

CAMBRIDGE EXAM PREPARATION

# HOW TO GET A BAND 5 IN SPEAKING

FIRST CERTIFICATE EXAM (B2)

## What Makes a Good Speaking Test?

In the B2 First exam, students are marked . Can you guess what they are? Brainstorm with a classmate and write down some ideas.

*fluency*

*use of complex sentences*

Now, match your ideas to the correct assessment criterion:

Grammar and Vocabulary	
Interactive Communication	
Discourse Manangement	
Pronunciation	


What are the differences between a Band 3 (a passing mark) and Band 5 (the best possible mark on a Cambridge Speaking exam)? Write some ideas below:

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Now, let's take a look at some differences:

# 1. Grammar & Vocabulary




Band 3	Band 5
Shows good control of <b>simple</b> grammar; <b>attempts</b> some complex forms	Uses a <b>range of simple and some complex</b> forms <b>accurately</b>
Uses <b>appropriate vocabulary</b> for familiar topics	Uses a <b>range</b> of vocabulary <b>appropriately and with flexibility</b>
<p><b>Activity:</b>  <b>Compare these two answers</b> to the question:  <i>“Do you enjoy going to the cinema?”</i>            Underline the complex grammar and highlight topic-specific vocabulary.</p>	
<p><i>I like going to the cinema. I go once a month.            The last film I saw was interesting and funny</i></p>	<p><i>I really enjoy going to the cinema, especially when a new action movie is released. Although I don't have much free time, I try to catch the latest films, as it helps me unwind after a long week</i></p>

**Now you try it!! Try to answer these questions:**

<p>Do you enjoy going to parties?</p> 	<p>Use these words:</p> <p><i>Small talk, life of the party, I can't deny...</i></p>
<p>Tell us about a shop that you go to often</p> 	<p>Answer using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complex sentence</li> <li>• Two expressions related to shopping</li> </ul>

## 2. Discourse Management

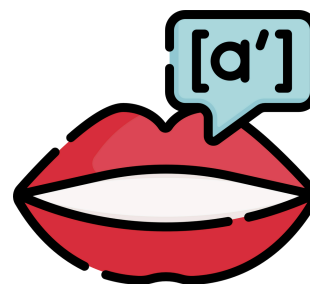


Band 3	Band 5
Produces relevant responses with <b>some repetition or hesitation</b>	Produces <b>extended, well-organised, and relevant</b> answers with <b>few pauses</b>
May use <b>basic linking words</b>	Uses a <b>range of cohesive devices</b> (e.g. <i>however, on the other hand, as a result</i> )
<b>Activity:</b> Respond to the question: <i>"Do you prefer city life or country life?"</i>	
<b>Band 3:</b> <i>I think the city is nice... er... there's things to do and shops. But... I also like the countryside because it's quiet.</i>	<b>Band 5:</b> <i>While I appreciate the excitement of city life, I prefer living in the countryside because it offers peace and a closer connection to nature. In fact, I often go hiking at weekends, which helps me relax</i>

**Now you try it!! Try to complete these tasks:**

<b>Task:</b> Improve <b>the Band 3</b> answer above by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Removing hesitation</li> <li>● Adding linking phrases (e.g. <i>while, because, in fact</i>)</li> </ul>	Improved answer:
<b>Now try to answer for yourself:</b> Respond to the question: <i>"Do you prefer city life or country life?"</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use at least two linking phrases (<i>however, in the meantime</i>)</li> <li>● Now, try to repeat your answer twice, with no hesitations!</li> </ul>	Your answer:

### 3. Pronunciation



Band 3	Band 5
Intelligible but with <b>occasional strain</b>	Is <b>clear and natural</b> , with <b>appropriate intonation and stress</b>
Some issues with individual sounds	<b>Accurate</b> pronunciation of individual sounds and stress patterns

#### Mark the stress and intonation.

Underline the **stressed words** and draw arrows to show **intonation** (↘ for falling, ↗ for rising). Then practise saying them with a partner (or record yourself):

1. What do you do in your free time?
2. I love spending time outdoors.
3. Do you want to go to the cinema tonight?
4. I usually go running in the evening.
5. Have you ever been to London?
6. I didn't really enjoy that film.

