

Giving a talk: an examiner's notes

Candidate 1

- Fluency:** Candidate 1 keeps going. He never has to search for a word and always has a replacement word as good as the word he needs. He gets a good mark for fluency.
- Accuracy:** In some areas he displays a high degree of grammatical competence, for example his use of the past perfect and 'had to' as the simple past of 'must'. Tenses generally good. Problems with relative clauses, 'the fax machine is something that it would be soon forgotten'.
- Vocabulary** Reasonably accurate, but some problems, 'put into commerce' for 'became available', 'fun' for 'funny', 'came over' for 'took over', 'hard paper' for 'hard copy'. But some nice idiomatic language, 'the dear old fax machine'. Generally scores well on accuracy.
- Clarity:** I had no problems understanding him. I can hear an accent, but it doesn't interfere with comprehension. There was not one word that I didn't understand, or which made me pause to think.
- Relevance:** Fine.

Candidate 2

Try your own assessment!

Candidate 3

- Fluency:** He puts a strain on me as a listener; I'm afraid that he is not going to be able to continue. He does always continue, but there is often a question mark. He seems to talk abnormally slowly, given the subject matter, ie a friend, a topic you would expect someone to be excited about. There are significant pauses at the end of each sentence. The overall impression is that he doesn't have control of the language.
- Accuracy:** There are major problems with grammatical accuracy. Use of the simple past is patchy: sometimes accurate, usually not. Sometimes, however, the failure to use the simple past may be a pronunciation problem. Use of 'since' is inaccurate; use of adverbs a problem, 'we know each other very much' instead of 'very well'.
Vocabulary: his vocabulary is wide enough to enable him to keep going, but there are inaccuracies and he does not display the range of vocabulary of Candidate 1. Mistakes include: 'design homework', 'he also help me other things', 'he become a nice friend' (for 'good friend').
- Clarity:** Pronunciation problems include:
- difficulty with consonants at the end of a word
 - adding an /s/ sound at the end of words (so-s, certainly-s, never-s)
 - confusion of the /n/ and /l/ sounds in 'nice' and 'like'
- Relevance:** No problem with relevance. He gets a bit sidetracked on the reason for the football team losing, but that is only a momentary slip.

Candidate 4 (native speaker)

- Fluency:** He speaks slowly and deliberately, but there is no fear that he's going to stop because he can't find a word or phrase. He uses fillers effectively, eg 'err', 'umm', 'you know'. He also hangs on certain words, eg 'and', as he thinks of what he wants to say next.
- Accuracy:** Very high level of accuracy as you would expect from a native speaker. But note how even a native speaker makes false starts, and uses phrases which would not be considered correct if written: 'Mark and I, well, we always went to school together, right from age five' (instead of 'from the age of five').
- Clarity:** Clear.
- Relevance:** Note how well Candidate 4 follows the prompts on the card, and uses them to develop a story.

