

## ISE I (B1) Interview: choosing a Topic

**Level:**

ISE I (CEFR B1)

**Time:**

3 x 45 minutes

**Aims:**

- ✓ To understand what suitable topics for ISE I are
- ✓ To choose individual topics
- ✓ To develop topics through mind maps
- ✓ To write individual topic forms

**Resources and preparation:**

- Pictures of famous people/place/object/sport/activity - to be used to stimulate ideas at the beginning of the class
- Handout 1 (H/O1): a simple mind map (1 per group OR shown on the white or blackboard)
- Handout 2 (H/O2): functions and language of ISE I (1 per group)

**Procedure:**

**1. Generating topic ideas (45 minutes)**

i) Warm-up activity (10 minutes): Show on screen or hold up some large pictures of a favourite person/place/object/activity.

Tell the class that they are going to think individually for 2 minutes of questions they would like to ask you about the pictures. They should write their questions down. The questions can be either FACTUAL (e.g. When was she born?) or PERSONAL (e.g. When did you last see her in a film or on television?)

After 2 minutes, use a strong student first to demonstrate a couple of questions. Then put the students in groups of 3 to compare questions and discuss grammatical accuracy. Give them another 2 minutes to discuss their questions.

Then invite the class to ask you questions about the pictures for 4 minutes.

ii) Brainstorming activity (15 minutes): Ask the class how doing an interview can be more comfortable for us > the answer: choose something to talk about that you're interested in.

- Put the students in mixed-ability groups of 3.
- Each group must write down at least 5 topics that they are interested in and they would like to be interviewed about for 4 minutes.
- The subjects should be personal, not factual, and they must not be too difficult for the students' level of English.

–To start the brainstorming, write a few ideas on the board. (Please note: the ideas below are **only examples**. They are **not** suggestions from Trinity.) For example::

<i>my football team</i>	<i>my favourite sport</i>	<i>my favourite player</i>
<i>my favourite actor</i>	<i>my favourite film</i>	<i>different film genres</i>
<i>my favourite book/writer</i>	<i>my school</i>	<i>my favourite musician</i>
<i>my dance club</i>	<i>the instrument I play</i>	<i>my favourite city</i>
<i>my judo club</i>	<i>my favourite country</i>	

–The students continue in their groups.

iii) Choosing the best 3 possible Topics (20 minutes): 1 student from each group comes up to the board to write all their ideas on the board.

When they have finished writing, look at the suggestions and congratulate the students on suggesting so many ideas. Now, tell the students that some ideas are better than others. Tell the students (diplomatically!) that we need to cross out (e.g. ~~crosses out~~) some of the ideas on the board that are not appropriate or useful, giving a reason (e.g. the Topic is too complex; or the students have to learn too much new vocabulary; or the Topic is exactly the same as the Level's Subjects for Conversation. Trinity also strongly recommends that students do not choose 'my family', 'my best friend' or 'my pet' as their Topic. In Trinity's experience, these are rarely communicative or productive Topics and the students only use the present simple tense.)

Next, tell the students that they must choose 3 possible Topics which they think are interesting and which they could do in the exam. They can be suggestions on the list of class ideas on the board, or they can think of other ideas. Give the students 3 minutes to discuss what they're interested in with a friend. After 3 minutes, tell them to write down their 3 possible Topics. Check around the class to make sure that each student has 3 possible Topics.

## 2. Working with mind maps to choose Topics (45 minutes)

i) Demonstrating a mind map and brainstorming (25 minutes): Show a very simple mind map on the board (see H/O1 for an example shape). Ask the class to suggest one Topic to use on the mind map. Then do a class brainstorm - in English - of possible ideas to add to the mind map. Collect 10-12 suggestions from the students and write them on the mind map. After about 2 minutes, stop the activity.

Tell the students that it is now their turn to complete a mind map for their own 3 possible Topics. Tell them that they have 5 minutes to brainstorm - in English - a mind map for each Topic. 15 minutes in total.

Either give every student photocopies of H/O1 or tell them to draw the mind map in their own exercise books. Tell the students to think about Topic 1. They have 5 minutes to think of lots of ideas - in English! After 5 minutes, tell the class that they must change to a new piece of paper and a new mind map. Now they must brainstorm Topic 2. After 5 more minutes, repeat the same instructions and start Topic 3. After 15 minutes, stop the activity.

ii) From 3 possible Topics to 2 possible Topics (20 minutes): This activity is important because it teaches students that the first idea (e.g. football) is not always the best idea. Put the students in pairs (x2). Tell the students they have 5 minutes each to tell each other about their 3 ideas - in English. Allow 1 student in each pair to start, and after 5 minutes, tell them it's the other student's turn to describe their 3 possible Topics in English.