**Now write three of your own sentences related to these topics:**

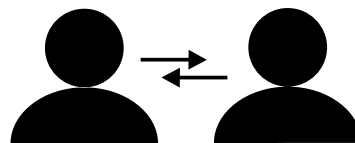
● Your free time	
● A recent conversation	
● Plans for the weekend	


#### Instructions:

- Underline the stressed words.
- Use arrows to show the intonation.

**Now practice saying the sentences out loud!**

## 4. Interactive Communication

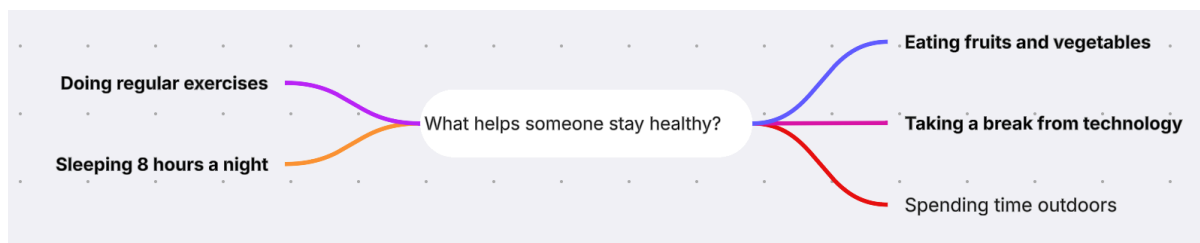


Band 3	Band 5
Responds but <b>relies on the partner</b> to move the conversation forward	Initiates, <b>develops ideas</b> , responds naturally, and <b>negotiates reach a conclusion</b>
<p><b>Activity:</b> Work in pairs and compare the answers to this <b>Part 3</b> task: <b>Discuss</b> which of these inventions has had the biggest impact on people's lives: <i>the internet, the mobile phone, the car, electricity, or television.</i></p> <p>What elements do you see in a Band 3 answer? How is it different from Band 5?</p>	
<p><b>Band 3:</b></p> <p>I think the internet is good. What do you think? Yeah, mobile phones are good too</p>	<p><b>Band 5:</b></p> <p>Personally, I'd say the internet has revolutionised how we work and communicate. What do you think about mobile phones — do you think they're equally important?</p>
<p><b>Now try to complete the Part 3 Task with a partner!</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask at least two follow-up questions</li> <li>• Develop your partner's ideas using phrases like "<i>That's a good point, and I'd add...</i>"</li> </ul>

## Cambridge B2 First – Speaking Part 3 Practice Task

**Instructions:** Student A and Student B, look at the task below and talk to each other about **which of these habits can most help someone stay healthy.**

You have **two minutes** to discuss the options and then decide **which one is the most important overall**



## Responding to your partner; Useful Language

I'd say that...	I see what you mean	That's a good point, but...	That's interesting!
How about you?	We both seem to think that...	True, and I'd add that...	Yes, exactly!

**Write a response to these ideas, using some of the expressions from the box and your own ideas:**

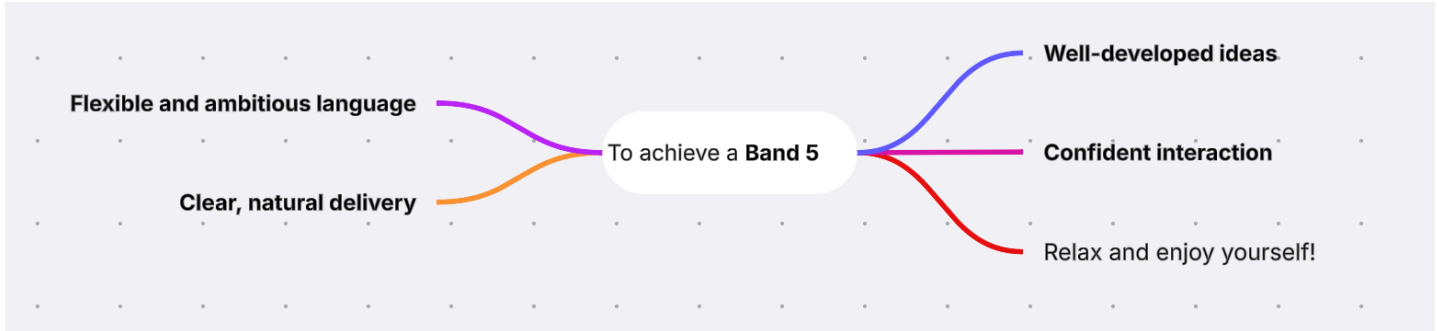
I think doing regular exercise is the most important because it helps both your body and your mind	
Spending time outdoors is great, but it really depends on where you live and how much free time you have	
Eating fruit and vegetables sounds easy, but some people just don't like the taste or don't know how to cook them	
Sleeping well can make a huge difference to your energy and focus — more than people realise.	
I'm not sure taking breaks from technology really affects your physical health, though it might help with stress	

