

Speaking and Listening Test Guidelines



Cambridge IGCSE[®] (9–1)* First Language English

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For examination from 2017

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The purpose of these guidelines

- To explain the syllabus aims and objectives
- To suggest suitable pedagogical approaches for you and your learners in developing appropriate Speaking and Listening skills
- To suggest suitable content and learner activities, which will help prepare learners for the assessment model used in the Speaking and Listening Test
- To explain how the test functions as a non-coursework speaking *test*
- To explain the formal requirements of the Speaking and Listening Test
- To provide examples of a range of productive and useful topics for Part 1 of the Test: Individual Task
- To provide a framework for structuring Part 2 of the Test: Questions
- To give guidance on interpreting and applying the assessment criteria when a teacher is assuming the role of an examiner
- To give guidance on how to manage the logistics of the test effectively
- To give guidance on coordinating examiners and internal moderation processes.

Section 1: Developing appropriate Speaking and Listening skills

1.1 Syllabus aims

The aims of the syllabus are for learners to:

- develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when speaking and writing
- learn how to use a wide range of vocabulary, and correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed.

Learners are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which English can be used. It is hoped that learners will develop analysis and communication skills, such as synthesis, inference and the ability to order facts and present opinions effectively.

Learners will also have the opportunity to develop their Speaking and Listening skills by presenting to others and responding to questions. Learners should be able to develop a range of skills in organising content and adapting their spoken language to meet the needs of the purpose and audience.

It is clear that these broader aims will help support learners in achieving their potential for the Speaking and Listening assessment.

1.2 Assessment objectives for Speaking and Listening

AO3: Speaking and Listening

The syllabus comprises three assessment objectives – Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. For Speaking and Listening, candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

SL1 Articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined

SL2 Present facts, ideas and opinions in a sustained, cohesive order

SL3 Communicate clearly and purposefully using fluent language

SL4 Use register appropriate to a formal setting

SL5 Listen to and respond appropriately to questions.

In the first part of the Speaking and Listening Test (the Individual Task), objectives SL1, SL2, SL3, and SL4 are assessed. In the second part of the test (Questions) all SL1, SL2, SL3, SL4 and SL5 are assessed.

Section 1: Developing appropriate Speaking and Listening skills

1.3 Syllabus content

Appropriate topics for the test

There is no question paper for this component, so it follows that the topic chosen for the test is not prescribed. It must however be appropriate for a formal assessment and allow the candidate to demonstrate their abilities to the full. It is up to the Centre and its candidates to explore a range of topics, themes, scenarios and useful content which lends itself to the preparation of a brief oral presentation and subsequent discussion. Section 2 of these guidelines offers specific guidance relating to content, but whatever is chosen by candidates, there should be opportunities to:

- describe and reflect on experience
- express what is thought, felt and imagined
- understand and convey complex information
- order and present facts, ideas and opinions effectively
- respond appropriately to questions
- communicate with clarity, focus and purpose
- communicate appropriately for the audience and context
- evaluate and reflect on what is heard.

As speakers, learners should also study using language devices and language appropriately, and develop presentational skills in employing and organising content. As listeners, they should develop skills in listening to, and responding to, questions appropriately.

Some suggested curricular areas include: health, science, sports, medicine, travel, technology, hobbies, careers, social matters, and popular culture (among many others).

Learners may also draw upon literature and popular fiction as sources.

Section 1: Developing appropriate Speaking and Listening skills

1.4 Underlying pedagogy

Dialogic teaching and active learning

Cambridge believes that the incorporation of Speaking and Listening activities into regular classroom work for English is beneficial to learners' development. Speaking is a primary means of expression and in many cases it requires secure listening skills to be effective. This component allows for and encourages a wide range of Speaking and Listening skills to be practised leading towards the final assessment of delivering a talk and taking part in a focused discussion.

Learners are likely to achieve close to their potential if they play a role in constructing their own learning. Active learning and constructivist approaches are at the heart of the Cambridge ethos of good teaching and effective learning. The work learners undertake for this component creates a good environment for active learning, and a range of dynamic and interactive Speaking and Listening activities is encouraged.

Dialogic learning is learning that takes place through dialogue. Dialogic teaching involves ongoing talk between teacher and learners. Through dialogue, teachers can elicit learners' perspectives, engage with their developing ideas and help them become clear and efficient communicators. When learners are given opportunities to contribute to classroom dialogue in extended and varied ways, they can explore the limits of their own understanding. At the same time they practise new ways of using language as a tool for constructing knowledge. Dialogic teaching also promotes higher order thinking skills.

