholders before the growing season even commences (Samoggia et al., 2019). This provides much-needed capital for farming operations, eliminating some of the financial risks associated with conventional farming methods. However, CSA poses complexities for farmers in terms of meeting shareholder demands (Sulistiyowati et al., 2023). Meticulous planning is needed to ensure harvests are consistent and diverse. Underproducing may overwhelm farmers, and they may outsource to meet the consumers' needs, increasing pressure on themselves.

In conclusion, Community Supported Agriculture represents a promising avenue for fostering sustainability and potential mutual benefit among farmers and consumers alike. Nonetheless, its implementation is accompanied by noteworthy challenges that demand attention to detail and strategic management to ensure its efficacy. Because of the escalating consumer interest in sustainable agricultural practices, CSA is poised as a pivotal solution toward cultivating an environmentally conscientious and equitable food system.

**Text B****Sustainable Consumption Practices Blog**

Hello everyone!

Have you ever considered transforming the way you connect with your food and community? Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) offers an unparalleled opportunity to do just that, establishing a symbiotic relationship between local farms and their subscribing members. By enrolling in a CSA scheme, you essentially procure a share of the farm's seasonal yield, analogous to acquiring a season ticket, and in return, you receive a portion of the weekly harvest throughout the year.

Subscribers benefit from access to the freshest organic produce, which can be collected weekly from various distribution points, including farmers' markets, farm stands and designated pickup locations. The variety of produce changes with the seasons, offering an ever-evolving palette of flavours and textures. From tangy rhubarb, tender asparagus and peppery rocket in spring, juicy strawberries and glossy aubergines in summer, and delicious apples and hearty root vegetables in autumn. As an unashamed gourmet who appreciates the nuances of seasonal gastronomy and culinary experimentation, this arrangement proves exceptionally beneficial.

If, like me, you are concerned about your carbon footprint, the advantage CSA offers in shortening the food supply chain extends beyond mere nutritional value. Supporting local farmers to mitigate financial risk by ensuring a predictable consumer base is instrumental in solving an age-old conundrum. Not only does this stability enable more precise crop planning but it also allows farmers to invest in better infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and greenhouses, which can enhance productivity and resilience against adverse weather conditions. CSA further promotes sustainable agricultural practices, as farmers are encouraged to diversify their crops and employ environmentally friendly methods, such as avoiding pesticides, to meet the needs of their members.

In addition, I can certainly attest to the sense of camaraderie cultivated among like-minded individuals, facilitating the exchange of ideas and recipes, and fostering a deeper connection to the local area. CSA members can also attend farm events to learn more about agricultural practices, share experiences and build a community around healthy eating.

So, why not revolutionise your eating habits and support your local community? Join a CSA scheme today and experience the myriad benefits firsthand. Embrace the chance to make a positive impact, savour the freshest produce and become part of a vibrant, sustainable food movement!

### Activity 9.6: Evidence mapping

**Classroom note:** Here, students practise answering test-style questions and linking each choice to explicit evidence in the texts. This builds precision and avoids superficial word-matching.

**Step 1:** Give students the multiple-choice questions.

**Q1:** According to Text A, what is the primary advantage to farmers of participating in CSA?

- a. growing organic produce
- b. having a diverse harvest
- c. limiting greenhouse gas emissions
- d. \*being paid for crops in advance

**Q2:** What is the main idea presented in Text A, paragraph 2?

- a. the impact on farmers of Community Supported Agriculture schemes
- b. \*the environmental benefits of Community Supported Agriculture
- c. the advantages of Community Supported Agriculture for members
- d. the popularity of Community Supported Agriculture nowadays

**Q3:** In Text A, paragraph 4, what does 'poised' mean?

- a. \*ready
- b. unlikely
- c. utilised
- d. insignificant

**Q4:** According to the writer of Text B, what is the main benefit to members of CSA schemes?

- a. It encourages people to try new, seasonal foods.
- b. It enables you to meet people who share your views.
- c. \*It helps support small, local farms financially.
- d. It allows you to learn more about farming practices.

**Q5:** Which advantage of CSA schemes is mentioned in both texts?

- a. the decrease of greenhouse gases
- b. \*the lack of chemicals used to grow produce
- c. the variety of produce available each season
- d. the frequency of produce collections

**Step 2:** Individually, students answer each question.

**Step 3:** In pairs, students use *Appendix P* to highlight the evidence in the text that supports the correct answer and also mark where distractors 'echo' misleading wording.

