

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT SAMPLE TASKS
FRENCH SPEAKING

BREAKTHROUGH

Asset Languages

Breakthrough French Speaking External Assessment sample

This sample material has been provided to help you get a feel for the style of tasks and the level of Asset Languages External Assessment.

Please see our website www.assetlanguages.org.uk for the most up-to-date information and new materials as they become available in other languages and stages.

Asset Languages

Breakthrough stage speaking tests

This booklet is for teachers who will act as examiners for Breakthrough stage speaking tests. The following pages provide guidelines on assessing candidates and conducting the tests.

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Guidelines for assessment

Understanding the standard of Breakthrough

Before conducting a speaking test, ensure that you are familiar with the standard of the Breakthrough stage as described by the Languages Ladder statements.

Languages Ladder Statements – Speaking

Grade 1 I can say/repeat a few words and short simple phrases.

Grade 2 I can answer simple questions and give basic information.

Grade 3 I can ask and answer simple questions and talk about my interests.

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your pronunciation will not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

During the speaking test, you will determine whether candidates have demonstrated these grades by assessing their performance in terms of the language they use and communication they achieve.

Language

This refers to a candidate's knowledge of and ability to use vocabulary and structures to convey meaning. Breakthrough candidates are expected to be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your assessment will evaluate a candidate's success in using this range with sufficient accuracy.

Communication

This refers to a candidate's ability to take part in the tasks appropriately and to communicate their messages. You should also assess the length and frequency of their responses. Hesitations while a candidate searches for language are to be expected, but there should be sufficient fluency so as not to make communication difficult. Pronunciation should be accurate enough for the meaning to be clear, and understanding should not require much effort from a listener. Do not penalise a candidate who occasionally uses their first language (such as English) so long as it does not affect communication.

Structure of Breakthrough speaking tests

The following table shows the activities that make up a speaking test.

	Content	Format	Assessment	Test time	Weighting
Part 1, task 1 Personal information	Personal questions on a topic	Candidate and teacher only	Conducted, assessed and recorded by a teacher Moderated by OCR	30 seconds to 1 minute	70%
Part 1, task 2 Interaction	Picture-based task: statements and questions	Candidate and teacher only	Conducted, assessed and recorded by a teacher Moderated by OCR	2 minutes	
Part 2 Presentation	Candidate talks on a prepared topic	Candidate and teacher only or candidate to a group	Conducted and assessed by a teacher	Up to 1 minute	30%

Applying the assessment criteria

During a speaking test, assess candidates by applying the criteria shown in the table on page 5. You award each candidate one language mark and one communication mark for each of part 1 and part 2, giving four marks in total.



Ensure that you give marks for part 1 and part 2.

To award a language or communication mark:

- 1 Choose which band (0, 1, 2 or 3) best describes a candidate's performance.

Normally you will assign a candidate to band 1, 2 or 3. However, in an exceptional case, a candidate might provide you with a language sample that is insufficient for you to apply the usual criteria. In such a case, assign the candidate to band 0.

- 2 Each band is then subdivided into three levels, e.g. .1, .2 and .3.

This allows you to discriminate within each band to say that the level has been fully achieved (.3), partially achieved (.2) or minimally achieved (.1).

So, for example, you would award a language mark of 3.2 to a candidate whose performance you think is best described as 'partially achieving the language criteria for band 3'.

The 'Completing a mark sheet' section on page 6 explains how to record a candidate's marks on a mark sheet.

Breakthrough assessment criteria

This mark scheme is to be interpreted at Breakthrough standard.