## Follow-up question (after 2-minute discussion):

**Which of these would be the easiest for most people to start doing, and why?**

Shall we say that...?	So, do we agree on...?	I think we've decided that...	We both seem to think that...
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# Final Tips:



## Answer Key (Answers will vary)

### What Makes a Good Speaking Test?

<i>fluency</i>	<i>use of complex sentences</i>	asking follow-up questions
speaking without too many pauses	using advanced vocabulary	intonation
using linking words	negotiating	using correct verb tenses
stressing the correct syllable	using examples	

<b>Grammar and Vocabulary</b>	use of complex sentences, using advanced vocabulary, using correct verb tenses
<b>Interactive Communication</b>	asking follow-up questions, negotiating
<b>Discourse Manangement</b>	fluency, speaking without too many pauses, using linking words, using examples
<b>Pronunciation</b>	intonation, stressing the correct syllable

## Discourse Management

<p><b>Task:</b> Improve <b>the Band 3</b> answer above by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removing hesitation</li><li>• Adding linking phrases (e.g. <i>while, because, in fact</i>)</li></ul>	<p>Improved answer: <i>I'd say I prefer city life because everything is more convenient. There are shops, restaurants, and public transport, while the countryside can be a bit boring. On the other hand, the countryside is more relaxing</i></p>
<p><b>Now try to answer for yourself:</b></p> <p>Respond to the question: "Do you prefer city life or country life?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use at least two linking phrases (<i>however, in the meantime</i>)</li><li>• Now, try to repeat your answer twice, with no hesitations!</li></ul>	<p>Your answer: <i>Although I enjoy visiting the city from time to time, I prefer living in the countryside. It's quieter and less stressful. I work from home, so being close to nature really helps me focus. For example, I often take short walks in the woods after lunch to clear my mind</i></p>

## Pronunciation: Model Sentences with Stress and Intonation

1. What do you do in your free time? ↗  
(Question with rising intonation; stress on question word and key content words)
2. I love spending time outdoors. ↘  
(Falling intonation to end a statement; key content words stressed)
3. Do you want to go to the cinema tonight? ↗  
(Yes/No question; rising intonation at the end)
4. I usually go running in the evening. ↘  
(Statement with falling intonation; regular rhythm with adverb and content words stressed)
5. Have you ever been to London? ↗  
(Genuine question, rising intonation)
6. I didn't really enjoy that film. ↘  
(Falling intonation for a final opinion; content and negative auxiliary stressed)



## Interactive Communication

I think doing regular exercise is the most important because it helps both your body and your mind	<b>True, and I'd add</b> that it does wonders for your self-esteem too!
Spending time outdoors is great, but it really depends on where you live and how much free time you have	<b>That's a good point, but</b> I'd say that everyone should make it a priority, even if it's just going to a local park.
Eating fruit and vegetables sounds easy, but some people just don't like the taste or don't know how to cook them	<b>Yes, exactly!</b> Unless you prepare them well, vegetables can be hard to really incorporate into your daily meals
Sleeping well can make a huge difference to your energy and focus — more than people realise.	<b>I see what you mean,</b> when I get a good night's sleep I feel much better the next day. <b>How about you?</b>
I'm not sure taking breaks from technology really affects your physical health, though it might help with stress	<b>We both seem to think that</b> less time with technology would be a good thing, though I'd argue that helping with stress does affect your health.