

Classroom activity 1 – Preparing for the Formal topic presentation phase

Grade: GESE Grade 11 (CEFR C1)

Focus: The Formal topic presentation phase

Time: 65 minutes

Aims:

- ▶ To review the functions of GESE Grade 11
- ▶ To review the exam format
- ▶ To raise students' awareness of discursive topics
- ▶ To focus on using the functions in the topic presentation
- ▶ To identify what a discursive topic is
- ▶ To match GESE Grade 11 functions to example sentences
- ▶ To start thinking about a suitable topic choice

Materials needed:

- ▶ A copy of Worksheets 1, 2 and 3 for each student

Preparation

1. Make copies of Worksheets 1 & 2 for all students.
2. Cut up Worksheet 3 so that each box is an individual card. Make a set for each group of three or four students.

In class

What do you know about the topic presentation? (5 minutes)

1. Tell the students you are going to focus on how to prepare for the topic presentation.
2. Give them 2 minutes to discuss in pairs or small groups what they know about this phase.
3. When they finish talking, take a few suggestions from the group and put them on the board. Don't confirm if their ideas are right or wrong at this point.

True or False? (10 minutes)

1. Give the students Worksheet 1 and ask them to work on it for about 4 minutes alone. They need to read each statement and tick the ones they believe are true. Make sure they understand what discursive means.
2. When they've finished, get them to check their answers in pairs, and then elicit and confirm the answers on the board as a group. Confirm which of their ideas from the first task were true too if they haven't been covered in the task.

Choosing a discursive topic (10 minutes)

1. Tell the students that it is very important to prepare a discursive topic. Explain that the language functions focus largely on developing arguments and expressing beliefs, and that in the phase after the topic presentation the examiner will push them to defend this viewpoint.
2. Give them 1 minute with their partner to brainstorm ideas of topics which are discursive, then give them Worksheet 2 and 5 more minutes to decide together if the topics are good examples for GESE Grade 11 or not.
3. Monitor and offer support where needed. Some students might argue that example 4 could be discursive. Explain that it would be possible to debate themes around teaching, but the focus of the topic needs to outline these arguments more clearly – eg 'Teaching – the worst job in the world!' Encourage them to think of more suitable options which have clear arguments on both sides. Explain that this will mean they are much more likely to do well on both the presentation and discussion of the topic.

What are the functions of GESE Grade 11? (10 minutes)

1. If your students have already worked on the functions of GESE Grade 11, give them a few minutes in pairs to see how many they can remember, then elicit them and write them on the board, adding any they forgot.

2. If they haven't looked at the functions before, get them to think what kinds of functions might be at GESE Grade 11. You could show them some examples from GESE Grade 10 if they might not know what a function is. Elicit some ideas and then confirm the correct answers on the board.
3. Give them a few more minutes to think alone about what kind of things they might say when using each of the functions.

Using the functions of the grade (10 minutes)

1. Put them into groups of three or four, and get them to match the function cards to the example sentence cards from Worksheet 3.
2. Monitor and offer support where needed.
3. After eliciting the correct answers on the board. Check the students understand all the language in the task, and help them with any difficult words – model their pronunciation and get the students to repeat the expressions. Make sure you focus on stress and intonation. It's important that they engage the examiner's interest and signal when new information is coming at this grade.
4. You might find it useful to show some clips of native speakers talking on TV shows where people discuss controversial topics to get some inspiration. Possible examples include 'Loose Women', 'The View', 'Question time' (clips available on YouTube).

Start thinking about your topic (10 minutes)

1. Tell the students you want them to start thinking about their own topic now. Give them a few minutes to think of a few possible things they could talk about. Remind them that it should be something they're interested in, have a lot to say about, and feel comfortable talking about with the examiner.
2. After a few minutes, encourage them to discuss their ideas in small groups. Ask them to listen to each other's ideas and decide if they sound suitably discursive, and if they offer the chance to use the functions of the grade. Monitor and offer support where needed. Afterwards feedback as a group and elicit good examples of possible topics.

Feedback (10 minutes)

1. Afterwards, elicit good examples of possible topics from each group. Write their suggestions on the board and then elicit arguments on both sides. Also elicit examples of things the students could say about the topics while also using the functions of the grade.
2. Tell the students to think a little more about the topic they've chosen. Is it something they know a lot about, or would be interested in researching. Would they feel comfortable talking about it with an examiner?

Extension activity

In the 'Using the functions of the Grade' task, more advanced students could start thinking of ways they could use the functions in their topics.

Further support activity

Weaker students could be given a copy of Worksheet 3 which hasn't been cut up but has some key words blocked out. These words could be written on the board and they decide where they go in each sentence. They can check their answers by looking at the other students' worksheets, and the other students can check their answers by looking at the weaker students' worksheets.

After class

Students can start preparing their topics at home.

Answers

Worksheet 1

1. False – candidates must **not** select a topic from this list – this is for the conversation phase only.
2. True
3. False – they will ask you questions in the next phase - the discussion of the topic presentation.
4. True
5. True

6. False - you need to give the examiner a brief outline of the topic in note form.

7. True

Worksheet 2

1. No – this is likely to be largely descriptive.

2. Yes – people have opposing views about whether this should be done. There is also a difference between testing for cosmetic and medicinal purposes.

3. Yes – they could talk about lobbying, business people becoming politicians etc. – it's likely that people will have mixed views on this.

4. No – although there might be different views on this. It's very subjective. There are some ways of measuring it, eg championship/league winners.

5. Yes – some people believe vitamins are worth taking but many healthcare professionals disagree.

Worksheet 3

They are matched on the original worksheet. Make sure you keep one copy of the worksheet which hasn't been cut up so you can confirm the answers.

Worksheet 1 – The Topic presentation

Tick the correct sentences

1. You choose your topic from the list of subject areas for GESE 11.
2. This phase lasts for up to 5 minutes.
3. The examiner will ask you questions about your topic in this phase.
4. You need to make sure you use the language of GESE 11 in your presentation.
5. The topic needs to be discursive.
6. You need to give the examiner a written copy of your full presentation.
7. The examiner will make some notes during your presentation.

Worksheet 2 – Discursive or not?

Decide which topics are discursive in nature in your opinion?

1. My wonderful family
2. Testing on animals
3. Mixing business with politics
4. My job – being a teacher
5. Vitamin supplements – are they worth it?

Worksheet 3 – Functions of Grade 11

<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Justifying an argument</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>I know it's a bit of a controversial opinion but we all know that the system can't go on the way it is - something has to change.</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Inferring</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>The government has been cutting funding for health for years. With the economy the way it, it's pretty clear what they'll do next.</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Expressing caution</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>Of course, there is a risk that the most vulnerable would be affected, and a system would need to be figured out for them before any decisions can be made.</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Expressing empathy and sympathy</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>I can't even begin to imagine what it must feel like to have some sort of serious illness and be put on some waiting list - it's just awful.</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Challenging arguments and opinions</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>People say privatisation is a step back but I beg to differ, it's taking a step forward to a better health care system for everyone.</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Evaluating different standpoints</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>I'm going to start by talking about some of the reasons why people believe health care should be free for everyone, I'll be arguing against each point...</p>
<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Grade 11 Function</p> <p>Expressing reservations</p>	<p>TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON</p> <p>Example sentence</p> <p>I do have some concerns about how any changes would affect people who are currently undergoing treatment.</p>