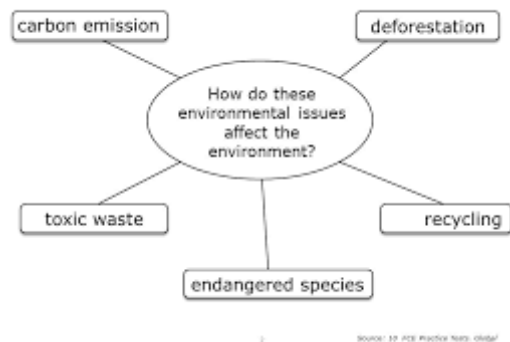




3. Collaborative task



This part of the exam is called the Collaborative Task. To collaborate means to work as a team. Imagine you had a discussion with a friend or work colleague in your own language - you wouldn't talk for two minutes while the other person said nothing (at least I hope you wouldn't) and you would listen to what the other person said and be interested in it (at least I hope you would).

So - treat your partner like an EQUAL - give them equal chance to speak and be prepared to agree and disagree with them in a respectful way.

Have you ever played chess with a clock? You make your move, hit the button, your clock stops ticking and your partner's clock starts. It would be very useful to have one of these clocks while practicing this part of the exam. At the end you should both have spoken about the same amount of time. (Of course 5 or 10 seconds difference is no big deal.)

Another way to think of it is like a tennis practice - you hit the ball to your partner with the goal of playing for as long as possible.

You will get a good grade if you ask questions and react to what the other student says.

You will get a bad grade if you are selfish, don't listen, or try to monopolise the conversation.

4. What if my partner is shy or aggressive?

There's normally no need to worry about this.



First, you can find a speaking test partner and register for the exam together. Then you will know who your speaking test partner will be. Problem solved.

Second, if you do end up with an aggressive speaking partner, you will have lots of time in parts 1, 2, and 4 to show your speaking skills. In part 3, try your best to politely interrupt and to be sociable - the examiners will notice and you will gain points while the other student is losing them.

If your partner is too shy, just give them opportunities to talk as normal, wait a few seconds for an answer, then answer them yourself if needed. You know - exactly what you would do in your own language.

5. I can't talk about 5 points in detail in 2 minutes!

True! And you don't have to. In fact, you probably shouldn't. It's much better to have a really good, deep conversation about three of the topics than to race through and mention five. The good discussions in my classes tend to hit 3 or 4 topics.

6. Help! We don't agree about anything!

it doesn't matter - it's all about opinions. There are no right or wrong answers, only good or bad discussions. If you disagree, explain why. Try to persuade your partner that your way is right. But also, when your partner says something good, react. 'Oh, that's a good point, I hadn't thought of that.'

Cambridge are only interested in the quality of the discussion and the quality of your language (your grammar and vocabulary). You won't lose points if you say something crazy like:

“We shouldn't build new parks because tourists hate green spaces. We should build more concrete buildings if we want to attract more tourists.”

In fact, those sentences are relevant to the task (providing parks is one of the 5 topics) and there's some good vocabulary.

7. What's the best way to do it?

- LISTEN to your partner. Don't just wait for your turn to speak. Be interested in what they are saying and politely agree or disagree. If you disagree, try to persuade them to change their idea, but don't spend too long doing that.
- Refer back to things you already said.
- Say a couple of sentences then ask a question. Never answer your own questions!
- Try to look at your speaking partner more than the paper.
- Some students turn their chair a little bit - towards the other student. This helps them to remember who they should talk to.

8. What are some useful phrases I should learn?

Maybe this helpful article will come in handy?



[FCE Speaking Test Part 3 Useful Phrases \(with examples\)](#)

Useful phrases for part 3 of the FCE Speaking test, with examples of how to use them.

Feb 29, 2016

9. Got any more tips?

- Don't introduce the task. There's really no point saying 'So, Bob, today we have to talk about attracting more tourists to our town.' Everyone in the room knows what the task is! Repeating it is just a waste of time.
 - In part 1, don't talk about what the most important or best thing is. That is normally the question for part 2. If you look at the example question at the top of this page, it says 'Why would these ideas attract more tourists to the town?' Not 'what's the best way to attract more tourists'. It's a very important difference! Always focus on what the question says.
 - If your speaking partner is talking about the wrong thing, bring them back to the task. Say, 'that's very interesting but we should talk about why more tourists would come'.
-

10. What about the second part?

Everything we said about the first part (2 minutes) applies to the second part (1 minute). You have to take turns, respond to your partner, agree and disagree, and so on.

The only difference is the task. It's normally something like 'now decide which of the 5 topics is the most important'.

DON'T start by saying what you think is the most important!

This may seem crazy at first, but look:

- I think providing parks will bring the most tourists because they will have a place to relax, especially in Summer.
- I totally agree.

END CONVERSATION

There's another 45 seconds left! What are you going to discuss? Nothing useful, that's for sure!

How about this:

- I think the answer definitely isn't putting up security cameras. It might make some people feel safer but mostly it's just ugly and maybe people will think the city isn't so safe if there is such a need for cameras. What do you think?

- I totally agree. I think tourists don't want the NSA watching everything they do.

[Great! Now we have 40 seconds left.]

- I think building a nightclub would bring some tourists but would put off some others.

- Yes, especially older ones. The best solution has to be something that's right for teenagers, their parents, and the elderly. Right?

- Absolutely.

- So I think maybe providing parks will bring the most tourists because they will have a place to relax, especially in Summer.

- And as you said, it's something for people of all ages.

You see how starting with something that isn't the best leads to a better conversation?

TOP TIP

Refer back to what you said in part 1.

'Well, as Bob said earlier, the answer definitely isn't putting up security cameras.'

Getting Started

Which one shall we start with?

What do you think, Bob?

Bob, I think you know a lot about [topic]. What's your opinion on it?