**Step 4:** In groups, students share one example of a 'convincing but wrong' distractor and explain why.

### Activity 9.7: Genre and style contrast

**Classroom note:** This activity builds higher-level critical reading by focusing on tone, style and purpose rather than only on content.

**Step 1:** Students reread one paragraph from each text (Text A: para 2 on environmental benefits; Text B: para 2 on seasonal produce).

**Step 2:** In small groups, they compare:

- ▶ use of technical/scientific language vs personal narrative
- ▶ how each text appeals to its audience (authority, data, anecdote, enthusiasm).

**Step 3:** Each group writes a 2-3 sentence synthesis: 'Text A presents CSA as..., while Text B emphasises...'

**Step 4:** Ask some volunteers to share with the class, highlighting different ways the same ideas can be framed.

### Activity 9.8: Peer synthesis exchange

**Classroom note:** This task strengthens synthesis skills through collaborative feedback.

**Step 1:** Students write a short paragraph (4-5 sentences) answering the question: 'What benefits and challenges of CSA are highlighted across both texts?'

**Step 2:** In pairs, they exchange paragraphs and use a checklist (coverage, balance, evidence, clarity) to give feedback. Students then revise their paragraphs.

**Step 3:** Each pair nominates one improved synthesis to read aloud.

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss which strategies made the synthesis clearer and more balanced.

# Writing module

The Writing module of the ISE Digital test assesses a range of skills needed to produce clear, purposeful and effective written communication. The activities in this section are designed to help students prepare for each part of the test while developing strategies to plan, structure and express their ideas appropriately in writing.

These activities support students in developing the skills assessed in the Writing module: Content (relevance and completeness of ideas), Organisation (clarity and logical flow), Language (accuracy, range and appropriateness of grammar and vocabulary), Style (register, tone and suitability for the audience and context) and Use of sources (integrating and paraphrasing information effectively from reading and listening input).

By working through these activities, students also practise essential strategies such as planning, drafting and reviewing their writing under time constraints. These skills are vital not only for success in the test but also for authentic written communication in digital, academic and professional contexts.

## Exam strategies:

### Written Online Communication

- ▶ Read the prompt carefully, focusing on purpose, audience and tone.
- ▶ Address both bullet points fully, expanding with clear reasons, examples or explanations.
- ▶ Aim for precision in register (professional, semi-formal or informal depending on the task).
- ▶ Write 70-90 words.
- ▶ Allow around 5 minutes, leaving time to check for conciseness and stylistic accuracy.

### Writing from Sources

- ▶ Read the prompt carefully, noting the exact task type (essay, report).
- ▶ Read the texts closely and select the most relevant ideas; do not summarise everything.
- ▶ Plan a clear structure that balances source integration with your own critical response.
- ▶ Paraphrase and synthesise information, citing both sources appropriately.
- ▶ Write 250-300 words.
- ▶ Allow around 35 minutes, including time to check for coherence, variety in grammar/vocabulary and register consistency.

## Part 10: Written online communication (online discussion board)

**Rationale:** In this task, students produce a short piece of digital communication such as a written contribution for an online discussion board, direct communication, eg an email, or a group chat. At C1-C2, the emphasis shifts from simply expressing opinions to engaging critically with multiple voices in the conversation, shaping arguments that are purposeful, precise and audience-aware. Assessment criteria include Content (relevance and completeness of ideas), Language (accuracy, range and precision of grammar and vocabulary) and Style (register, tone and appropriacy for an online classroom forum).

Through these activities, students practise taking a stance, responding constructively to others' viewpoints and adjusting tone to suit the context. They also learn to support opinions with reasoning and examples, developing the ability to interact persuasively and professionally in digital communication. This prepares them not only for exam success but also for authentic online exchanges in academic, workplace and social contexts.

### Activity 10.1: Prompt and stance analysis

**Classroom note:** At this level, students need to unpack both the teacher's open-ended question and Luke's opinion before they can respond meaningfully. This activity focuses on identifying task requirements and planning a clear stance.