Cambridge is also dedicated to helping prepare learners for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We recommend therefore that learners are encouraged to use this component to spark their curiosity and explore topics and themes which are likely to have a long-lasting impact on their future learning.

Section 1: Developing appropriate Speaking and Listening skills

1.5 Formative assessment

The Cambridge Learner profile establishes that learners should be:

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **reflective** as learners, developing their ability to learn
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

This component encourages the use of formative learning and formative assessment in order to promote and develop the attributes above.

An example of formative learning is learning from peers, and this can be used at the preparatory stages. A key skill which should be practised is listening to others and being able to respond in detail and some depth so that the discussion is elevated to a higher level. Activities which encourage higher order thinking skills are useful mechanisms to develop this skill.

Discussing a contemporary and perhaps contentious issue in a small group is a good way to offer learners engagement and to show them that they can make a difference. A contentious issue is one which will have opposing viewpoints and/or a number of contrasting perspectives. A ten-minute scaffolded group discussion can explore this issue effectively, and a teacher will be able to plan for stop-off points where formative learning can take place. These stop-off points should also encourage learners to be reflective about the learning that is taking place.

Formative assessment can be carried out by the teacher in the above scenario by means of observation, immediate oral feedback, and by gauging the extent to which each group member has been involved in terms of:

- a) listening sensitively and *responsibly* to others
- b) making appropriate, useful, and potentially *innovative* contributions
- c) developing their *confidence*.

Formative assessment invites teachers to design informal and non-threatening activities which lend themselves to immediate feedback. We recommend that the topics, themes and issues under discussion are drawn from the curriculum and productive Part 1 content stated elsewhere in this guide.

Section 2: Planning for the Speaking and Listening Test

2.1 Preparing for the test

Task setting and topic choice

There is a very broad range of Speaking and Listening topics which are suitable for final examination. You and your learners are encouraged to be as creative and lively as possible in choosing topics and delivery modes. However, successful work will be that which can be assessed using the Speaking and Listening assessment criteria. It is important therefore when task-setting that the assessment criteria are considered at the planning stage.

Once the task is secure, implementation of it usually requires research, practice and refinement.

Successful work is almost always work in which the learner has a clear interest in the topic, and is motivated intrinsically.

In designing their Part 1 Individual Task, learners are encouraged to:

- prepare and organise appropriate and interesting material
- be aware of the range of suitable presentational styles
- display awareness of their audience
- employ a range of language devices
- select content which lends itself to further discussion.

The Individual Task should be as lively as possible and to ensure this, learners are advised to prepare a topic in which they have a personal interest.

Personal experiences and interests are a common focus, for example, recent trips abroad, reading, sport, music. These kinds of presentations vary in their degree of success, with the less successful tasks simply describing likes, dislikes and experiences without further research or insight.

Some examples of productive topics used by candidates:

- Pros and cons of social media for teenagers
- Are women's rights really equal in today's world?
- The use of humour as a tool to get on in life
- Talking to my younger self (as a monologue)
- Do we really need censorship?

Section 2: Planning for the Speaking and Listening Test

- What money means to a teenager
- Conspiracy theories, including one of my own
- Seven reasons why I hate football
- What is a fair rate of pay for a job?
- Should we be suspicious of data clouds?
- Cricket isn't what it used to be
- Cosmetic surgery and teenagers
- Playing the role of a tourism officer promoting a country
- A person I would really like to interview; why, and what questions I would ask
- Why the world needs more superheroes
- Why the voting age should be lowered to 16
- Should we spend money on space programs or can it be better spent?
- Pros and cons of conscription
- First impressions and the science behind it
- Poverty in the UK
- The experience and impact of living in a different culture
- Celebrities who make a real difference

These topics have lent themselves to interesting and useful Part 1 presentations. They are presented here to indicate that topics which have a specific focus and a clear purpose work well. They are not intended as a prescriptive list. There are many more topics which would work equally well.

We do not recommend the use of very generic topics or themes, however, a specific topic, such as 'Should we bring back capital punishment?' should not be presented as the topic for all of your learners, or indeed, for a specific set, or group of learners. The danger of such an approach is that the content of Part 1 is likely to be very similar, and this will impact on the range of questions available in Part 2. The most serious consequence could be plagiarism.

