



COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 13+

LISTENING AND SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

1. Delivery of examination materials

Two weeks before the start of the examination period, prep schools/examination sitting centres will receive the following materials:

Listening: examination papers for each candidate, and one pre-recorded CD/one copy of the Examiner's paper (transcript) per 11 candidates.

Speaking: one set of Speaking Candidate papers/one Examiner's paper per 11 candidates. Speaking Examiner's Marksheets and Speaking Record Sheets should be downloaded from the ISEB website.

On receipt of the packets of examination papers, Heads should check that there are enough papers for the candidates listed. The packets 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

At the start of the examination, candidates are allowed two minutes to read the questions. This time is recorded on the CD, after the instructions.

Candidates hear each text twice, and there is a pause between sections. At the end of the examination there is a further two minutes for completion of the tasks. All pauses are recorded on the CD.

Candidates may make notes or answer the questions at any time.

Dictionaries are not allowed.

A transcript of the recorded material is provided for examiner's use only.

For candidates granted additional time under **access arrangements**, ISEB does not provide separate CDs with extended pauses. However, the invigilator may use the transcript of the recording to determine when to pause the standard CD manually, in order to give candidates extra time to write their answer. The tracks may not be replayed at any stage. The invigilator should allocate the extra time across the test as a whole, and in accordance with the needs of the candidates, up to the maximum extra time for the test.

3. **Speaking** (4 or 6 minutes + 10 minutes' preparation time)

Candidates may use a bilingual dictionary during the preparation time but may not use any other reference material or make any notes.

4. **Recording the speaking examination**

Prep schools may use CDs, memory sticks or any other digital equipment for recording candidates, but are expected to liaise with senior schools about the most appropriate method.

Recording equipment should be tested in advance. The microphone should be turned towards the candidate and all extraneous noises excluded, if possible.

For each individual senior school, the examiner should record the name of the prep school at the beginning of the CD/memory stick/digital file, and each candidate's name as he/she begins the examination.

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

5. **Action after the examination**

Signed speaking examination mark sheets, record 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 media must be clearly marked with the **language** and **level**, and include the sender's name and address. Senior schools will undertake to return media **only** when a return label has been supplied. Emails containing digital speaking files should include all relevant details.

6. **Action by senior schools**

- (a) At least seven days before the examination period, senior schools will receive copies of the Speaking Examiner and Speaking Candidate examination papers for assessment purposes.
- (b) The **moderator's report form should be** downloaded from the ISEB website, **completed for each prep school** and returned as soon as possible after the test has been moderated. This provides valuable feedback to prep school examiners.
- (c) Senior schools will be responsible for the cost of returning recordings to prep schools **only when addressed labels have been supplied.**

FRENCH SPEAKING

Level 1

Prepared topics (1-2 minutes each)

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 some specific, spontaneous questions (approximately 3-4) about the topic, bringing the time for the discussion of both topics to a total of 4 minutes.

The topics for both conversations are chosen and prepared in advance by the candidate. They may be any topic covered by the syllabus (see pages 2 and 4 of the syllabus) and the examiner will need to be aware of the candidate's choices prior to the examination.

Prepared topics assessment

Both discussions are marked out of 10, according to the following descriptors.

Mark	Communication
5	Very good: information presented with confidence.
4	Good: a good amount of information conveyed.
3	Satisfactory: a reasonable amount of information conveyed.
2	Limited: very simple information conveyed.
1	Poor: very little information conveyed.
0	No relevant information conveyed.

Mark	Accuracy and Quality
5	Good accent and range of vocabulary; possible errors in more complex language, but generally accurate.
4	Some errors, but clear message and generally good pronunciation.
3	Generally simple answers and frequent errors, but language more accurate than inaccurate.
2	Very limited vocabulary; short, simple sentences; errors very frequent; comprehension somewhat delayed.
1	Occasional, short phrases; communication often hindered by errors; pronunciation barely understandable.
0	No language produced worthy of credit.

NB: the final mark out of 20 should be scaled up to be out of 25, to have equal weighting with the Listening, Reading and Writing papers, in accordance with the following scale:

20 = 25	16 = 20	12 = 15	8 = 10	4 = 5
19 = 24	15 = 19	11 = 14	7 = 9	3 = 4
18 = 23	14 = 18	10 = 13	6 = 8	2 = 3
17 = 21	13 = 16	9 = 11	5 = 6	1 = 1

Level 2

The examination consists of three sections: a role-play situation; a discussion of one prepared topic and an open, unprepared conversation.