**Step 1:** Project the prompt and highlight the two parts of the task:

- ▶ Respond to Ms Davies (address the general question).
- ▶ Respond to Luke (engage with a peer's opinion).

Read these messages from an online discussion. Write an answer and respond to both your teacher and Luke.

**Ms Davies:**

Hello class! Here is the topic we are discussing this week:

Nowadays, we see advertising everywhere we look. How does this affect our society?

Please write your opinion below.

**Luke:**

I don't think adverts have a strong effect on people at all. We can ignore them if we want to.

**Step 2:** Ask students to draft 2-3 possible viewpoints: positive, negative or balanced.

**Step 3:** Discuss what kind of reply would engage Luke (agreement, disagreement, partial agreement).

## Activity 10.2: Writing and peer feedback

**Classroom note:** This activity gives practice in producing the full response while raising awareness of digital register and interaction. Peer review builds critical thinking and editing skills.

**Step 1:** Individually, students write a short online response (70–90 words) addressing both Ms Davies and Luke. Encourage them to:

- ▶ state a clear opinion about advertising
- ▶ refer explicitly to Luke's point (agree, disagree or qualify)
- ▶ use appropriate interactive markers (eg 'I see your point, Luke, but...').

**Step 2:** In pairs, students exchange responses and give feedback on three criteria using *Appendix Q*:

- ▶ Content: Did they respond to both people?
- ▶ Language: Is the argument precise and fluent?
- ▶ Style: Is the tone appropriate for an online class forum?

**Step 3:** Students revise their responses based on the feedback.

## Activity 10.3: Extension – Register shift

**Classroom note:** Advanced learners benefit from exploring how tone and register shift meaning. This activity strengthens awareness of style, an essential criterion at C1–C2.

**Step 1:** Students rewrite their original post in two alternative registers:

- ▶ too formal (like an academic essay)
- ▶ too casual (like a WhatsApp chat)

**Step 2:** In groups of three, they compare versions and discuss:

- ▶ Which is most effective in the given online class forum? Why?
- ▶ What linguistic choices (greetings, contractions, vocabulary, length) created the difference?

**Step 3:** With the class, build a list of 'best-fit' style features for digital classroom discussions (eg polite but concise, semi-formal, interactive).

# Part 11: Writing from sources (report)

**Rationale:** In this task, students produce a formal written text (such as a report or essay) that integrates information from source materials with their own ideas. At C1-C2, the focus is not only on summarising but also on selecting, paraphrasing, synthesising and evaluating the ideas from sources to create a balanced, well-argued piece of writing. Assessment criteria include Content and organisation (relevance, completeness, depth, coherence and logical structure), Use of sources (integration, paraphrase, transformation), Language (accuracy, range, sophistication) and Style (formal register, clarity, suitability for context).

Through these activities, students refine advanced academic and professional writing skills: weighing perspectives from different texts, generating their own stance and framing recommendations based on evidence. These are essential for success in the test and transferable to real-world tasks such as policy papers, workplace reports or academic essays.

## Activity 11.1: Task analysis and planning grid

**Classroom note:** At this level, students must go beyond spotting keywords and learn to map ideas from multiple sources into argument structures.

**Step 1:** Students read the essay prompt and underline task requirements ('evaluate benefits/drawbacks' and 'make recommendations').

Write a formal report for a youth employment office about summer employment for students. In your report, you should:

- ▶ evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of summer employment
- ▶ make recommendations.
- ▶ You **MUST** use ideas from the texts **AND** your own ideas.
- ▶ You **MUST NOT** copy from the texts.

**Step 2:** In pairs, students create a three-column planning grid:

- ▶ Benefits of summer jobs
- ▶ Drawbacks of summer jobs
- ▶ Recommendations

**Step 3:** Students note which ideas come from Text A, which from Text B and which are their own contributions.

**Text A**

**Loxford School Website: Careers Advice**

If you have never had a job before, you might want to think about looking for one this summer. Although it is nice to have a break from your studies, you could be acquiring new skills instead, benefitting your future career as well as your bank account.

Summer jobs provide you with the opportunity to work with others and learn new things. If you have trouble getting up for class, a summer job will help you to become more responsible as others will depend on you.

Even filling in an application form or being interviewed is good practice. Remember, it is not just about the money.

Don't delay! Click on the following link for information. If you need further advice, book a tutorial with one of our team.

