



Independent Schools
Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 13+

LISTENING AND SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

1. Distribution

Schools/centres will receive papers and examiner's mark sheets for each candidate, a copy of the examiner's instructions and one pre-recorded CD per 15 candidates. Heads should check on receipt of the packets that there are enough papers for the candidates listed. The packets of examination papers should remain **unopened** in a secure place until the end of the last teaching session, when Heads should distribute the papers to the examiners.

2. Listening

Candidates hear the texts twice. They must answer the questions on the answer sheet provided which will be marked by the senior school. Dictionaries are not allowed. A transcript of the pre-recorded CD is provided for the examiner's use.

3. Speaking (6 minutes + 10 minutes' preparation time)

Candidates may use a dictionary during the preparation time but may not use any other reference material or make notes. They should be advised to focus on the role play for at least three of the ten minutes' preparation time.

The examination consists of two elements:

Role-play situation (about 2 minutes)

Three role plays are provided and the examiner must choose one of them for each candidate. The examiner may distribute the role plays in any order, but should ensure that over the whole examination period all three are used more or less equally. Additional guidance is given on page 3.

Prepared topics (2-4 minutes)

This section consists of two short conversations between the examiner and the candidate. In each case the candidate is allowed to speak uninterrupted for up to 30 seconds and then is asked at least four questions about the topic.

The topic for conversation A is chosen and prepared in advance by the candidate. It may be *any* topic covered by the syllabus and the examiner will need to be aware of the candidate's choice prior to the examination.

The topic for conversation B is selected by the examiner and given to the candidate at the beginning of the preparation time. It must be one of the four topics specified in the syllabus (*house, home, daily routine and chores; free-time and holiday activities; life and work at school; personal description, family, friends and pets*). It must, of course, be different from the topic chosen by the candidate for conversation A.

Additional guidance is given on page 4.

4. Recording the speaking examination

Schools may use cassettes or CDs, or use digital equipment for recording candidates. Junior schools are expected to liaise with senior schools about the most appropriate method. An

operator for the recorder will be allowed in the examination room with the examiner. Equipment should be tested in advance. The microphone should be turned towards the candidate and all extraneous noises excluded if possible.

For any one senior school, the examiner should record the name of the junior school at the beginning of the cassette/CD/digital file, and each candidate's name as he/she begins the examination. The whole of a candidate's examination must fit on one side of the cassette.

Pauses due to hesitation in the candidate's delivery of answers must remain on the recording. If machines are fitted with a PAUSE button, it is better to use this rather than the STOP control during the change over of candidates.

5. Action after the examination

Signed speaking examination mark sheets and listening examination papers for each candidate should be forwarded to senior schools, together with the recordings. These should be sent by next-day delivery or courier by the last day of the speaking examination period. Packets containing speaking examination cassettes/CDs must be clearly marked **French, German or Spanish Speaking**, and include the sender's name and address. Senior schools will undertake to return cassettes/CDs **only** when a return label has been supplied. Emails containing digital speaking files should include all relevant details, as for cassettes and CDs.

6. Action by senior schools

- (a) One copy of the examiner's instructions and candidate's papers for assessment purposes, together with a moderator's report form, will be sent to all senior schools at least seven days before the examination.
- (b) **The moderator's report form should be completed for each junior school** and returned as soon as possible after the test has been moderated. This provides valuable feedback to junior school examiners.
- (c) Senior schools will be responsible for the cost of returning cassettes/CDs to junior schools **only when addressed labels have been supplied.**

Role-play situation

This is probably the most demanding part of the speaking test in that it requires a candidate to respond to a specific stimulus and to communicate a precise piece of information given in English.

- As in the whole of the speaking test, you should never use English.
- The exercise must be introduced in the target language, using the exact wording given in the examiner's notes.
- Often the tasks are open-ended and where this is indicated in the script (... etc.) a range of answers will be possible.
- One task will always require the candidate to answer an unprepared question (indicated by an exclamation mark on the examination paper).
- If the candidate does not understand an item (including the unprepared one), you may repeat it, but if the candidate still does not understand, you must go on to the next item.
- The question for the unprepared item should not be rephrased.
- If you feel that there has been considerable hesitation, a maximum of ½ a mark is to be awarded for the task.
- If a candidate requests a repeat, using appropriate language, and then answers promptly and correctly, he or she should not be penalised.

- The role play is not a translation exercise. Full sentences are not always needed and in some cases the full mark can be scored with an answer consisting of a short phrase or a single word. The mark scheme tells you that *minor* errors are to be tolerated. These might include, for example, an incorrect adjectival agreement or an imprecise verb form. Provided that full communication is achieved and there is no confusion, a candidate should not be penalised for such errors.
- Trust your own judgement and, if in doubt, be generous towards the candidate.
- The graphics are meant to enhance the presentation of the exercise, but the candidate's answer does not necessarily depend on them.

Role-play assessment

Mark (per task)	Completion of tasks
1	Full communication.
$\frac{1}{2}$	Task partly carried out; there may be considerable hesitation.
0	Failure to communicate.

Mark (overall impression)	Quality of language
3	High level of accuracy with no significant errors.
2	Level of language generally good but with a number of errors.
1	Marked weaknesses in the use of language.
0	Little or no effective use of the target language.

Prepared topics

Altogether, the two conversations should last between two and four minutes. Try to ensure that each of them does last for at least one minute. On the other hand, please do not continue significantly beyond the maximum time allowed for this part of the examination. A good candidate should be able to give plenty of evidence of his or her ability within that time.

The intention is to allow the candidate to take the initiative and to show how much he or she can do. It is, of course, very important that the teacher gives the greatest possible opportunity for this to happen. The candidate is allowed up to 30 seconds to speak without interruption, but after that at least four questions must be asked.

Remember that the highest marks are given for:

- good communication
- ready response
- wide range of vocabulary
- good pronunciation

Grammatical accuracy matters, of course, and it is essential for good communication; but it is not the principal criterion by which a candidate's performance is judged. The best candidates

have plenty to say in answer to the questions they are asked and communicate it effectively and convincingly, using a range of tenses.

For Part A, the candidate may choose *any* topic covered by the syllabus. This may be one of the four listed for Part B, but in this case could be limited to a particular part of the topic.

Key points for the examiner

- Striking a balance between candidate and examiner contribution is important.
- Do not say too much.
- As far as possible, make sure that your questions are open-ended. Do not ask too many questions which only require short answers.
- On the other hand, do not allow the whole exercise to become a pupil monologue. The candidate must demonstrate an ability to respond to your questions.
- Try to prevent the candidate from racing through all that he or she knows in the first thirty seconds before you have had a chance to ask questions.

Prepared topic assessment

In both Part A and Part B the following grid should be used.

Mark	Descriptors
8	Excellent: a lot of information communicated; good pronunciation and at least a reasonable attempt at intonation; a high level of accuracy; a range of tenses attempted; opinions and justification offered.
7	Very good communication: ready responses, mainly accurate; a wide range of vocabulary; good pronunciation.
6	Good communication: generally ready responses, though with some hesitation and a number of errors; a good range of vocabulary; a reasonable attempt at pronunciation.
4–5	Satisfactory communication: adequate responses; some hesitation; some significant errors.
3	Limited communication: hesitant and probably with serious errors; prompting required.
2	Very limited communication: very hesitant, with prompting needed; relatively little accurate usage.
0–1	Very weak: little or no communication; not easily understood; much prompting needed.