Section 1: Role-play situation (about 2 minutes; 9 marks)

Three role plays are provided, and the examiner must choose any one of them for each candidate. The examiner may distribute the role plays in any order, but should ensure that all three are used more or less equally over the examination session.

The role-play situation requires a candidate to carry out six tasks in the target language, which have been given in English. Candidates should be advised to focus on the role play for at least three of the ten minutes' preparation time.

The role plays may be based on any area of the syllabus, and will be of a transactional or social nature, such as conversations in a shop, at the station, in a café/restaurant etc., or discussing hobbies, school or family etc. with a friend.

The following points are important:

- As in the whole of the speaking test, English should never be used.
- The exercise must be introduced by the examiner in the target language, using the exact wording given in the examiner's script.
- One task in each role play will require the candidate to answer an unprepared question (indicated by the words *Answer the question* on the examination paper).
- The question for the unprepared task must not be rephrased, unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to respond to the original question. However, rephrased questions must not change the nature of the task set.
- Responses to the unprepared question will be open-ended, and therefore a range of appropriate answers will be acceptable. Full sentences in response to the unprepared question are not expected and the full mark can be given for an answer consisting of a short phrase or a single word, if appropriate.
- Each task must be carried out in full. If the candidate is unable to respond to one of the tasks set (including the unprepared question), the examiner should proceed to the next task.
- If 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/she should not be penalised.
- The mark scheme states 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.
- Examiners should trust their own judgement and, if in doubt, be generous towards the candidate.

Role–play assessment

Each role play is marked out of 9, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 6 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the role play.

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.

Section 2: Prepared topic (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

This section consists of a short conversation between the examiner and the candidate.

The topic for discussion is chosen and prepared in advance by the candidate. It may be any topic covered by the syllabus (*see pages 2 and 5 of the syllabus*). The examiner will need to be aware of the candidate's choice prior to the examination.

At the start of this section, the examiner should ask the candidate to introduce the topic in the target language.

The candidate is then allowed up to 30 seconds to speak without interruption, to show what he/she can do. After 30 seconds, the examiner must intervene to ask at least four questions on the topic during the course of the two minutes.

Credit will be given for relevant, spontaneous communication, appropriate response to the questions and accuracy and quality of language, including pronunciation and an ability to use a range of tenses. The examiner should therefore ensure candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the *passé composé*, as well as the present and near future tenses.

The examiner should not continue significantly beyond the maximum time allowed for this part of the examination, to allow ample time for the final section.

Section 3: Open Conversation (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

This section consists of an open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion of any/all of the topics listed in Level 1, which should not overlap with the prepared topic.

The Open Conversation should last the stipulated two minutes for each candidate. With weaker candidates, it may be appropriate to cover a wider range of topics at a more superficial level, but a more able candidate should be able to explore one or two topics in greater depth.

It can be helpful to ease the candidate into the Open Conversation by asking a general 'starter' question relating to a particular topic, for example: 'Tell me a little about your family ...' and allowing him/her to lead the direction of the conversation.

Examiners are encouraged to enable candidates to demonstrate a range of vocabulary and grammar, to develop their responses and to show their fluency and knowledge of the language (including passé composé, as well as the present and near future tenses for access to the highest marks).

Note that the highest marks are given for:

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

Of course, grammatical accuracy matters, 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 and communicate it effectively and convincingly, using a range of tenses.

For **both sections 2 and 3**, the following points are important:

- Striking a balance between candidate and examiner contribution is important.
- The examiner should avoid saying too much, but should not allow the whole exercise to become a pupil monologue; the candidate must also demonstrate an ability to respond to the questions.
- As far as possible, the examiner should make sure that questions are open-ended and avoid asking too many questions which require only short answers.
- However, candidates are expected to give natural replies to questions, so their answers need not be in the form of complete sentences, where a short answer is appropriate.
- The examiner should try to extend the candidate as far as possible, by giving him/her the opportunity to explain and justify his/her opinions.

Prepared topic and Open Conversation assessment

Both sections are marked out of 8, according to the following descriptors. (A best fit policy should be used and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Mark	Descriptor
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, including accurate use of the passé composé, as well as the present and near future tenses; opinions and justification offered; errors may exist but only in the most ambitious language.
7	Very good communication: ready responses, mainly accurate including some successful use of the passé composé and near future, as well as very good use of the present tense; 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. NB a range of tenses is not required.
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.