Teachers should advise on the suitability of topics or themes, but must **not** be involved in the preparation of material for the individual task.

Task setting and differentiation

As learners are able to choose their own topics, there is also an opportunity to differentiate by task-setting. You may guide more able learners, for example, to aim high and choose topics which are more sophisticated, more demanding, and have a very specific focus – such topics often allow stronger candidates to develop their responses more effectively.

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Delivery modes

You should encourage your learners to make their Part 1 presentations livelier by perhaps incorporating creative presentational styles. For example, if candidates wish to talk about a hobby, we suggest that they find a creative way of doing this through a different kind of delivery. The quality of Part 1 might be improved if learners perhaps focused on the idea of an 'intelligent' audience, that they wish to inform, entertain or even intrigue. There is certainly scope for alternative approaches to Part 1 – e.g. taking up a 'voice'. For example, where learners wish to speak about travel or sport, they could speak in the role of a tour guide, or indeed as if they were their favourite sports star. A dramatic monologue, created by the candidate, would be an interesting approach if literature is drawn upon.

A wide range of possibilities exist for the delivery of the Individual Task. Examples include:

- a standard informative presentation
- a talk, expressing viewpoints and opinions
- a monologue, perhaps in character (as an empathic piece)
- a public speech, perhaps of the persuasive type
- a 'pros and cons' piece
- a news report
- a documentary-style report
- a narrative, perhaps with anecdotes
- a poem written by the candidate, accompanied by a brief commentary
- an original piece based on, and expanding upon a literary text

Learners sometimes attempt to use techniques such as addressing the listener and rhetorical questions. Such techniques can be effective but care should be taken in implementing these devices to ensure consistency and impact.

Use of notes in the test

Remind learners that they may prepare a 'cue card' (of postcard size or one PowerPoint slide) to bring into the examination room to remind them of the main points they wish to make. The cue card/slide should contain a list of key points, not continuous sentences. Candidates may write their points on one side of the cue card only.

Candidates may also use a limited quantity of illustrative material, which may include maps, diagrams, statistics and pictures. A script is **not** allowed. Dictionaries may be used to prepare the individual task, but they may **not** be taken into the test.

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Practice topics and activities

Practice topics and activities can be integrated into your schemes of work. For example, you may be studying crime and the law. You may wish to ask learners to deliver a presentation to the class about their views on whether there should be more policing on the streets or not, or whether the use of CCTV cameras should be increased or decreased or not. Questions from the audience, their classmates, could serve as useful practice for responding to questions in Part 2 of the test.

Please note that such practice presentations must not be the same presentation given for the Speaking and Listening Test.

2.2 Teacher and learner guidelines

Learner guidelines:

- The learner should use material which is original, created by the learner, or material which has been heavily adapted by the learner. This is particularly relevant in the case of material drawn from other sources.
- The learner should choose interesting content. If the topic is interesting, it is more likely that presentation of it will be lively and attractive.
- The learner should aim to use a wide variety of language devices to carefully capture the audience's attention.
- The learner should prepare for the environment of the test. A learner who arrives for the test and completes an Individual Task lacking in prior preparation is unlikely to perform as well as one who has prepared for the moment.
- The learner should enjoy the experience. The format of this oral task encourages a relaxed atmosphere. If the learner can convey confidence, the task is likely to be completed more successfully.

Teacher guidelines:

- Allow your learners to source their own material.
- Advise your learners on the suitability of topics or themes.
- Teach language devices in general, inviting learners to explore and experiment with devices which they feel suit their own abilities and styles.
- Enjoy the experience. Your enjoyment will help place the learners at ease.

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

3.1 The structure of the Speaking and Listening Test

Rubric

There are two parts to the Speaking and Listening Test. In Part 1, candidates present an individual task. This is a formal presentation. In Part 2, candidates answer spoken questions.

There is no question paper for the test. The test is **audio recorded** for **all** candidates within a set speaking test period. Candidates must take the Speaking and Listening Test **once** only.

Part 1 Individual Task (approximately 4–5 minutes) (20 marks)

The candidate delivers a formal presentation of approximately 4–5 minutes, speaking **on a single topic or theme**. The class may be present as an audience.

The presentation should be continuous. Teachers should only interrupt to prompt candidates who are finding it difficult to continue or to begin Part 2 if candidates show no signs of finishing after about 5½ minutes.