**Text B**

**Student Magazine: *Students Online***

Tania's Blog: Final day at work

Some might be surprised to hear this, but I am actually quite glad the summer is nearly over. I'm looking forward to going back to school and having more free time. Despite putting aside money for university next year, it's been exhausting. Everyone is off in August, so the restaurants are always crowded. As a result, I've had to work long shifts, but now I am worrying about completing my summer assignments in time.

However, I have met some great people. When you work as a team, you learn a lot about getting on with others, especially when under pressure. I'm actually going to meet up with some of them next month. My boss was also really proud of the way I dealt with customers too - it's helped me to be more confident.

I found it hard to turn down extra shifts, but now I realise that it's also important to find the right balance. After all, you can't do the same thing for all of the summer holidays.

**Step 4:** Students compare plans, checking whether they have balanced evidence and a clear path to recommendations.

## Activity 11.2: Paraphrasing and knowledge transformation

**Classroom note:** This activity sharpens the skill of recasting source information so that it fits a new communicative purpose (the report).

**Step 1:** Give students short extracts, eg:

- ▶ Text A: 'Even filling in an application form or being interviewed is good practice.'
- ▶ Text B: 'I found it hard to turn down extra shifts, but now I realise it's important to find a balance.'

**Step 2:** Students rewrite these in more formal, report-appropriate language.

- ▶ Example: 'The process of applying for jobs and attending interviews provides valuable preparation for future employment.'

**Step 3:** In pairs, students compare what they have written and highlight strategies (synonyms, restructuring, generalising vs specifying).

**Step 4:** With the class, discuss what makes a paraphrase too close to the original and what makes it persuasive in a report.

## Activity 11.3: Repurposing for a report

**Classroom note:** This activity develops students' ability to move beyond paraphrasing into genre-appropriate transformation; taking ideas from their original context (a school website or personal blog) and reshaping them for a new purpose and audience (a formal report).

**Step 1:** Provide students with the worksheet in *Appendix R* which has four short extracts from Text A and Text B.

**Step 2:** Students first paraphrase each extract in neutral language.

**Step 3:** Students then rewrite each paraphrase as a report statement, adapting tone, perspective and purpose.

**Example:**

- ▶ Original (Text B): 'I found it hard to turn down extra shifts, but now I realise that it's also important to find the right balance.'
- ▶ Paraphrased: 'Tania explained that she had difficulty refusing additional shifts.'
- ▶ Repurposed (report): 'Student experiences indicate that young employees often struggle to refuse additional hours, highlighting the need for better guidance on balancing work and study.'

**Step 4:** In pairs, students exchange their repurposed sentences and underline where changes in tone, vocabulary or audience focus made the transformation effective.

**Step 5:** With the class, discuss:

- ▶ What changes were necessary to make the text appropriate for a report?
- ▶ Which repurposed versions sound most convincing?
- ▶ How does this skill prepare students for full essay writing?

### Activity 11.4: Argument weighing and evaluation

**Classroom note:** At higher levels, students must evaluate, not just report, the perspectives in the texts.

**Step 1:** Write on the board:

'Summer jobs are more beneficial for students than they are harmful.' Do you agree?

**Step 2:** In pairs, students select one benefit (eg developing responsibility) and one drawback (eg academic workload).

**Step 3:** Students write a short evaluative paragraph weighing up which is more significant, using evidence from the texts and their own reasoning.

**Step 4:** Students exchange paragraphs, and their partner underlines:

- ▶ the evaluation statement (eg 'Although the workload is heavy, the skills gained outweigh the drawback.')
- ▶ any unsupported claims that need evidence.

**Step 5:** With the class, discuss what makes an evaluation persuasive (eg balance, evidence, logical reasoning).

### Activity 11.5: Mini-report drafting and peer review

**Classroom note:** This activity scaffolds the full task by letting students practise integrating sources into structured sections.

**Step 1:** In pairs, students draft a mini-report section (100-120 words) focusing on either benefits or drawbacks. They must:

- ▶ integrate one idea from Text A, one from Text B and one of their own
- ▶ use formal report language (eg 'One significant advantage is that...').

