

ISE DVD 2008 - Grades and rationales

ISE 0 - Marco

Topic Presentation - B

Marco is prepared for his topic and demonstrates good control of the language of the level, using past tenses and 'going to' consistently. He understands the examiner well and occasionally expands on what he is saying: e.g. 'but I didn't go there.' However, there are inaccuracies and Marco has difficulties with comparatives. His pronunciation can occasionally pose a strain for the listener and he forgets to ask the examiner a question, although he is not prompted to do so. However, the interaction generally progresses well.

Portfolio discussion and conversation - B

In the portfolio discussion Marco responds promptly to the examiner's questions and clearly understands the examiner but his responses are often short and only occasionally does he add extra information; 'I go once a week, with my mother.' Unfortunately, Marco does not take the opportunity to ask the examiner a question himself. In the conversation phase his performance is similar and again he forgets to ask the examiner a question. However, his responses are prompt and he communicates limited information in simple and direct exchanges successfully. Overall the interaction progresses well and Marco's contributions adequately fulfil the task.

ISE I - William

Topic presentation - C

Key area for improvement - Communicative skills

William has prepared his topic well and he uses the topic to present the language items of the level, for example present perfect, past continuous and modals. However, there is some evidence of memorisation since he finds the examiner's questions difficult to answer and his responses become halting. There are occasions where he has to ask for repetition, for instance when she asks which teams were competing. He does ask the examiner a question in accordance with the communicative skills listed for ISE I. His pronunciation can be a strain for the listener and there are hesitations between most words. Overall William's performance partially fulfils the task.

Portfolio discussion and conversation - C

Key area for improvement - Grammar

The portfolio discussion covers transport and Marco makes reference to the text in his portfolio. However, he doesn't ask the examiner a question about his portfolio. The communicative flow is somewhat restricted due to hesitancy in finding the right words, repetition of lexis he is familiar with and inaccuracies in his grammar. When talking about health and fitness he talks knowledgeably about the training programme but there are inaccuracies in his delivery. He does ask the examiner a question but runs into difficulties with the word order. Generally, his language is not as accurate as in the previous phase but overall his contributions partially fulfil the task and William is awarded 'C'.

ISE II - Athanasia

Topic Presentation - B

Athanasia is enthusiastic and has a well structured topic, Greek Television, to discuss with the examiner. She is very communicative and deals well with the examiner's interruptions.

Athanasia speaks very fluently but with a scattering of grammatical mistakes, which, however, do not impede comprehension for example; 'It send us ready made messages', 'It must be done something'. Athanasia asks the examiner a question towards the end of this phase and checks her understanding of reality TV shows by giving an explanation of what they are.

Unfortunately, Athanasia does not make the most of the opportunity to show a good range of the structures of the level. Initially her intonation causes a few problems but this disappears as the phase progresses. Generally, the interaction flows smoothly and her contributions are effective, comprehensible, appropriate and adequately fulfil the task.

Interactive task - B

In this phase Athanasia interacts very well with the examiner. She asks relevant questions matching her questions closely to what the examiner has just said. She expresses her feelings and emotions, showing sympathy e.g. 'What a pity'. Her intonation also conveys her interest in what the examiner is saying. Athanasia covers a good range of the functional language listed for the level; feelings and emotions, asking for further information, speculating about the future and making suggestions e.g. 'You must support her...she needs a friend'. Overall the interaction flows well and her contributions adequately fulfil the task.

Portfolio discussion and conversation - C

Key area for improvement - Communication skills

In this phase Athanasia does not take much responsibility for maintaining the interaction with the examiner, nor does she ask a question about the portfolio, although she responds well and gives quite full answers to the examiner's questions about the portfolio. In the second part of the conversation her answers are vague and not closely related to the question. Her grammatical inaccuracies are quite noticeable and there are many basic errors with for example the 3rd person singular. Athanasia misses the opportunity to use a range of past tenses and 'used to' when comparing her life with that of her grandparents. There are only isolated examples of the language items of the level. Overall her performance partially fulfils the task.

ISE III - Edoardo

Topic presentation - C

Key area for improvement - Lexis

Edoardo starts his presentation well, it is well-structured, and incorporates appropriate lexis and language for the topic, which is discursive. He uses discourse markers and some complex structures. However, as the presentation progresses, there is a lack of cohesion. Some hesitancy results as he searches for suitable words and there are lapses in grammar and lexis. A more fluent presentation would have allowed him to spend more time talking about his ideas. Timing is also an issue as he has too much material for the allotted time. Overall his presentation partially fulfils the task.

Topic discussion - C

Key area for improvement - Communicative skills

Edoardo responds quite well, and at some length, to the examiner's questions. However, there are still frequent hesitations while he searches for words. He does attempt to justify his opinions but doesn't try to engage the examiner in the discussion. There is limited use of the other functions listed for the level e.g. challenging the examiner on her opinions. Generally, his range of language is quite limited. There are some key lexical items which are incorrectly used e.g. 'A plastic operation'. There are also basic grammar errors e.g. 'those operation'. Overall this is a C performance, partially fulfilling the task.

Interactive phase - C

Key area for improvement - Grammar

In this phase Edoardo engages with the examiner, maintaining the discourse by asking for information. He does use some of the functions of the level e.g. evaluating different standpoints 'You have to consider the risks involved' and challenging opinions 'I suggest that you should reconsider'. However, these are isolated samples and the range of functional language used is quite limited, with inaccuracies throughout. The halting delivery does not impede comprehension. Overall this is a strong 'C' grade performance.

Listening - B

The first response is delivered haltingly and is an approximation of the required answer. The other two responses are correct.

Portfolio discussion and conversation - C

Key area for improvement - Lexis

Edoardo responds to the examiner's questions but the delivery is still hindered by hesitancy as he searches for the right words. His grammar is also marred by inaccuracies and he tends to fall back on basic structures. The discussion on role models is similarly affected by hesitancy and lack of focus in his responses. Overall his contributions partially fulfil the task.

ISE IV Leda

Topic Presentation - B

Leda gave a strong presentation, clearly demonstrating her command of sophisticated lexis and complex grammar structures. There is a clear structure to the talk with an initial statement outlining the aim of her presentation. Although there isn't the very formal structure which is required for ISE IV there are sufficient signposts for the listener e.g. 'Another reason for...', 'Another interesting way to look at...' The subject is well chosen, 'Ostalgie' which may not be familiar to the listener and Leda maintains the interest of the listener throughout. Overall the presentation adequately fulfils the requirements for a 'B' grade.

Topic discussion - A

Leda invites discussion of her topic with the examiner and then proceeds to give a highly competent performance, using an excellent range of grammar and lexis whilst demonstrating the required functions of the level. Leda's interaction with the examiner is very fluent and accurate. Overall this is a very effective, clearly comprehensible and highly appropriate performance.

Interactive task - A

Leda develops the conversation well by moving on to different points and asking relevant questions. She also shows empathy by commenting on the examiner's responses before moving on to the next question. She has an excellent command of a very broad range of language and is precise in her use of it. Overall a very competent performance, conducted with the appropriate maturity to maximise use of the required language and lexis of the level.

Listening - A

All the responses are a close match to the answers and are delivered promptly, confidently and concisely.

Conversation - A

Leda's comments on her portfolio and her responses to the examiner's questions show that she has a very wide-ranging vocabulary and an excellent command of idiomatic English. She demonstrates an ability to use language to develop her thoughts and arguments while she speaks and engages the examiner in discussion. Again, a very strong performance and a clear 'A' grade.