GERMAN SPEAKING

The examination consists of two elements:

Role-play situation (about 2 minutes)

Three role plays are provided, and the examiner must choose any one of them for each candidate. The examiner may distribute the role plays in any order, but should ensure that all three are used more or less equally over the examination session.

The role-play situation requires a candidate to carry out six tasks in the target language which have been given in English. Candidates should be advised to focus on the role play for at least three of the ten minutes' preparation time.

The role plays may be based on any area of the syllabus, and will be of a transactional or social nature, such as conversations in a shop, at the station, in a café/restaurant etc., or discussing hobbies, school or family etc. with a friend.

The following points are important:

- As in the whole of the speaking test, English should never be used.
- The exercise must be introduced by the examiner in the target language, using the exact wording given in the examiner's script.
- One task in each role play will require the candidate to answer an unprepared question (indicated by the words *Answer the question* on the examination paper).
- The question for the unprepared task must not be rephrased, unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to respond to the original question. However, rephrased questions must not change the nature of the task set.
- Responses to the unprepared question will be open-ended, and therefore a range of appropriate answers will be acceptable. Full sentences in response to the unprepared question are not expected and the full mark can be given for an answer consisting of a short phrase or a single word, if appropriate.
- Each task must be carried out in full. If the candidate is unable to respond to one of the tasks set (including the unprepared question), the examiner should proceed to the next task.
- If 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/she should not be penalised.
- The mark scheme states 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.
- Examiners should trust their own judgement and, if in doubt, be generous towards the candidate.

Role-play assessment

Each role play is marked out of 9, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 6 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the role play.

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 (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 (*see pages 2 and 4 of 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. 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.

Altogether, the two conversations should last between two and four minutes. The examiner should try to ensure that each of them does last for at least one minute. On the other hand, the examiner should 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/she can do. It is, of course, very important that the examiner gives the greatest possible opportunity for this to happen.

Credit will be given for relevant, spontaneous communication, appropriate response to the questions and accuracy and quality of language, including pronunciation and an ability to use a range of tenses.

Note that the highest marks are given for:

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

Of course, grammatical accuracy matters, 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 and communicate it effectively and convincingly, using a range of tenses.

The following points are important:

- Striking a balance between candidate and examiner contribution is important.
- The examiner should avoid saying too much, but should not allow the whole exercise to become a pupil monologue; the candidate must also demonstrate an ability to respond to the questions.
- As far as possible, the examiner should make sure that questions are open-ended and avoid asking too many questions which require only short answers.
- However, candidates are expected to give natural replies to questions, so their answers need not be in the form of complete sentences, where a short answer is appropriate.
- The examiner should try to extend the candidate as far as possible, by giving him/her the opportunity to explain and justify his/her opinions.

Prepared topic assessment

Both discussions are marked out of 8, according to the following descriptors.

Mark	Descriptor
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.

SPANISH SPEAKING

Level 1

Prepared topics (1-2 minutes each)

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 some specific, spontaneous questions (approximately 3-4) about the topic, bringing the time for the discussion of both topics to a total of 4 minutes.

The topics for both conversations are chosen and prepared in advance by the candidate. They may be any topic covered by the syllabus (see pages 2 and 4 of the syllabus) and the examiner will need to be aware of the candidate's choices prior to the examination.

Prepared topics assessment

Both discussions are marked out of 10, according to the following descriptors.

Mark	Communication
5	Very good: information presented with confidence.
4	Good: a good amount of information conveyed.
3	Satisfactory: a reasonable amount of information conveyed.
2	Limited: very simple information conveyed.
1	Poor: very little information conveyed.
0	No relevant information conveyed.

Mark	Accuracy and Quality
5	Good accent and range of vocabulary; possible errors in more complex language, but generally accurate.
4	Some errors, but clear message and generally good pronunciation.
3	Generally simple answers and frequent errors, but language more accurate than inaccurate.
2	Very limited vocabulary; short, simple sentences; frequent errors; comprehension somewhat delayed.
1	Occasional, short phrases; communication often hindered by errors; pronunciation barely understandable.
0	No language produced worthy of credit.

NB: the final mark out of 20 should be scaled up to be out of 25, to have equal weighting with the Listening, Reading and Writing papers, in accordance with the following scale:

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18 = 23	14 = 18	10 = 13	6 = 8	2 = 3
17 = 21	13 = 16	9 = 11	5 = 6	1 = 1

Level 2

The examination consists of three sections: a role-play situation; a discussion of one prepared topic and an open, unprepared conversation.