**Step 2:** Exchange drafts with another pair. The reviewing pair gives feedback on:

- ▶ Balance of sources vs own ideas
- ▶ Clarity of structure (topic sentence, development, conclusion)
- ▶ Formality of style

**Step 3:** The pairs revise their drafts based on the feedback.

### Activity 11.6: Full report writing and reflection

**Classroom note:** This pulls together the skills of selection, paraphrasing, integration and evaluation.

**Step 1:** Students create a full outline: Introduction, Benefits, Drawbacks, Recommendations, Conclusion.

**Step 2:** Students write a 250-300 word formal report using ideas from both texts and their own perspective.

**Step 3:** Partners complete the feedback checklist in *Appendix S*.

**Step 4:** Students revise their reports and write a short reflection: 'One thing I did well in integrating sources.../One thing I want to improve next time...'

## Appendix A: Peer Feedback | Activity 1.3

**Speaker's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

As you listen to your partner, check whether they:

- answered the question fully
- adapted their answer according to the cue (eg added an example, changed register, gave the opposite view)
- extended their response with extra detail, not just repetition
- kept their answer clear, logical and easy to follow
- showed flexibility by using new vocabulary or different grammar structures.

**One thing they did well:** \_\_\_\_\_

**One thing that could be improved:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Peer Feedback | Activity 1.4

**Speaker's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Did they answer the question directly?

- Yes - the answer was clear and relevant.
- Partly - the answer was vague or off-topic.
- No - they didn't address the question.

### 2. Did they give a reason or explanation for their answer?

- Yes - the reason supported the answer clearly.
- Partly - the reason was weak or not fully explained.
- No - they gave an opinion without a reason.

### 3. Did they give an example or evidence?

- Yes - the example made the point stronger and more convincing.
- Partly - the example was unclear or not well connected to the answer.
- No - there was no example.

### 4. How complete was the response?

- Full - Answer + Reason + Example, developed clearly.
- Partial - one part missing, eg no example.
- Weak - only a short answer, not developed.

### 5. How effective was the response overall?

- Very effective - clear, well supported and easy to follow.
- Quite effective - some points were clear, but more detail or support was needed.
- Not effective - unclear, incomplete or too short.

**One thing they did well:** \_\_\_\_\_

**One thing that could be improved:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D: Feedback Form - Structure & Delivery | Activity 2.4 & 2.5

Speaker's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Structure & Content

- Clear introduction of topic
- Ideas logically sequenced
- Good use of signposting phrases

### 2. Evidence & Support

- Used at least one fact/example to support a point
- Evidence was relevant and convincing

### 3. Delivery

- Spoke fluently without long pauses
- Used stress and intonation effectively
- Maintained audience engagement

One thing they did well: \_\_\_\_\_

One thing that could be improved: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Self-Assessment & Reflection | Activity 2.6

Listen back to your talk, once for content and once for delivery. Then complete the checklist and reflection prompts.

### 1. Content & Structure

- Did I cover all the points I planned?
- Did my ideas follow a clear and logical order?
- Did I use linking phrases to connect my points?

### 2. Language

- Did I use a wide range of vocabulary (general + topic-specific)?
- Did I avoid repeating the same words or phrases?
- Were my grammar and sentence structures mostly accurate?

### 3. Delivery

- Did I speak fluently without long pauses?
- Was my pace appropriate (not too fast or too slow)?
- Did I use intonation and stress to keep the talk engaging?
- Did I minimise filler words ('um', 'like', 'you know')?

### 4. Reflection

What is one strength I want to keep for next time?

What is one area I want to improve?

What will I try differently in my next talk?

## Appendix F: Peer Feedback Form | Activity 3.2 & 3.4

**Speaker's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Initial response

- Did they begin with an acknowledgement/apology?
- Was the reason for missing the meeting clear and concise?
- Did they suggest something specific to support the team?

### 2. Follow-up response

- Did they acknowledge the boss's concern?
- Did they offer a concrete, time-bound action plan?
- Did they justify why their plan would work?
- Did they conclude positively and invite alignment (eg 'Would this be acceptable?')?

### 3. Overall delivery

- Was the tone professional and polite?
- Did the response stay clear and structured?
- Did they adapt appropriately when the scenario changed?

**One thing they did well:** \_\_\_\_\_

**One thing that could be improved:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Intercultural Interaction Checklist | Activity 3.5

### Part A - Compare

Read the three sample responses from your group (Direct, Neutral, Softened).