Language	
A basic range of simple structures is used successfully. There are few grammatical errors. A range of basic vocabulary is used successfully.	Band 3 3.3, 3.2, 3.1
There is an attempt to use a basic range of simple structures. There are several grammatical errors. There is an attempt to use a range of basic vocabulary.	Band 2 2.3, 2.2, 2.1
Individual words are used successfully. Grammatical errors are evident. A limited range of basic vocabulary is used.	Band 1 1.3, 1.2, 1.1
Insufficient sample of spoken language.	Band 0
Communication	
The main points of the task are communicated. Responses are sometimes extended. Hesitations do not make communication difficult. Pronunciation is accurate enough for the meaning to be clear. There is a good attempt to use the target language pronunciation. Understanding requires little effort from the listener.	Band 3 3.3, 3.2, 3.1
Some of the main points of the task are communicated. Responses are short. Hesitation can sometimes make communication difficult. Pronunciation is accurate enough for the meaning to be clear with some effort from the listener. There is some attempt to use the target language pronunciation. Understanding requires some effort from the listener.	Band 2 2.3, 2.2, 2.1
Few of the main points of the task are communicated. Responses are very short. Hesitation makes communication very difficult. There is little attempt to use the target language pronunciation. Understanding requires considerable effort from the listener.	Band 1 1.3, 1.2, 1.1
Insufficient sample of spoken language	Band 0

Completing a mark sheet

The facing page shows an example of a completed mark sheet, and the following notes explain how to complete the various sections.

Using a PENCIL, complete one mark sheet for each candidate. The Examination Details, Centre No. and Centre Name will already have been completed.



Before completing the mark sheets, ask your Examinations Officer for a list of candidate numbers for your students.

Accredited Teacher No. – leave this box empty.

Candidate Name – write the candidate's first name and family name.

Candidate No. – write the number in the top row of boxes, then confirm the number by shading the appropriate boxes in the grid below.

Ensure that the number you enter on this mark sheet matches the number supplied by the Examinations Officer. If they do not match, candidates might not receive their grades.

What is the candidate's first language? – Select one of the languages listed or, if a suitable language is not listed, write the language in the box provided.

Task attempted – mark the number of the set of visual materials you used in part 1 task 2.

Marks awarded – for part 1 and part 2, you must award ONLY ONE mark in each row (*Language* and *Communication*). If you need to change a mark, rub out the original mark and underline the new one.



Note that the final 'To be completed by the Moderator' section of the mark sheet is for completion by an External Moderator and not by your centre.

Preparing Breakthrough speaking tests

Any teacher can conduct a Breakthrough speaking test and is responsible for ensuring that the test is conducted correctly.

Before conducting a speaking test, read through this booklet to familiarise yourself with the test structure, the test topics and vocabulary. This familiarity will help you to select the best task for each candidate and to ensure that you use a variety of topics. Please note that this booklet is for use for one academic year.

Managing time

The total duration of all the assessed activities in a test should be 3–4 minutes. This allowance does not include the time required to introduce a candidate, or for any administrative activities.

Throughout the test, keep a careful track of the time. Move through the tasks appropriately, ensuring that each candidate is given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability by responding fully to the whole range of prompts. Allocate the full time to each task so that every candidate has a fair opportunity to speak. When the required time for the task has passed, do not ask further questions that will cause the test to overrun. When a candidate has finished the activities for a task, bring the task to a clear finish.

Introducing a test

Before beginning task 1, explain the whole test in English or pass the 'Instructions to Candidates' section of the *Candidate's Booklet* for the candidate to read for themselves. Do not assess a candidate's responses during this introduction.

Separating the test parts

You can conduct part 2 of a speaking test separately from part 1 at any convenient time before or after it.

Choosing topics and pictures for assessments

For this booklet, we have selected topics and pictures that allow a range of vocabulary to be covered. Use the full range of material available and vary the topics and tasks for different candidates. Ensure that you do not repeat areas of vocabulary in the test. For example, the topic you choose for the personal information task must be different from the subject of the candidate's presentation.

Using questions correctly

When you act as an examiner, be aware that your technique can significantly influence how well a candidate can demonstrate their ability to speak a language.

For part 1 task 1:

- Only use the questions provided in this booklet. However, you can subsequently rephrase a question to assist a candidate who is struggling.
- When rephrasing questions, use open questions (for example, 'What do you do at the weekend?') rather than closed questions (for example 'Do you play tennis?'), which only require yes/no answers.

