SPEAKING

Individual Component Checklist

ENGLISH VERSION

ALTE

Association of Language Testers in Europe

INTRODUCTION

This checklist has been designed for use as a practical tool for describing **ONE VERSION** of a particular component of a language test, for the purpose of evaluation or comparison. This checklist if for use only with tests of speaking.

General Notes

In this checklist the following terminology is used:

- **Component**
One subtest in an examination. Usually an examination is made up of subtests in the different skills, and components are commonly called by the names of skills. This checklist concerns the listening component of an examination. Components are also often referred to as 'papers'.

- **Input**
The material provided by the candidate for use in order to produce an appropriate response. In a test of listening it is likely to take the form of a recorded oral text plus written items.

- **Item**
Each testing point which is given a separate mark or marks. It may consist of, for example, one gap in a written text, or one multiple choice question with three or four options.

- **Response**
The candidate's written or spoken response to a task. The term 'answer' is often used in this context. However, for reasons of precision, it is not used here.

- **Rubric**
The instructions given to a candidate on how to respond to a particular input. The rubric for a speaking test might be spoken by an examiner, or take the form of a written rubric accompanying written or graphic prompt material. An example of rubric for a speaking test is: *In this part of the test I'm going to give each of you the change to talk for about a minute. First, I'm going to give each of you some pictures to look at. Please do not show your pictures to each other.*

- **Section**
Parts of the component can be subdivided into. Each may be testing a different area of skill or usage.

- **Task**
A task is defined precisely as a combination of rubric, input and response. For example, a reading text with several multiple choice items, all of which can be answered by referring to a single rubric, can be classified as a task. If another set of items relates to the same text, but requires a different rubric in order for a response to be produced, then that combination of text, rubric and items constitutes a different task. Thus the same text can for part of the same input for one or more tasks.

The term 'question' which is often used when referring to tasks, whether or not they are presented as grammatical questions, is avoided here because of its ambiguity.

- **Text**
In the context of a speaking component of an examination, a text is a piece of written or spoken language, used as input to a task.

Please note
Some of the questions in this checklist are to be answered with a couple of words or numbers, and some have boxes to tick 'yes' or 'no'. Others, which involve making some qualitative judgement, ask for an assessment on a scale of 1 – 4, where 1 represents the most negative judgement and 4 the most positive.

Instructions for Individual Questions

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION

11 Weighting
Sometimes one section of a component is given more or less importance than others by weighting it differently from the others – assigning a higher or lower percentage of the total mark to it.

B PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT

7   How realistic is the presentation of the text?
If, for example, a task used in an examination paper is taken from an original advertisement, an attempt may be made to present it in such a way as to make this source clear to the candidate, by means of typography, layout etc.

D SPEAKING TASKS

1   **INPUT**
Most of this part of the checklist operates a the level of tasks. As the number of texts in a test varies widely – some being composed of as few as two or three, while others consist of a large number of very short texts – text numbers have been left out of headings, and it is assumed that these pages will be photocopied when necessary, and text numbers written in.

3   Topic used
The likely extent of topic areas used in tests of spoken language is covered in the 'notions' in **Threshold Level 1990**.

4   What type of prompt is used?
A prompt is any material which may be used as stimulus to oral production.

2   LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

1   **Main focus of testing**
By this it is meant the **main focus** of what is being tested in language terms, although it may also touch on other areas. It is taken as understood that there is a great deal of ambiguity in this area.

4   EXPECTED RESPONSE

2   Are the relationships (between candidates or between candidate and assessor(s)) simulated?
In some tests of speaking candidates are asked to imagine that they are in certain situations and respond appropriately, or are given the role of a character with particular views, in support of which they have to argue. Other tests do not use this 'role play' approach, instead asking candidates to respond to prompts by giving their own reactions and opinions.

3   Is register important?
This refers to the degree of formality expressed in response, which is determined by the purpose of speaking and the relationship between the participants in the exchange, or the roles they are playing.

6   To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?
This question attempts to gauge the extent to which skills other than language ability are required in order to provide a response. An example of this would be an item which demands some type of mathematical calculation in order to get the correct answer, or an item which involves the candidate reading a map or interpreting an plan or diagram.

12   To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?
This question attempts to gauge the extent to which testing one area of language skill also involved the candidate's ability in another area of skill. It is difficult to separate skills completely from one another. For example, it is likely that any test of speaking will involve candidates in reading or listening to instructions and other forms of input.

5   MARKING

1   What are the criteria for marking?
The emphasis in marking test of speaking may be placed in various features related to accuracy, or more importance may be given to the achievement of the task set.