Part 2 Questions (approximately 4–5 minutes) (20 marks)

The individual task leads into spoken questions from the teacher/examiner about the candidate's chosen topic or theme.

Timings

The timings of the two parts of the test are therefore set and are not a guideline but a rubric. As such, all tests are expected to run between 8 and 10 minutes. However, we appreciate that Part 1 is not fully in the teacher's control and may run for 2 or 3 minutes – these short Part 1s should be addressed by applying the assessment criteria.

In Part 2, we expect all candidates to be given to 5 minutes for discussion.

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

3.2 Part 2: Asking appropriate questions

Differentiation and scaffolding

It is good practice to begin with an opening question which is accessible and which allows the candidate to feel at ease as this part of the test begins.

It is just as important that as the discussion develops you scaffold the questioning, asking questions which are more demanding and sophisticated. For example, if the topic in Part 1 is 'the money wasted on space programmes', a scaffolded series of questions could operate like this:

- What about going into space yourself? [you draw out the candidate's view on the subject]
- What about the experiences of people who have been to the moon? [empathy]
- Can you think of any benefits of the space programme in the past? [working with the opposing view]
- Which one area *would you* rather spend the money on? [try to use this to argue that research into space programmes impacts on other areas, e.g. medical advances].
- I think that the future of the planet lies in outer space – what do you think of that? [a suitable moment to propose your view to assess the response]
- What do you think of the suggestion that governments only spend money on space as a competition to perhaps get a human to Mars first? [higher order thinking required]

Depending on the responses to earlier questions, you may decide not to use the last two questions which deal with more abstract matters.

You will also of course need to be guided by the content covered in Part 1 to ensure that fresh content is incorporated into Part 2. Expanding on the topic and expressing the topic in different ways are assessment criteria for part of the test.

While some tangential discussion is allowed, it must relate to the topic. Questions which take candidates into general discussion, or other topics, should not be used.

You may wish to consider Bloom's revised taxonomy for learning in scaffolding Part 2 of the test.

Avoiding predictability in the questions

We encourage examiners to be clear about the nature of the topics of their candidates a little while beforehand, and to begin thinking about suitable questions. This is a sensible approach if you are examining candidates who are not familiar to you. It is imperative, however, that any questions you plan to use in the test are not shared with the learner before the test.

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The discussion should be spontaneous. There should be no sense of candidates responding to questions which they already know. However, we realise that some candidates will pre-prepare responses to questions that they have predicted. As with Part 1 of the test, candidates should not rely on memorising prepared material. If you feel this is happening, then please adjust your questioning to generate spontaneous responses.

Under no circumstances should an examiner use a very specific planned question which has been used or practised in the classroom.

3.3 Applying the assessment criteria

Best fit

The aim is to try to locate an achievement band initially, and you may have to apply the 'best fit' approach for candidates who range across two bands. Once you have decided on a band, you then decide whether a candidate is at the top, the middle, or at the lower end of the band and assign marks accordingly. This principle applies to both parts of the test and both criteria grid tables. The total mark for the test is divided into 20 marks for Speaking in Part 1 (Individual Task), and 10 marks for Speaking and 10 marks for Listening in Part 2 (Questions).

Part 1 Individual Task

In addition to the criteria, please consider the length of this part of the test. The rubric stipulates 4–5 minutes and the objective therefore is for the candidate to plan for this. For example, 'full and well-organised' use of content cannot be applied to a talk which is over 6 minutes long, and the longer the talk is the less organised it becomes. You should intercede at just over 5 minutes and begin Part 2, but you will have noted that the candidate has not controlled his/her individual task within the parameters and registered that this has had an impact on which achievement band is considered.

Part 1s which are short, or indeed very short, are also not likely to achieve the higher bands. A short individual task can be regarded as one which is under 3 minutes, and a very short task will be under 2 minutes. It is likely that Band 4 will best describe this scenario but other factors will of course impact on your final judgment.

It is clear from the other sub-criteria that this is test of the ability to use spoken language: delivery, language devices (of which there may be many), and accuracy of spoken English (e.g. grammar, structures, punctuation).