For part 1 task 2:

- Use the questions provided in this booklet. Where an item of vocabulary is not familiar to a candidate, you can use your own statements or questions.
- Target questions at any aspect of the picture, not just the differences.
- The language tested in the statements and questions should not overlap.
- Ensure that your language is at the appropriate level for the Breakthrough stage.

Avoiding malpractice

When you conduct speaking tests, take care to follow the guidelines in this booklet and to be consistent and impartial in your dealings with candidates. If you deviate significantly from recommended practice, you risk arousing suspicions of 'malpractice'. We consider malpractice to be any attempt to give an unfair advantage, or any breach of the regulations governing the conduct of assessment that may threaten the integrity of Asset Languages. So remember:

- use a variety of topics from this booklet when testing a group of students; you must not give all candidates the same tasks
- although it is important to prepare candidates for a speaking test, you must not coach them to the point where questions are rehearsed
- to ensure fairness to all candidates, take care to respect the timings for each task.

Choosing a suitable location for conducting tests

For part 1 tasks

Before conducting the part 1 tasks, find and reserve a room that is suitable both for assessing candidates and for recording the test sessions.

Look for a room that:

- can accommodate yourself and a candidate in reasonable comfort
- is equipped with two chairs and a table or desk suitable for placing a cassette recorder and microphone
- is sufficiently quiet to avoid distractions and to permit you to make good quality recordings
- provides suitable conditions for a test: acceptable air temperature, ventilation, lighting and cleanliness

- does not display any materials that might help candidates during tests.

Later, when conducting tests, ensure that you maintain an ordered and quiet atmosphere.

If you designate another location as a waiting area, it should be some distance from the test room. Also, it should ideally contain enough chairs for candidates to sit while they wait.

For part 2

The requirements for part 2 are less demanding because you do not have to record candidates' presentations. However, you must ensure that you choose a room that provides the furniture and power supply that you need to work with an OHP or any other equipment needed to support the presentations. Also, if you choose to hold the presentations in front of a class or group, you need a room that can comfortably accommodate more people.

Controlling the quality of recordings

Before conducting any speaking tests, make a brief test recording in the test room. Listen to the recording to check that the microphone is suitably positioned on the table or desk to capture clearly the voices of both yourself and candidates. Also, after recording the first candidate, listen to the quality of the recorded sound to confirm that it is clear and comprehensible.

From time to time during a task, check the cassette recorder to confirm that it is still recording.

Labelling cassettes and cassette boxes

After completing the tests, you must clearly and securely label each cassette and its box with the assessment title, assessment code, centre name and centre number.

While you conduct tests, keep accurate lists of the sequence in which you record candidates. Then, in each cassette box, provide a list of candidates recorded on the relevant cassette (in the order you have recorded them) and all their candidate numbers. Also, distinguish between candidates recorded on side A and on side B. This information is to enable the External Moderator to identify which candidates appear on any particular cassette.

Conducting Breakthrough speaking tests

Requirements for both part 1 tasks

For every candidate, record both part 1 tasks. Record no more than 10 candidates on each side of a 90-minute cassette. During the tests, use a watch or alarm clock to keep track of time.

Materials needed:

- this *Examiner's Booklet*
- a *Candidate's Booklet*
- candidate mark sheets
- a cassette recorder
- cassettes (provided by OCR)
- an external microphone
- a watch or clock, preferably with a second hand, suitable for timing the test.

Conducting task 1 of part 1 – Personal information task

The aim of task 1 is to give each candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to answer questions related to their life and circumstances.



Duration: 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Before you begin the task, ensure that the cassette recorder is recording.