5   How many assessors are involved in each oral assessment?
This will probably depend on how many candidates are assessed at once. It is difficult for one assessor working alone to assess more than two candidates at a time. In some examinations the number of candidates an assessors will be fixed, while other candidates have a choice of being examined alone, in pairs or in larger groups.

6   How are their roles defined?
If there is only one oral examiner, he or she has to act as both interlocutor and assessor, whereas if two people carry out each assessment, one may act solely as interlocutor, talking to the candidates and setting the tasks, while the other is responsible only for assessing the candidate's responses.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

NAME OF EXAMINATION

NAME OF COMPONENT

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

		Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Total for component
1	Name of section (if any)				
2	Number of tasks				
3	Suggested time allocated for each section				
4	Preparation time allocated (if any)				
5	Total number of marks achievable (as percentage)				**100%**
6	Is percentage of marks available for section indicated to candidate?	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐
7	Is percentage of marks available for each task indicated to candidate?	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐
8	Is time allocation for each section indicated to candidate?	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐
9	Is time allocation for each task indicated to candidate?	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐
10	Weighting				**100%**

B   PRESENTATION & LAYOUT

Name of component

1   How is the component presented?   As a separate booklet [   ]   As part of a booklet [   ]

2   How is the beginning of the component indicated?   by a front page [   ]   by a title page in a booklet [   ]
    by a title [   ]

3   What information is given at the beginning of the component?

title of component [ ]	candidate name [ ]
candidate number [ ]	sex of candidate [ ]
name of institution [ ]	date of examination [ ]
total number of marks for component [ ]	time allocated [ ]
instructions to examiner [ ]	instructions to candidate [ ]

4   How many pages long is the component?   [   ]

5   How well is the text in the booklet spaced out?   1 [   ]   2 [   ]   3 [   ]   4 [   ]

6   How realistic is presentation of the text?   1 [   ]   2 [   ]   3 [   ]   4 [   ]

7   What size is the booklet? (A4, A5 etc.)   [   ]

8   Is colour printing used?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

9   Are drawings used?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

10   Are photographs used?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

C GUIDANCE TO CANDIDATES (INSTRUCTIONS AND RUBRICS)

Name of component

1	How clear are instructions?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
2	How easy to understand are instructions?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
3	How adequate are instructions?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
4	How relevant are instructions?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
5	How consistent are instructions?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
6	How clear are rubrics?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
7	How easy to understand are rubrics?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
8	How adequate are rubrics?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
9	How relevant are rubrics?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐
10	How consistent are rubrics?	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4 ☐

D SPEAKING TASKS

Name of examination

Number of texts in speaking component

1. INPUT - TEXTS

	Task	Task	Task	Task
1 Is the interview carried out				
a) face to face?	a	a	a	a
b) taped?	b	b	b	b
c) other (please specify)	c	c	c	c
2 Are the candidates interviewed				
a) individually	a	a	a	a
b) in pairs?	b	b	b	b
c) in groups of more than two	c	c	c	c
d) other (please specify)	d	d	d	d

1. INPUT

			Text		Text		Text	
3		Topic used in task						
	a)	Personal identification	a	☐	a	☐	a	☐
	b)	House, home and environment	b	☐	b	☐	b	☐
	c)	daily life	c	☐	c	☐	c	☐
	d)	free time, entertainment	d	☐	d	☐	d	☐
	e)	travel	e	☐	e	☐	e	☐
	f)	relations with other people	f	☐	f	☐	f	☐
	g)	health and bodycare	g	☐	g	☐	g	☐
	h)	education	h	☐	h	☐	h	☐
	i)	science and scholarship	i	☐	i	☐	i	☐
	j)	current affairs	j	☐	j	☐	j	☐
	k)	shopping	k	☐	k	☐	k	☐
	l)	food and drink	l	☐	l	☐	l	☐
	m)	services	m	☐	m	☐	m	☐
	n)	places	n	☐	n	☐	n	☐
	o)	language	o	☐	o	☐	o	☐
	p)	weather	p	☐	p	☐	p	☐
	q)	other (please specify)	q	☐	q	☐	q	☐

☐

1. INPUT

		Task			

4 Which type of prompt is used?

a)	photographs	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐
b)	drawings	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐
c)	diagrams	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐
d)	cue cards	d ☐	d ☐	d ☐	d ☐
e)	texts	e ☐	e ☐	e ☐	e ☐
f)	audio	f ☐	f ☐	f ☐	f ☐
g)	video	g ☐	g ☐	g ☐	g ☐
h)	other (please specify)	h ☐	h ☐	h ☐	h ☐

☐

5 How long is the prompt?

a)	In words (if text)				
b)	in minutes/seconds (if audio or video)				