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

Band descriptors for Component 3, Part 1 – Individual task (20 marks)

Band 5	17–20 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full and well organised use of content.• Lively delivery.• Employs a wide range of language devices (e.g. tone, irony, emphasis) accurately and sometimes eloquently.• Appropriate and accurate use of language throughout.
Band 4	13–16 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sound use of content.• Delivery may occasionally be stilted.• Employs a good range of language devices (e.g. tone, irony, emphasis) soundly.• Mainly appropriate and accurate use of language.
Band 3	9–12 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate use of content.• Delivery is secure but at times unimaginative.• Language devices (e.g. tone, irony, emphasis) are used safely and appropriately.• Often appropriate and accurate use of language, but some inaccuracy may be present.
Band 2	5–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content is thin or perhaps inconsistently used.• Delivery is not secure.• Limited employment of language devices (e.g. tone, irony, emphasis) with some inaccuracy.• Some appropriate use of language, but with some inaccuracy.
Band 1	1–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content is mostly undeveloped and/or very thin.• Delivery is weak.• Not able to use language devices (e.g. tone, irony, emphasis) or devices used with serious error.• Language is not used appropriately, or is used with serious inaccuracy.
Band 0	0 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not meet the above criteria.

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

Part 2 Questions

The timing of this part of the test is under your control. The dialogue should last between 4–5 minutes. You will do your best to ensure that the full time is given to more reticent candidates, or lower ability candidates, by re-phrasing questions and posing tangential questions which match the needs of the candidate.

The skill of listening is not a passive skill. It is assessed entirely by the ability of the candidate to take note of what he/she has heard and to respond as well as possible, trying to extend the response. If you feel a candidate is not extending appropriately, given the question asked, you may wish to intercede and ask another question.

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

Band descriptors for Component 3, Part 2 – Questions (20 marks)

For Part2, record separate marks for each category (Speaking and Listening).

Speaking			Listening		
Band 5	9–10 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extends the subject matter. • Appropriate and accurate use of language throughout. 	Band 5	9–10 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions fully and in detail, confidently and sometimes enthusiastically.
Band 4	7–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses the subject matter competently. • Mainly appropriate and accurate use of language. 	Band 4	7–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions appropriately and in some detail.
Band 3	5–6 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses the subject matter adequately. • Often appropriate and accurate use of language, but some inaccuracy may be present. 	Band 3	5–6 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions adequately, but may miss opportunities to provide further detail.
Band 2	3–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses some relevant ideas but with some inconsistency. • Some appropriate use of language, but with some inaccuracy. 	Band 2	3–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions in a limited way.
Band 1	1–2 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses simple facts and ideas. • Language is not used appropriately, or is used with serious inaccuracy. 	Band 1	1–2 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to questions simply, or is unable to respond.
Band 0	0 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not meet the above criteria. 	Band 0	0 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not meet the above criteria.

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

3.4 Logistical considerations

Ideally, a Centre would use a single examiner to make it easier to keep to a common standard. However, Centres with large numbers of candidates will need to use additional examiners.

The logistics of conducting all of the tests will therefore depend on:

- how many candidates there are
- how many teachers are going to work as examiners
- how many days you wish to use in recording all of the tests.

Cambridge recommends that a single teacher should examine approximately 30 candidates and therefore two teachers would share the examining for between 30 and 60 candidates. Each Centre will need to decide the most effective approach given the considerations above.

Assessments for all candidates are completed and audio recorded within a set speaking test period. Teachers must treat this component as a non-coursework speaking test and must read this information in conjunction with the relevant sections of the *Cambridge Handbook* and the *Cambridge Administrative Guide*. These documents are available at www.cie.org.uk

The test is **audio recorded** for **all** candidates.

3.5 Practical aspects of managing the tests

You have the option to conduct the tests in front of your class or as a one-to-one in a suitably quiet location. If the class is chosen as an audience, they must be passive and silent and it must be a formal setting. They are listeners only and must not engage in Part 2; the interaction is therefore only between the learner (candidate) and the teacher (examiner).

You will need to be the judge of whether speaking in front of the class benefits learners, or whether some learners might be disadvantaged by this and are likely to be better served in a one-to-one situation. A second person is allowed to be in the room in these circumstances but he/she must not take part in the test as a second examiner, so he/she must not ask any questions.

3.6 Coordination of examiners and internal moderation

Where more than one teacher is assessing candidates, arrangements need to be made for internal moderation. It may be necessary, due to the number of candidates, for several teachers to be involved in the conduct and assessment of the tests.

