

Assessing Speaking Performance – Level A2

Examiners and speaking assessment in the A2 Key for Schools exam

Speaking tests are conducted by trained examiners. The quality assurance of Speaking Examiners (SEs) is managed by Team Leaders (TLs) who are in turn responsible to a Professional Support Leader (PSL) who is the professional representative of Cambridge Assessment English for the Speaking tests in a given country or region.

All of the examiners (PSLs, TLs and SEs) must prove each year, through a certification process, that they are competent to assess. In addition, they are regularly monitored during live testing sessions.

Although candidates take the test in pairs or groups of three, throughout the test they are assessed on their individual performance and not in relation to each other. They are awarded marks by two examiners: an *assessor* and an *interlocutor*.

The interlocutor awards a mark for the performance as a whole, using the Global Achievement scale.

The assessor awards marks for three individual criteria:

- Grammar and Vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Interactive Communication

How can I use the assessment scales?

Examiners use the A2 Level assessment scales to decide which marks to give candidates taking the A2 Key for Schools Speaking test. Using the scales yourself during classroom speaking practice tasks will help you to:

- analyse your students' strengths and weaknesses when they do A2 Key for Schools Speaking tasks
- form an impression of how ready your students are to take the Speaking test

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The assessment scales

The A2 Key for Schools assessment scales are divided into six bands from 0 to 5 with 0 being the lowest and 5 the highest. Descriptors for each criterion are provided for bands 1, 3 and 5 and indicate what a candidate is expected to demonstrate at each band. A2 Key for Schools is at Level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the descriptors for band 3 and above generally indicate performance of at least A2 level.

A2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations.	Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	Maintains simple exchanges. Requires very little prompting and support.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>		
3	Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms. Uses appropriate vocabulary to talk about everyday situations.	Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features.	Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty. Requires prompting and support.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>		
1	Shows only limited control of a few grammatical forms. Uses a vocabulary of isolated words and phrases.	Has very limited control of phonological features and is often unintelligible.	Has considerable difficulty maintaining simple exchanges. Requires additional prompting and support.
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		

As you look through the scales, it may help to highlight words which make one band different from another.

For example, under Grammar and Vocabulary, the basic focus of the first bulleted descriptor at Band 3 is the same as at Band 1: the control of grammatical forms. However, at Band 3 'sufficient' replaces 'only limited' – *Shows sufficient control*, and the range of expected forms has been extended from *a few* to *simple grammatical forms* in general.