6 If input includes printed text of any kind, how appropriate is this?

	1 ☐	1 ☐	1 ☐	1 ☐
	2 ☐	2 ☐	2 ☐	2 ☐
	3 ☐	3 ☐	3 ☐	3 ☐
	4 ☐	4 ☐	4 ☐	4 ☐

2 LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

Task

1   Main focus of testing

a)	describing	a	☐	a	☐	a	☐	a	☐
b)	reporting events	b	☐	b	☐	b	☐	b	☐
c)	reqesting information	c	☐	c	☐	c	☐	c	☐
d)	responding to requests for info / explaining	d	☐	d	☐	d	☐	d	☐
e)	giving examples	e	☐	e	☐	e	☐	e	☐
f)	agreeing or disagreeing	f	☐	f	☐	f	☐	f	☐
g)	expressing opinions / preferences	g	☐	g	☐	g	☐	g	☐
h)	giving instructions	h	☐	h	☐	h	☐	h	☐
i)	making suggestions	i	☐	i	☐	i	☐	i	☐
j)	persuading	j	☐	j	☐	j	☐	j	☐
k)	complaining	k	☐	k	☐	k	☐	k	☐
l)	apologising	l	☐	l	☐	l	☐	l	☐
m)	expressing possibility	m	☐	m	☐	m	☐	m	☐
n)	expressing purpose	n	☐	n	☐	n	☐	n	☐
o)	comparing and contrasting	o	☐	o	☐	o	☐	o	☐
p)	classifying	p	☐	p	☐	p	☐	p	☐
q)	summing up	q	☐	q	☐	q	☐	q	☐
r)	appropriate social exchange	r	☐	r	☐	r	☐	r	☐
s)	other (please specify)	s	☐	s	☐	s	☐	s	☐

☐

2   Task type used

a)	reading text aloud	a	☐	a	☐	a	☐	a	☐
b)	answering questions for assessor	b	☐	b	☐	b	☐	b	☐
c)	problem solving	c	☐	c	☐	c	☐	c	☐
d)	discussion with assessor	d	☐	d	☐	d	☐	d	☐
e)	discussion with another candidate	e	☐	e	☐	e	☐	e	☐
f)	other (please specify)	f	☐	f	☐	f	☐	f	☐

3   VIDEO

		Task						
1	Number of speakers							

4 EXPECTED RESPONSE

Task ▢

1

		Task				
a) short turns	a ▢	a ▢	a ▢	a ▢	a ▢
b) longer turns	b ▢	b ▢	b ▢	b ▢	b ▢
c) questions from candidate	c ▢	c ▢	c ▢	c ▢	c ▢
d) responses from candidate	d ▢	d ▢	d ▢	d ▢	d ▢

2 Are role relationships (between candidates or between candidate and assessor(s)) simulated?

| Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ |
| No ▢ | No ▢ | No ▢ | No ▢ | No ▢ |

3 Is register important?

| Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ | Yes ▢ |
| No ▢ | No ▢ | No ▢ | No ▢ | No ▢ |

4 To what extent is specialist knowledge assumed?

1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢
2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢
3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢
4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢

5 To what extent is cultural knowledge assumed?

1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢
2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢
3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢
4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢

6 To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?

1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢
2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢
3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢
4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢

7 To what extent is there an overlap with testing another are of linguistic skill?

1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢	1 ▢
2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢	2 ▢
3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢	3 ▢
4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢	4 ▢

5   MARKING

Task ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

1   What are the criteria for marking?

a) grammatical accuracy	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐
b) range of structure and vocabulary	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐
c) stress and intonation	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐
d) pronunciation	d ☐	d ☐	d ☐	d ☐	d ☐
e) fluency	e ☐	e ☐	e ☐	e ☐	e ☐
f) register	f ☐	f ☐	f ☐	f ☐	f ☐
g) task achievement	g ☐	g ☐	g ☐	g ☐	g ☐
h) other (please specify)	h ☐	h ☐	h ☐	h ☐	h ☐

[   ]

2   Are marking criteria indicated to the candidate?   Yes ☐   Yes ☐   Yes ☐   Yes ☐   Yes ☐
No ☐   No ☐   No ☐   No ☐   No ☐

3   How many marks does each task carry?   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

4   Is the number of marks available indicated to the candidate?   Yes ☐   Yes ☐   Yes ☐   Yes ☐   Yes ☐
No ☐   No ☐   No ☐   No ☐   No ☐

5   How many assessors are involved in each oral assessment?

a) one	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐
b) two	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐
c) two or more	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐

6   How are their roles defined? (in terms of interlocutor and assessor)

a) one interlocutor / assessor	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐	a ☐
b) two interlocutors / assessors	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐	b ☐
c) one interlocutor + one assessor	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐	c ☐