Section 3: Conducting the Speaking and Listening Test

Internal moderation is more than just comparing the approach to marking of different examiners. It also assumes that there has been some prior coordination among teachers in terms of ensuring that the tests are being conducted in the same way by all of the examiners. For example, that the timings are consistent and Part 2 is approached with the same objectives.

It is sensible, therefore, for an English department to appoint a person to oversee the tests (usually the Head of Department), and to manage the administration of the tests from the planning stages through to the submission of final marks to Cambridge. This person is known as the Internal Moderator.

We recommend a training session takes place amongst members of the department before the test so that all of the examining team conducts the test in a similar manner. A key role of the Internal Moderator is to ensure that the approach to assessment has been consistent, and this will probably involve meeting as a team and listening again to candidates' recordings. We recommend that you prioritise candidates who:

- are clustered at the top of the range of marks
- are in the mid-ranges
- are at the lowest end of the mark range
- any candidate who requires a 'second opinion' (see below).

When conducting a test, an examiner will come to an initial impression of a candidate's performance and will probably note down a mark which seems appropriate. Many examiners keep a few rough 'first impression' notes discreetly while listening to Part 1 of the test and add to these at the end of Part 2. It is good practice for an examiner to highlight a candidate who has perhaps been difficult to assess and to return to this candidate later, perhaps during an internal moderation session.

We advise against taking notes and recording marks during Part 2 of the examination. You are reminded that candidates must not be given their mark, or indeed, made aware in any way of their performance levels.

Section 4: Other considerations

4.1 External moderation

It is essential that you complete the Speaking and Listening Test Summary Form for all candidates. This is the form which records the marks for each criterion for each candidate. Without this form, Cambridge will not be able to carry out external moderation. We remind you that it is the teacher/examiner that fills out the form for the candidates examined and not another colleague.

The external moderator will complete a feedback form for your Centre once external moderation has taken place.

There are three key areas that will be commented upon in the report:

- the choice of topics for Part 1: Individual Task
- the manner in which the Individual Tasks have been delivered
- the appropriateness of the discussions/dialogue in Part 2.

You will also be advised of whether your marks have been accepted or if there have been adjustments. If the latter, we will state where and why these have been made.

A further section will report to you on your administration of the test with regard to the quality and presentation of the recordings, the clarity of the documentation provided, and any inconsistencies which require addressing.

4.2 Principal Moderator report

The Principal Moderator also produces a report for teachers which indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the performance of the whole cohort for a particular examination series. This is available on Teacher Support at <https://teachers.cie.org.uk> and offers feedback in these key areas:

- Key messages to Centres – specific areas, common to a large number of Centres where a course of action is provided.
- Topics – the report will provide a list of well-chosen Part1 topics that allowed for focused discussion in Part 2.
- Part 1 – was there sufficient variety in approaches? What constituted good/strong individual tasks?

What were the common elements in weaker ones?

Section 4: Other considerations

- Part 2 – how well did examiners extend and expand the topics/themes? Were the candidates aware of their expected role in developing the discussions? Did both parties generally stay on task?
- Messages relating to assessment – to include observations made regarding trends of lenient and/or severe marking, and to offer further clarification of the application of the assessment criteria.

We strongly recommend that you obtain the report written by the Principal Moderator from the previous series and share this with colleagues administering the tests at the planning stages, ideally some months ahead of the tests.

4.3 Digital recording and presentation of the recordings

The use of modern, digital recording equipment is strongly recommended, to produce higher quality recordings, but also allows for the easy transfer of all of the recordings as individual files to be burned onto a CD/DVD or, preferably, onto a USB drive.

Separate tracks should be created, and each track should be re-named with the candidate's name and candidate number. Another advantage of using digital recording and creating audio files is that the school will have a back-up of all candidate recordings should Cambridge need replacement files.

When sending in CDs/DVDs, please ensure that a suitable cover or case is included to protect the discs in transit. Cambridge is not able to release candidates' marks unless external moderation has taken place, so a broken disc for example, could potentially slow down the release of marks while a replacement disc is sought. USB drives tend to be more reliable in this respect.

Please remember that all candidates must be recorded. If a candidate does not wish to be recorded, please contact Cambridge directly in plenty of time before the test, to discuss this situation.

Cambridge International Examinations
1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU, United Kingdom
tel: +44 1223 553554 fax: +44 1223 553558
email: info@cie.org.uk www.cie.org.uk