#### Underline or highlight examples of:

- Apology/Acknowledgement
- Explanation of reason
- Suggested remedy
- Politeness markers (eg 'I do apologise...', 'Would that be acceptable?')
- Direct commitments (eg 'I'll leave earlier...')

#### Discuss with your group:

- Which response is most efficient?
- Which response is most polite?
- Which response would fit best in a UK/US company?
- Which might fit better in a more formal or hierarchical culture?

### Part B - Feedback:

Which version sounds most professional?

Which version sounds most culturally appropriate in your context?

What could be improved?

## Appendix H: Peer Feedback | Activity 4.1

**Speaker's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 1: Summary of the Talk/Conversation

Did the speaker...

- include the main points (not too much detail)?
- organise ideas clearly and logically?
- reformulate ideas in their own words?
- use linking phrases (eg firstly, another point, in addition)?
- speak fluently and clearly, without long pauses?

### Part 2: Follow-up Question

Did the speaker...

- connect their opinion/advice to the summary?
- add at least one reason or example?
- introduce a new, relevant idea (not just repeat)?
- balance agreement/disagreement politely?
- conclude their point naturally?

**One thing they did well:** \_\_\_\_\_

**One thing that could be improved:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I: Layered Summaries | Activity 4.3

Speaker's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

### Check all that apply:

- Was the one-sentence version clear and accurate?
- Did the 30-second version include both bullet points?
- Did the 60-second version use examples logically without too much detail?
- Was the delivery appropriate for each length (no rushing or over-elaboration)?

### Comments:

One sentence (gist only)

30 second (key points plus advice)

60 second (detailed with examples)





## Appendix L: Tracking Interaction in a Discussion | Activity 6.2

### Part A: Interaction Codes

While listening, mark the moves with codes:

- A = Agree
- D = Disagree/Challenge
- E = Expand (add more detail)
- R = Redirect/Shift topic

Examples:

Speaker	Quote/Paraphrase	Code	Why?
Dr Gupta	Eldest children tend to be more compliant.		
Tim	I think it's essential to recognise the role of external factors.		
Jane	That's a great point, Tim.		

### Part B: Functional Language

Match the phrase to its function:

- 'I had assumed...'
- 'That's interesting, but...'
- 'You raise a valid point.'
- 'Nonetheless, for tasks such as yours...'

Functions:

- Concession
- Hedging
- Agreement/realignment
- Challenge

### Part C: Speaker Stances

Complete the table after listening:

Speaker	Overall stance	Evidence (words/phrases)
Dr Gupta		
Tim		
Jane		

## Appendix M: Claim-Evidence-Stance Analysis | Activity 7.2

### Instructions for Students

As you listen to the lecture and the retelling, note down important claims the speakers make. For each one, write the evidence or explanation that supports it and decide the stance:

- ▶ Established fact (widely accepted, scientific description)
- ▶ Uncertain (not fully understood, still under study)
- ▶ Hedged (phrased cautiously: 'might', 'suggests', 'possibly')
- ▶ Opinion (speaker's personal view or interpretation)

Claim (What is stated)	Evidence/Support (How it's justified)	Stance (Established/Uncertain/ Hedged/Opinion)
eg REM involves paralysis of the body's limb muscles	Physiological response - lecturer explains it prevents us from acting out our dreams	Established

### Follow-up questions

- ▶ Which claims appeared in both the lecture and the retelling?
- ▶ Did the retelling add, simplify or leave out any evidence? Give one example.
- ▶ Which claim did you find hardest to classify? Why?
- ▶ How might recognising stance (fact vs opinion vs hypothesis) help in academic listening?



## Appendix O: Peer Feedback Checklist | Activity 9.4

Speaker's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:

### 1. Coverage

- Does it refer to both texts?
- Are the main ideas from each text represented fairly?

### 2. Balance

- Is the contrast or agreement between the texts made clear?
- Does the synthesis avoid focusing too much on just one text?

### 3. Evidence

- Are there specific examples, paraphrases or references that support the summary?
- Does the evidence help show why the texts agree/disagree?

### 4. Clarity

- Is the synthesis written in clear, concise sentences?
- Does it flow logically from one idea to the next?

