

**Topic Task:
Preparing Students for Conversation
in the Topic Task**

At a glance

Level: ISE Foundation

Focus: Topic task

Aims: Developing skills in connected speech for the topic task and encouraging question formation and development of natural conversation

Objectives: Students will select and talk about a range of topics and practise the use of ISE Foundation language

Topic: Practising speaking about a topic with one or more partners

Language functions: Describing people, objects and places, describing present events and current activities, describing past events, describing future plans and intentions, expressing likes and dislikes

Grammar: Present simple tense; present continuous tense; going to future; adjectives (including comparatives and superlatives); adverbs of manner and frequency; like + gerund/infinitive; formation of questions and the use of question words

Lexis: Vocabulary specific to the subject and topic areas

Materials needed: Sets of *topics and questions cards* (see worksheet) (one set per four students)

Timing: Approximately one hour

Procedure

Preparation

Cut out the *Topics* and the *Questions* cards. You will need one set of *Topics* cards and one set of *Questions* cards for every **four** students in your class. If you can, it might be helpful to print the sets of cards on different coloured papers.

In class

1. Explain to the class that they will be doing an activity to help them practise speaking naturally, and that they will need to do this for the Topic task of the ISE Foundation Speaking & Listening exam. Tell

them they will be using question and topics cards to help them with ideas.

2. Divide your class into groups of four students. In each group, two pairs of students work together.
3. Give each group one set of *Topics* (pink) and one set of *Questions* (blue) cards.
4. Tell the students, in pairs, that they have 10 – 15 minutes to discuss the prompts on their topic cards. At this stage, it is a good idea to look at one of the topic cards with the class. For example, you can look at the topic:

Something interesting that has happened to you.

You can provide suggestions to help students develop their ideas on this topic; for example, discussing positive things that have happened in individual student's lives which are well-known to the rest of the class. As the ideas grow, encourage students to use the language of ISE Foundation. For example, with this topic, it's natural to use the Present perfect tense and with *Plans for the future* students can use future with 'going to'.

5. Ask each pair to choose **four** *Topics* on the (pink) cards.
6. When each pair has decided what to talk about for their four topics, the other pair uses the *Questions* (blue) cards to develop **full** questions to ask about the topics. Encourage students to use ISE Foundation language in questions.
7. Monitor groups to make sure they use **full** and relevant questions. Write up any errors on the board to look at later.
8. Encourage all four students in each group to collaborate on developing questions and help the activity to develop into a natural discussion of the topics in English.
9. When the first pair has discussed their topics, they ask the other pair questions from the *Questions* card about the other pair's topics.
10. Give students some feedback on how well they carried out the task and go over any errors you have written up on the board.

Extension activity

If any of the groups finish quickly, swap the *topic* cards between pairs and ask them to repeat the activity.

Further support activity

With weaker students you could:

- Help them to select topics of direct interest to them
- Remind them of the target language for ISE Foundation
- Provide them help with vocabulary by encouraging them to write down new words

After class

Ask students to choose one of the topics they discussed in their group and then do one or more of these tasks:

- Make notes on what they know about the topic.
- Use the internet or the school library to find out more information about it.
- Decide which English words and phrases they will need to talk about it.
- Write down 4-5 questions they could ask about the topic.

Note: Encourage students to practise talking about a range of different topics before they select a final one for the exam. However, you can in the next lesson show the class an ISE Foundation Topic form and explain to students what they will need to do to complete it.

Topics Questions

Topics Something interesting that has happened to you	Topics Someone you know
Topics A famous person	Topics Something you like doing
Topics An interesting or exciting place	Topics Plans for the future
Topics Your favourite meal to cook	Topics A surprise
Topics A book, movie or TV show	Topics Free-time activities

<p>Questions</p> <p>What's going to happen...?</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>What do you like about ...?</p>
<p>Questions</p> <p>Describe ... (using four adjectives).</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>Where is ...?</p>
<p>Questions</p> <p>How often...?</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>How many...?</p>
<p>Questions</p> <p>When did you first hear about...?</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>What are the best and worst things about...?</p>
<p>Questions</p> <p>What's happening with ... now?</p>	<p>Questions</p> <p>What happened about ... in the past?</p>