After 10 minutes, stop the class and ask them to think about these questions:

- Which of their 3 possible Topics is the most difficult to talk about in English because they don't know the vocabulary or grammar?
- Which of the Topics do they find least interesting to talk about?

It is important in the exam not to have to learn and memorise lots of new words, because when we feel nervous, we forget and we don't want to forget the vocabulary and grammar in the exam. Also, it's very difficult to talk about something boring in an exam and answer questions from the examiner. If you're not interested, you won't know what to say!

Tell the class to reject 1 of their Topics - the most technical one with lots of new vocabulary, or the least interesting one. They now only have 2 possible Topics.

### 3. Choosing the best Topic: which Topic generates the language of ISE I? (45 minutes)

i) Looking at the language of ISE I (10 minutes): Explain to the class what H/O2 is: it is an example list of language that the students will have to understand and use in the exam. This is the language that the examiner will use in his/her questions, and it is the language the students must use when they are discussing their Topics. Explain that this language MUST be demonstrated in their Topic. Give each group a photocopy of H/O2, the FUNCTIONS and LANGUAGE of ISE I.

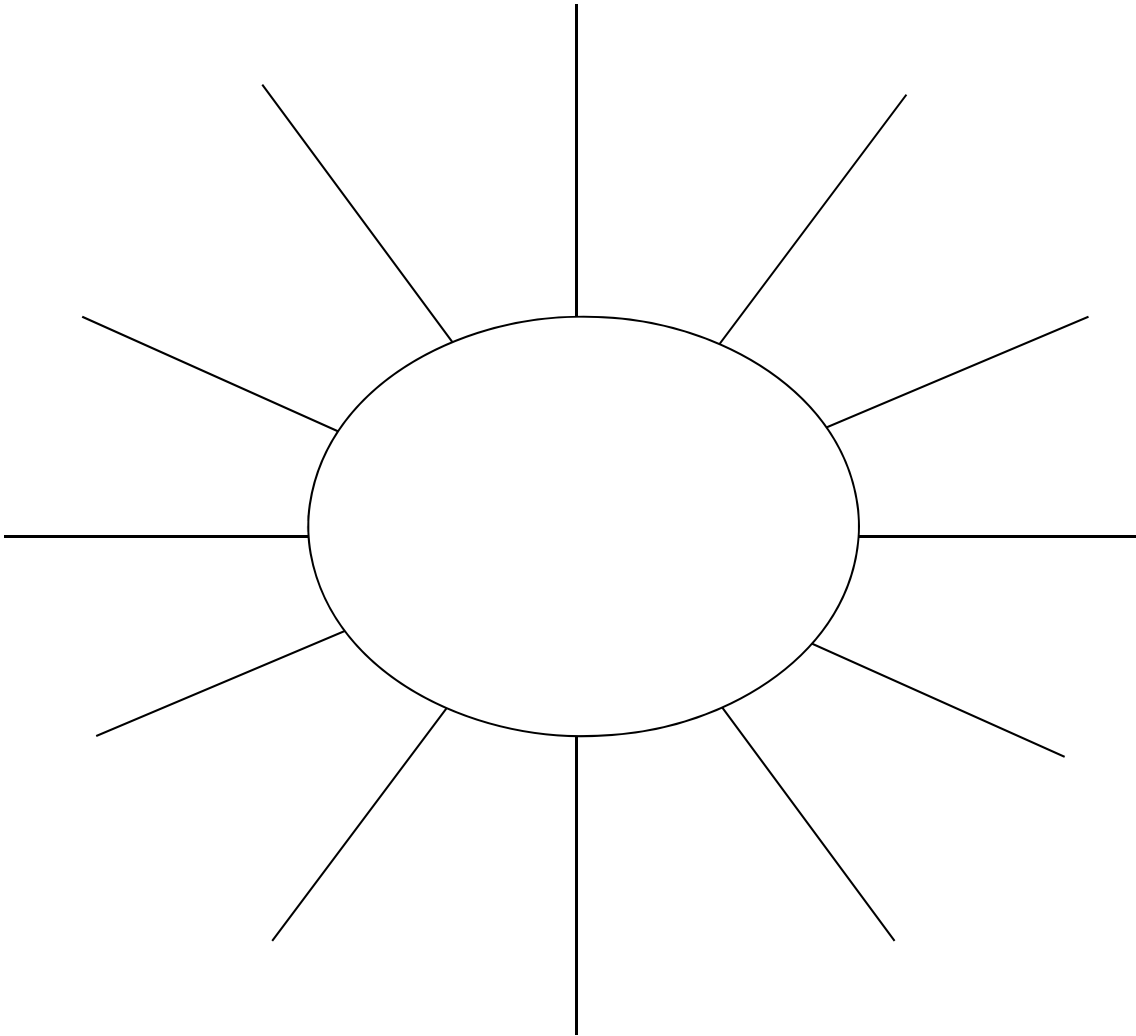
Put the students in pairs (x2). Tell them to look at H/O2 and check if there is anything they don't understand. Explain to the class any examples that they are not sure about.