To conduct task 1

- 1 At the beginning of each recording, state clearly:
'Centre [number], [language], [stage] Asset Speaking Tests.'
- 2 Before you begin your assessment of each candidate, state clearly:
'Candidate [number], [candidate name].'
- 3 Read the opening English instructions to the candidate and/or pass the "Instructions to Candidates" in the *Candidate's Booklet* for the candidate to read themselves.
- 4 Read the opening greeting in the target language.
- 5 Choose questions from any topic, as long as the questions are suitable for the candidate.
- 6 Choose one topic only from this booklet and ask questions for up to one minute.

If a candidate struggles with a specific question or topic, try another question from any part 1 task 1 page.

Conducting task 2 of part 1 – Interaction task

The aim of task 2 is to give each candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to make statements and to answer and ask questions.



Duration: 2 minutes.

To conduct task 2

- 1 Select a picture task and pass the *Candidate's Booklet*, open at picture B of the relevant task, to the candidate.
- 2 Announce the number and title of the picture for the cassette recorder.
- 3 Where applicable, read the instructions in English to the candidate.
- 4 Wait 15 seconds to allow the candidate to look at the picture.
- 5 Look at picture A in this *Examiner's Booklet* and read one statement about one of the differences in your picture.
- 6 Wait while the candidate responds with a statement about their picture. When a candidate struggles, prompt them or rephrase the statement if possible.
- 7 Read another statement about one of the differences in your picture and wait while the candidate responds, prompting where necessary.
- 8 Ask one question about the candidate's picture and wait for a response. When a candidate struggles, prompt them or rephrase the question if possible.
- 9 Ask another question about the candidate's picture and wait for a response, prompting where necessary.
- 10 The candidate asks you one question about any aspect of your picture and you respond. When a candidate struggles, prompt them or rephrase the question if possible.
- 11 The candidate asks you a second question about any aspect of your picture and you respond, prompting where necessary.
- 12 Record your assessment for part 1 on the mark sheet.

Conducting part 2 - Presentation

The aim of part 2 is to give each candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to speak uninterrupted about a prepared topic.

You can conduct part 2 separately from part 1, at any convenient time before or after it. Also, you can opt to conduct this part in front of a small group or class.



Do not record this part of the speaking test.



Duration: up to 1 minute.

Materials needed:

- this *Examiner's Booklet*
- candidate mark sheets
- a watch or clock, preferably with a second hand, suitable for timing the test
- an OHP, a projector or any other appropriate presentation equipment.

Preparation

Decide when to conduct the presentation. In advance of the test, ask each candidate to prepare a one-minute presentation.

You may conduct this part alone with a candidate or in front of a group or class. If you choose this second option, introduce part 2 to the group before the assessment begins. Stress to all group members that they:

- must remain silent throughout
- must not distract or interrupt candidates in any way during the presentations
- may only ask you questions, or interact with each other, after you have told them that part 2 is over.

Content of a presentation

Each presentation should be an account of something that relates personally to the candidate, for example: a member of my family, my best friend, my pet, my favourite singer, my home, a day at school/work/home, my room.

A candidate must not bring any written notes to their presentation but may bring up to two visual prompts (containing no text) such as OHTs, PowerPoint slides, objects or photos.

To conduct a part 2 assessment

- 1 Introduce the part in English by reading from the 'Presentation' section in this booklet.
- 2 Read the target language introduction.
- 3 Listen to the candidate and only intervene if communication breaks down completely. In such a case, prompt and encourage the candidate.
- 4 When the candidate has finished, read the closing statement to them in English.
- 5 Record your assessment for part 2 on the mark sheet and bring the test to a formal close.

At this point you and other students may interact with the candidate in the usual way. This interaction does not form part of the assessment.

After completing tests

Ensure that you have completed all the mark sheets and labelled all the cassettes correctly.

If more than one teacher at your centre is conducting and marking the same speaking test, the centre must ensure that all teachers are marking to the same standard (standardisation) before submitting the tests to OCR.

After standardisation, hand all mark sheets and cassettes to the Examinations Officer for despatch to OCR for moderation. This moderation ensures that OCR standards are applied uniformly across all centres.

Support documents

For more support with conducting speaking tests, the following documents are available.

