



Practising Cambridge English: Preliminary Speaking Part 1

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A. TEACHERS' NOTES

Description

Time required: 60 minutes

Materials required:

- 26 A4 pieces of card/paper, each with one letter of the alphabet
- Classroom Handout 1 (1 copy per student)

Aims:

- To practise for Cambridge English: Preliminary Speaking Part 1 by:
 - answering questions typically asked in Part 1
 - raising awareness about the exam by putting learners in the position of examiners.

A1. Lesson Plan

1. Give each student a piece of card with one letter of the alphabet. Start with A and give them out alphabetically around the class. (If there are more letters than students, put the remaining letters on the board at the front of the class. If there are more students than letters, give out some letters to pairs of students. Try to choose letters that can be doubled in words, e.g. t, p, o, e, etc.

Review the alphabet and ask students to hold up their letter when it is called. You can model each letter, then ask the class to repeat. Build this up until the class is saying the whole alphabet.

Timing: 5 minutes

2. Explain that in Cambridge English: Preliminary Speaking Part 1 students need to be able to spell their surname. Spell yours as an example and, as you spell, students stand up with their letters as though they are letters on a 'class keyboard'.

Give students a minute or so to practise spelling their names to their partner.

Then choose a few students to spell their surnames to the class, with the class acting as a keyboard again (i.e. standing up when their letter is called).

Timing: 3 minutes

3. Give out A3. *Classroom Handout 1*.

Explain that the handout contains some examples of questions they might find in Part 1 of the Cambridge English: Preliminary Speaking test. Allow students a minute or two to read the questions, then elicit whether any of these questions is difficult to answer. (*Answer: no, these are the kinds of questions that students should have encountered before.*)



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Nominate one student to ask you question 1. Reply with a one-word answer, e.g. “work”. Elicit whether this kind of answer is ok (*no*) and how you could make the answer longer (e.g. *I work as a teacher in an English school.*)

Students work in pairs to ask each other questions 1–5. Remind them to make their answers more than one word, and to give more information if possible. If you feel students need more support, you can model this by asking each question to a different student in the class before getting students to do the exercise in pairs. Monitor.

Feed back any unusual/interesting answers, and any good examples of extended answers.

Timing: 8 minutes

4. Focus attention on questions 6, 7 and 8 of *Classroom Handout 1*. In pairs, students should complete the questions. Elicit or offer some ideas to write on the board, then let students work together to think of their own questions.

Monitor while students are doing this to help with vocabulary and structures.

When students have written the questions, set the class up so that there are two pairs of chairs facing each other, ideally with a table between them. (There is an example table layout on *A2. Teacher’s Resource* as a guide.) Staying in their original pairs, students sit in the position of examiners or candidates.

Timing: 5 minutes

5. Explain that some students are going to play the part of examiners and some are going to be candidates in ‘speed examining’. Tell students if they are examiners or candidates.

Elicit and/or explain the following:

- in the Cambridge English: Preliminary Speaking exam there are two examiners
- one is the interlocutor, who asks the questions
- one is the assessor, who makes notes on the candidate’s performance.

In this activity:

- The interlocutor will ask the questions that they have written
- They can ask any of the questions on their worksheet.
- They must direct one question to one candidate and the next question to the other candidate.
- The assessor will listen to the answers, make a note of any good/interesting ones and of any questions that are difficult.



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Remind the candidates that they must extend their answers. Elicit as many ways as possible to extend the answer to a question, e.g. 'Tell us about your last holiday.'

(Possible answers: I went to France with my family. We stayed in a lovely caravan by the sea. The weather was fantastic and I loved the food. I'd like to go there again.)

Timing: 5 minutes

6. Groups begin their interview. Allow two minutes for each group.

Monitor and make a note of good features and areas that need further work.

When the two minutes are up, the 'candidates' stand up and move on to the next pair of examiners. (If you are familiar with speed dating, then this is the same idea but with the focus on examining rather than dating.)

Examiners swap roles, so that the interlocutor becomes the assessor, taking notes, and the assessor becomes the interlocutor.

Allow 2 minutes for the interview again, before the candidates move on and the examiners swap roles again.

Repeat until all the candidates have been examined by all examiners.

Timing: 10 minutes (based on a group of 20 students)

7. Swap student roles so that the candidates become examiners and vice versa.

Repeat the speed examining as before, with the new candidates being interviewed for 2 minutes by a pair of examiners before moving on to the next.

Timing: 10 minutes (based on a group of 20 students)

8. When all the interviews are complete, feed back on the experience:

- Did you enjoy it?
- Was it difficult?
- What were the best answers you heard when you were an assessor?
- Were any questions difficult? Why do you think they were difficult?

Explain that this part of the exam only lasts for two to three minutes, so what they have just done was actually much more difficult.