ii) ISE I language and the example mind map (10 minutes): Now return to the example mind map on the board from part 2. Ask the students to think of things that they can say about the example Topic, using the language on H/O2. Try to get from the students multiple examples of the language of ISE I for each point. Very quickly, it will become clear that some points are better than others, and some points don't attract many examples of the language. After you have examples of the language of ISE I for most points, stop the demonstration activity. Tell students that it's normal for some Topic ideas to be better than others.

iii) Students use ISE I language on their own mind maps (20 minutes): Tell the students that now it's their turn. Tell the students to take their 2 remaining mind maps from the exercises above, in Activity 2-ii. Tell them they have 5 minutes for each mind map to think of as many ways as possible to use the language of ISE I. (Remind them every 5 minutes to change mind map.) Tell the students to use as much variety in their language as they can.

iv) Choosing the best Topic (5 minutes): Tell the students that now they must choose only 1 of the mind maps to use as their exam Topic and reject the other. Tell them that they have to choose the mind map which generates most of the language of ISE I. Let the students tell each other which mind map they have chosen to be their exam Topic and why.

## Handout 1: a mind map



**Handout 2:** ISE I language (Please see the ISE Syllabus p.32 for full details.)

# 1

Here are some examples of the language of ISE I...

## ISE

### Example language:

The past → using the present perfect: *Have you had a drink?*  
*Yes, I have. I've had 2 glasses of water*  
*How many ice creams have you had today?*  
*I've had 3!*  
*Have you ever been to London?*  
*Yes, I have.*  
*How many times have you been there?*

The past → using the past continuous: *What were you doing last night?*  
*I was watching tv.*  
*What was happening in this photo?*  
*My friend was swimming with a dolphin!*

How long?  
 'For' and 'since': *How long were you there for?*  
*For 3 weeks.*  
*How long have you lived here?*  
*Since I was 10.*

Preferences: *What type of music do you prefer?*  
*I like rock, but I prefer pop.*

Giving reasons: *Why do you like rock music?*  
*Because it's very energetic.*

How much/how many: *How many toys have you got?*  
*I've got lots of toys!*  
*How big is your cat?*  
*It's very small.*  
*My homework was really easy!*

Intention: *I practise football to stay fit.*  
*I do my homework to earn pocket money!*

Obligations/lack of obligation  
 Prohibition/necessity: *What do you have to study at school?*  
*We have to study English and maths.*  
*I need to learn English to get a good job.*  
*I don't need to do any homework tonight!*  
*You mustn't smoke!*

0/1<sup>st</sup> conditionals and 'when': *What will you do if you win the competition?*  
*If I can, I'll come to your birthday party.*  
*What do you do when you see a spider?*

Common phrasal verbs:

*What are you looking for?*

*I need to sit down!*

The future → using 'will':

*Do you think you'll come to my party?*

*What do you think you'll do tonight?*

*I won't be able to come.*

*Do you think life will be different in future?*

The future → using the present continuous:

*Where are you going on holiday?*

*We're going to London.*

*What are you doing next week?*

*I'm visiting my cousins.*

Future possibility:

*What do you think you might do tonight?*

*I might go to the cinema.*

Future expressions:

*What are you doing in 3 days' time?*

*What are you doing the day after tomorrow?*