External Assessment Reference Guide

Ask your Examinations Officer for this guide, or download it from <http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk/examsofficers/default.aspx>.

The guide provides more information on administration and marks submission, when you can conduct speaking tests, the equipment needed, recording candidates, standardisation and submitting test marks with recordings.

Applying Speaking Criteria Booklet

See the accompanying letter for an application form to request this booklet, or download it from <http://www.assetlanguages.org.uk>.

The booklet provides more information on the Breakthrough standard. It also contains a DVD with sample speaking tests, with accompanying marking commentaries, as well as tips for conducting a speaking test.

SECONDARY CONTEXT

Part 1: Task 1 30 seconds – 1 minute

Introduction	Centre [number]. French Breakthrough Asset Speaking Tests. Candidate [number]. [Candidate name]. Hello. Come in and sit down. We're going to do your French Speaking test. We'll do most of it in French, but I'll tell you some things in English, so you know what to do. Right, let's start.
Not assessed	Bon, maintenant en français. Je m'appelle Xxx. Comment tu t'appelles ? Bon, on commence.

Note: Choose only one topic and ask questions for up to one minute. If a candidate struggles with a specific question or topic, try another one from any Task 1 page.

La maison	Maintenant on parle de la maison. Où habites-tu ? Qui habite dans ta maison ? Comment est ta maison ? Il y a combien de pièces ? Quelle pièce préfères-tu ? Pourquoi ? Qu'est-ce qu'il y a près de chez toi ?
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In the Examiner's booklet, three topics for each context (Primary, Secondary and Post-16) are provided.

1

Street scene

Part 1: Task 2

2 minutes

<p>Introduction</p>	<p>Now I will speak in English again. Here are two pictures, one for me, and one for you. <i>[give picture to candidate]</i></p> <p>The two pictures are similar, but some things are different.</p> <p>First I'll say two things about my picture and you will tell me what is different in your picture.</p> <p>Then I'll ask you two questions about your picture.</p> <p>Finally, you will ask me two new questions about my picture.</p> <p><i>[wait 15 seconds]</i></p>
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Suggested prompts

<p>Talk about any two differences</p>	<p>Maintenant, en français.</p> <p>Le chien est grand / petit.</p> <p>Il y a deux arbres dans le parc / trois arbres dans le parc.</p> <p>Le magasin vend des chaussures / des gâteaux.</p> <p>Il y a des nuages. / Il fait du soleil.</p> <p>La femme dans la voiture est triste / contente.</p>
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Suggested questions

<p>Ask two questions (do not repeat items chosen before)</p>	<p>De quelle couleur est la voiture ?</p> <p>Quelle heure est-il ?</p> <p>Où sont les arbres ?</p> <p>Que porte la fille ?</p> <p>Il y a combien de personnes ?</p>
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<p>Candidate asks two questions</p>	<p>Maintenant, à toi. / Maintenant, à vous.</p> <p>Tu peux me poser deux questions ? / Vous pouvez me poser deux questions ?</p> <p><i>[Candidate asks two questions.]</i></p> <p>Merci.</p>
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In the Examiner's booklet, four picture tasks are provided for French, German, Italian and Spanish. For all other languages, three picture tasks are provided.

1

Street scene

A



B



Part 2: up to 1 minute

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CONTEXT

Presentation	<p>Right, let's speak in English again. Now I'd like to hear your presentation please.</p> <p>Alors, maintenant en français.</p> <p>Je t'écoute. Tu peux commencer maintenant ?</p> <p>Merci.</p> <p>Let's finish in English. That's the end of your speaking test.</p>
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POST-16 CONTEXT

Presentation	<p>Right, let's speak in English again. Now I'd like to hear your presentation please.</p> <p>Alors, maintenant en français.</p> <p>Je vous écoute. Vous pouvez commencer maintenant ?</p> <p>Merci.</p> <p>Let's finish in English. That's the end of your speaking test.</p>
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