One thing they did well: \_\_\_\_\_

One thing that could be improved: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix P: Evidence Mapping Worksheet | Activity 9.6

Question	My answer	Evidence (Quote/Line)	Text A, B or both	Notes on distractors
<p><b>Q1: According to Text A, what is the primary advantage to farmers of participating in CSA?</b></p>				
<p><b>Q2: What is the main idea presented in Text A, paragraph 2?</b></p>				
<p><b>Q3: In Text A, paragraph 4, what does 'poised' mean?</b></p>				
<p><b>Q4: According to the writer of Text B, what is the main benefit to members of CSA schemes?</b></p>				
<p><b>Q5: Which advantage of CSA schemes is mentioned in both texts?</b></p>				

## Appendix Q: Peer Feedback | Activity 10.2

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

### Check all that apply:

#### 1. Content

- Did they respond to both Ms Davies and Luke?
- Did they give a clear opinion about advertising?
- Did they include a reason and/or example to support their opinion?
- Did they engage with Luke's viewpoint (agree, disagree or qualify it)?
- Is the message easy to follow, with ideas in a logical order?

#### 2. Language

- Did they use a range of vocabulary (eg influence, persuasive, consumer behaviour)?
- Was the grammar mostly accurate (verb forms, agreement, sentence structure)?
- Did they avoid repetition by using paraphrasing or synonyms?

#### 3. Style

- Is the tone appropriate for a class forum (polite, respectful, constructive)?
- Did they keep the message concise but complete (not too short, not too long)?

One strength of the message: \_\_\_\_\_

One thing that could be improved: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix R: Repurposing for a Report | Activity 11.3

### For each extract below:

- ▶ Paraphrase the original in neutral academic English.
- ▶ Repurpose it as a sentence suitable for a formal report to a youth employment office.
- ▶ Think about tone, audience and purpose.

### Example

- ▶ Original (Text B):  
'I found it hard to turn down extra shifts, but now I realise that it's also important to find the right balance.'
- ▶ Paraphrase:  
The student explained that she struggled to refuse additional shifts.
- ▶ Repurposed (Report):  
Student feedback suggests that many young employees struggle to decline extra hours, indicating the need for guidance on balancing work and study.

### Sentence 1

Original (Text A):

'Although it is nice to have a break from your studies, you could be acquiring new skills instead, benefitting your future career as well as your bank account.'

Paraphrase:

Repurposed (Report):

### Sentence 2

Original (Text B):

'Despite putting aside money for university next year, it's been exhausting. Everyone is off in August, so the restaurants are always crowded.'

Paraphrase:

Repurposed (Report):

**Sentence 3**

Original (Text A):

'Even filling in an application form or being interviewed is good practice.'

Paraphrase:

Repurposed (Report):

**Sentence 4**

Original (Text B):

'My boss was also really proud of the way I dealt with customers too - it's helped me to be more confident.'

Paraphrase:

Repurposed (Report):

**Reflection**

- ▶ What changes did you make when shifting from paraphrase to report?
- ▶ Which words or phrases helped make your sentences more formal and objective?
- ▶ How can this skill help you when writing the full report task?

## Appendix S: Peer Review Checklist | Activity 11.6

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

### Check all that apply:

#### 1. Content & organisation

- Does the report evaluate both benefits and drawbacks of summer employment?
- Does it include at least one clear recommendation?
- Are the ideas relevant and complete (no key aspect missing)?
- Is the report clearly structured (Introduction - Benefits - Drawbacks - Recommendations - Conclusion)?
- Do ideas flow logically from one paragraph to the next?
- Are linking words and phrases used effectively (eg however, in addition, on the other hand)?

#### 2. Use of sources

- Are ideas from both Text A and Text B included?
- Are sources paraphrased (not copied directly)?
- Are source ideas repurposed appropriately for a formal report (adapted from their original context)?
- Are source ideas integrated smoothly with the writer's own points?

#### 3. Language

- Is the grammar accurate and varied?
- Is the vocabulary precise and appropriately formal?
- Are sentences clear and easy to follow?

#### 4. Style

- Does the text maintain a formal, report-style register?
- Is the tone suitable for the youth employment office audience?

One strength of the message: \_\_\_\_\_

One thing that could be improved: \_\_\_\_\_