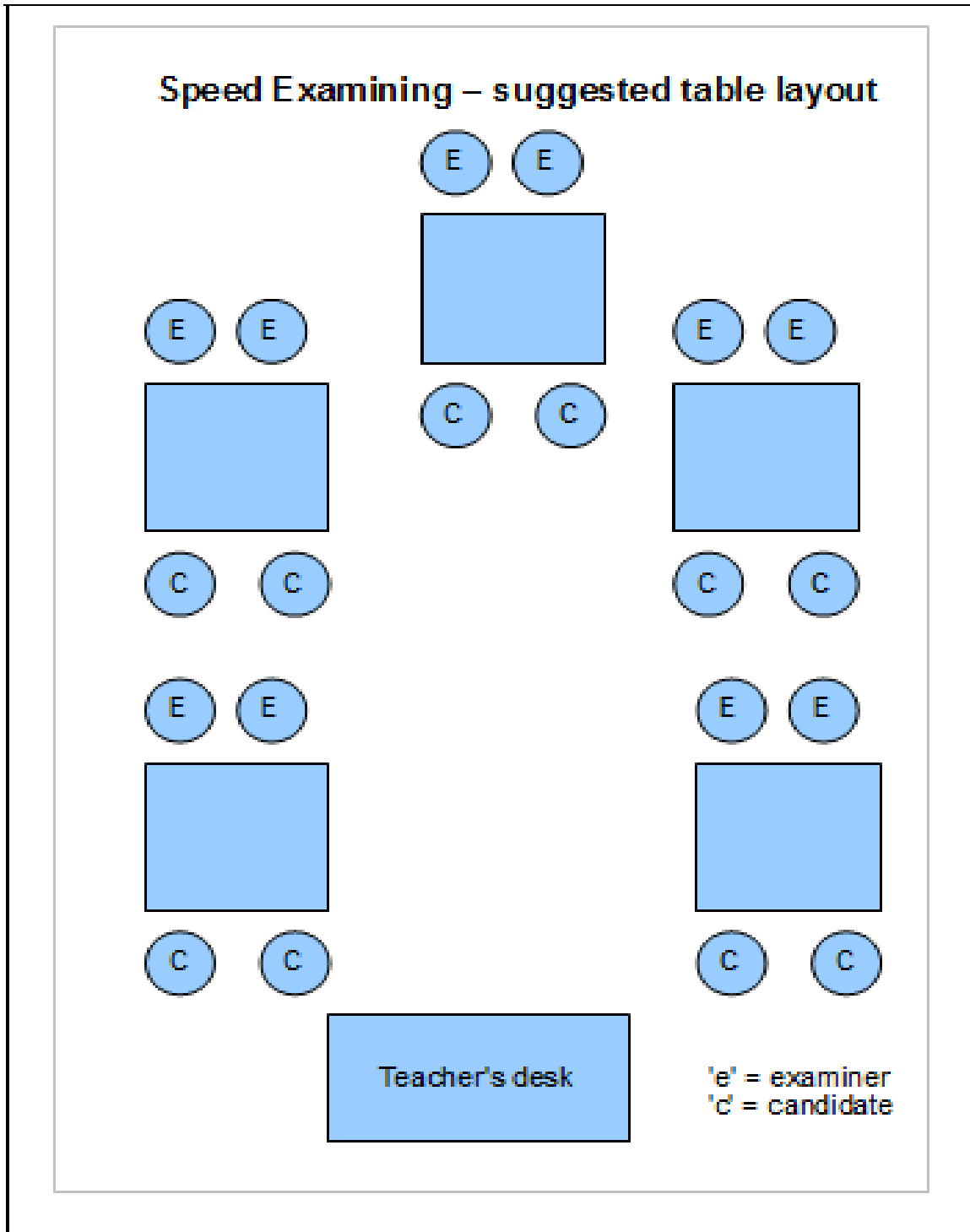
Encourage students to keep up the practice for this part of the exam by using the follow-up activities suggested below.

Timing: 8–10 minutes



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A2. Teacher's Resource





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A3. Classroom Handout 1

1. Do you work or are you a student?
2. What do you do/study?
3. How often do you do sport? Why(not)?
4. Tell (us/me) about your last holiday.
5. What's your favourite kind of food?
6. How often....
7. Tell (us/me) about
8. What's your....



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B1 GUIDANCE FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Part 1 of Cambridge English: Preliminary Speaking consists of general questions that candidates will regularly encounter. There is a huge quantity of practice material available in course books, teaching books, and speaking practice books. Any other general speaking practice should also be encouraged, for example speaking English with classmates, with a host family or having a language exchange with a native speaker.
2. The idea of the 'classroom keyboard' in *A1. Lesson Plan* Steps 1 and 2 can be used to practise both spelling and the letter names. Spelling may be tested in Cambridge English: Preliminary Listening Part 3. You could:
 - dictate words for students to 'spell' out for you
 - spell a word for students to get into order
 - practise minimal pairs of letters students have difficulty with.Make several copies of the letters for groups of students to:
 - spell out words you or another student call out
 - make as many words (correctly spelled!) as possible
 - find the letter you or another student call out.
3. The questions on *A3. Classroom Handout 1* are easy to reproduce.
 - Keep questions 1 and 2, as they are as these are standard questions in the exam for the examiners to ascertain background information on the candidates.
 - Keep the beginnings of questions 3–5 the same as they are in the worksheet, as this will ensure the students are exposed to a range of question forms.
 - Change the ends of the questions, e.g. question 3 could be changed to 'Tell us about your family/school/the place where you live'.
4. The 'speed examining' activity encourages students to refine and improve their answers by repeating similar answers several times. Other activities that use these kinds of questions and encourage repetition and refinement are:
 - 'Tell me about...' games in which students have a list of questions and walk around the class asking different questions to different students.
 - 'Find someone who...' can be used. Although this game elicits 'yes/no' questions such as 'Do you like TV?', the conversations which ensue as a result of this game will enable students to practise answering and asking questions of the type asked in the exam.
 - Board games – there are many speaking practice board games available in resource books. These are ideal for practising in groups.