

Say it better – Speaking Part 1

Teacher's notes

Aim: Raise awareness of need to use / practise using a wider range of grammar / lexis in part 1 of the Speaking exam

(Under the Assessment Criteria for all parts of the Speaking test, as well as accuracy, candidates are assessed on range of grammar and lexis (vocab). To get a higher band for grammar, candidates need to demonstrate flexibility and an ability to use complex structures. For lexical resource, they need to demonstrate flexibility, awareness of style and collocation and ability to use less common / idiomatic vocab.)

Instructions

1. Tell students they are going to look at how to impress the examiner (elicit the meaning of *impress* if necessary) in Speaking part 1.

Write the question: ***What do you do to keep healthy?*** on the board. Ask a student to ask you the question and give a short answer (e.g. *I run.*) Ask Ss if your answer would impress the examiner and why (not). (**No. It's a very short answer. The examiner can't tell if your English is good or bad.**)

Elicit some longer / more impressive answers from Ss.

2. Hand out worksheet 1. Ss work in pairs to match a reply from the left column (1-6) with a reply to the same question from the right (a-f). Feed back.
3. Pairs decide which of the two replies is the most impressive and tick the reply which is better. Feed back to make sure everyone agrees on which reply is better.
4. Pairs identify why the grammar and / or vocab is better. Elicit suggestions.
5. Hand out worksheet 2 to small groups. Groups work together to reword the three replies so that they are more impressive. Teacher monitors and offers help / suggestions where necessary.
6. Listen to / write groups' answers on board. Class vote on the most impressive reply.*

Follow up

Practice answering Speaking part 1 questions. Ss roleplay examiner / candidate. 'Examiners' give feedback focusing on the most impressive grammar / vocab used. If you don't have Speaking part 1 questions available, first get Ss to brainstorm possible questions (familiar topics, e.g. *home, family, work / study, free time, sports, food, etc*)

Whenever Ss practice the Speaking part of the exam in future lessons, remind Ss of the need to impress the Examiner by using a greater range of vocab / grammar (in **all** parts of the Speaking test).

Alternative suggestion

*With large classes, for stage 6 you could stick their answers up around the room. Groups go around and note their favourite replies on a piece of paper. Then they put their hands up to vote for their favourite reply.

ANSWER KEY - Worksheet 1 – Say it better

Matching

1D, 2F, 3A, 4B, 5E, 6C

Which reply is better?

Suggested answers (other suggestions may be acceptable):

(1) **D** is better – see example on worksheet

2(F) is better. Vocabulary – in F *children* is repeated, in 2 it's substituted with *toddler / kids*. *Nice* and *bad* are simple vocabulary, *entertaining* and *naughty* are less common. Good phrase *spend (lots of) time around...*

(3) **A** is better. Vocabulary – *to be really into* is less common than *like*. *Tops* and *accessories* are more impressive than listing items of clothing. *I've got loads of...* and *it suits me* are good informal expressions.

4(B) is better. Grammar – *I've been playing... since...* = present perfect continuous + *I was* = past simple. In B only present simple is used. Vocab – *to be a (big) fan of...* is less common than *my favourite...is*.

5(E) is better. Grammar – past simple, used to and present simple used. In E only past simple is used. Vocab – *neighbourhood* is less common. Nouns are quantified with *a bit* and *loads of* to make them more impressive.

(6) **C** is better. Vocabulary – good adjectives to describe food – *savoury, sweet, spicy, greasy*. In 6, the speaker just gives names of food which are quite simple. C also uses a range of verbs – *love, prefer, tend to (choose), avoid*. Grammar - both speakers use a more complex *verb + infinitive* structure (*try to eat, tend to choose*).

ANSWER KEY - Worksheet 2 – Say it better

Suggestions for rewording. These are only to give ideas if the students need help. Bear in mind the level of your students and what you can reasonably expect them to produce.

1. *I really hate my name because loads of Spaniards (substitute Ss' nationality) are called Juan (substitute Ss' name). I'm pretty sure that Juan is a biblical name. In English, of course, you say John.*

For sentence 2, encourage Ss to come up with a translation for their own name and try to use impressive vocab / paraphrase if they don't know the exact meaning.

2. *I've known my neighbour for 7 years / since 2005. She's really friendly and helpful. Once when I was really ill, she came round to look after me – bought medicine, cooked for me, that kind of thing.*

3. *I'm planning on going to Europe for my next holiday. I've never been there before. I'd like to do some sightseeing and sample some of the local cuisine.*

Worksheet 1 – Say it better – Speaking Part 1

Below are some replies which IELTS candidates gave to 6 questions in part 1 of the Speaking test.

Match a reply on the left (1 - 6) with a reply to the same question on the right (a - f).

Example: 1 = D

1 I think I'll study Engineering next year. I will decide after my exams.

A I'm really into green. I've got loads of green tops and accessories because people say it suits me.

2 I spend lots of time around children because I've got two – well one is only a toddler. My kids are very entertaining but they can also be naughty.

B My favourite sport is football. I play football every week in the summer.

3 I like blue. I often wear blue clothes like t-shirts, shorts, socks...

C I love all kinds of food. I prefer savoury dishes to sweet ones. In restaurants I tend to choose spicy meals and avoid anything too greasy.

4 I'm a big fan of tennis. I've been playing every week since I was about 10 years old.

D I'm planning to take a degree in Engineering. I'm due to start the course in September next year. ✓

5 I still live in the same neighbourhood I grew up in. It used to be a bit boring but now there are loads of shops and restaurants.

E I grew up in Wakra. I lived in a small house. Wakra was boring.

6 I really like food. My favourite food is chicken and rice. I don't like vegetables very much but I try to eat them because they're healthy.

F I often play with children because my sister has 3 children. They are nice children but sometimes they are bad.

For each pair of replies, tick (✓) the reply which is better. Example: D ✓

Now decide why the reply you ticked is better. Think about grammar and vocabulary.

Example: The grammar is more impressive than 1, e.g. D = future *to be planning to* and *to be due to* (in 1 = future *will* is repeated). There's also some good vocabulary in D, e.g. *take a degree in...*

Worksheet 2 – Say it better – Speaking Part 1

Below are three more examples of how candidates replied to questions in part 1 of the Speaking test.

Rewrite the replies so that they use more impressive grammar and / or vocabulary. Don't change the ideas, just the language.

Example:

I sometimes buy things on the Internet, like clothes. You can buy the new styles and they are cheap.

I shop on the Internet quite regularly, usually for casual clothes or workwear. The stuff that's available on the Internet is usually more up-to-date and often less expensive than in the shops.

1.

I don't like my name. Many people in my country have the same name. It has a meaning but I don't know it in English.

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2.

I know my neighbour. We first met in 2005. She is very nice. Once she helped when I was sick.

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3.

My next holiday will be in Europe. It's my first holiday in Europe. I want to visit important places and nice restaurants.

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Now decide which group(s) wrote the best reply.