Section 1: Role-play situation (about 2 minutes; 9 marks)

Three role plays are provided, and the examiner must choose any one of them for each candidate. The examiner may distribute the role plays in any order, but should ensure that all three are used more or less equally over the examination session.

The role-play situation requires a candidate to carry out six tasks in the target language, which have been given in English. Candidates should be advised to focus on the role play for at least three of the ten minutes' preparation time.

The role plays may be based on any area of the syllabus, and will be of a transactional or social nature, such as conversations in a shop, at the station, in a café/restaurant etc., or discussing hobbies, school or family etc. with a friend.

The following points are important:

- As in the whole of the speaking test, English should never be used.
- The exercise must be introduced by the examiner in the target language, using the exact wording given in the examiner's script.
- One task in each role play will require the candidate to answer an unprepared question (indicated by the words *Answer the question* on the examination paper).
- The question for the unprepared task must not be rephrased, unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to respond to the original question. However, rephrased questions must not change the nature of the task set.
- Responses to the unprepared question will be open-ended, and therefore a range of appropriate answers will be acceptable. Full sentences in response to the unprepared question are not expected and the full mark can be given for an answer consisting of a short phrase or a single word, if appropriate.
- Each task must be carried out in full. If the candidate is unable to respond to one of the tasks set (including the unprepared question), the examiner should proceed to the next task.
- If 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/she should not be penalised.
- The mark scheme states 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.
- Examiners should trust their own judgement and, if in doubt, be generous towards the candidate.

Role-play assessment

Each role play is marked out of 9, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 6 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the role play.

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.

Section 2: Prepared topic (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

This section consists of a short conversation between the examiner and the candidate.

The topic for discussion is chosen and prepared in advance by the candidate. It may be any topic covered by the syllabus (*see pages 2 and 5 of the syllabus*). The examiner will need to be aware of the candidate's choice prior to the examination.

At the start of this section, the examiner should ask the candidate to introduce the topic in the target language.

The candidate is then allowed up to 30 seconds to speak without interruption, to show what he/she can do. After 30 seconds, the examiner must intervene to ask at least four questions on the topic during the course of the two minutes.

Credit will be given for relevant, spontaneous communication, appropriate response to the questions and accuracy and quality of language, including pronunciation and an ability to use the present and near future tenses. The examiner should therefore ensure candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the near future tense, as well as the present tense.

The examiner should not continue significantly beyond the maximum time allowed for this part of the examination, to allow ample time for the final section.

Section 3: Open Conversation (about 2 minutes; 8 marks)

This section consists of an open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion of any/all of the topics listed in Level 1, which should not overlap with the prepared topic.

The Open Conversation should last the stipulated two minutes for each candidate. With weaker candidates, it may be appropriate to cover a wider range of topics at a more superficial level, but a more able candidate should be able to explore one or two topics in greater depth.

It can be helpful to ease the candidate into the Open Conversation by asking a general 'starter' question relating to a particular topic, for example: 'Tell me a little about your family ...' and allowing him/her to lead the direction of the conversation.

Examiners are encouraged to enable candidates to demonstrate a range of vocabulary and grammar, to develop their responses and to show their fluency and knowledge of the language (including the present and near future tenses for access to the highest marks).

Note that the highest marks are given for:

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

Of course, grammatical accuracy matters, 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 and communicate it effectively and convincingly, using a range of tenses.

For **both sections 2 and 3**, the following points are important:

- Striking a balance between candidate and examiner contribution is important.
- The examiner should avoid saying too much, but should not allow the whole exercise to become a pupil monologue; the candidate must also demonstrate an ability to respond to the questions.
- As far as possible, the examiner should make sure that questions are open-ended and avoid asking too many questions which require only short answers.
- However, candidates are expected to give natural replies to questions, so their answers need not be in the form of complete sentences, where a short answer is appropriate.
- The examiner should try to extend the candidate as far as possible, by giving him/her the opportunity to explain and justify his/her opinions.

Prepared topic and Open Conversation assessment

Both sections are marked out of 8, according to the following descriptors. (A best fit policy should be used and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Mark	Descriptor
8	Excellent: a lot of information communicated; good pronunciation and at least a reasonable attempt at intonation; a high level of accuracy; generally accurate use of the present and near future tenses; opinions and justification offered; errors may exist, but only in the most ambitious language.
7	Very good communication: ready responses, mainly accurate; both present and near future tenses attempted; 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. NB a range of tenses is not required.
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.