GCSE

GCSE English Language: Speaking & Listening

Speaking and Listening advice for Teachers

Overview

This support document has been developed to assist teachers approach Unit 2: Speaking & Listening. Additional measures may need to be employed during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is essential that teachers and students follow Public Health Agency guidance (and their own school policy where applicable). The strategies and ideas included in this document focus on developing the speaking and listening skills for students and are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

Developing Speaking & Listening skills (AO1)

The following recommendations are dependent on the context of each classroom situation, but core ideas may successfully be adapted in order to allow students to develop their speaking and listening skills. It may be the case that some of the formative assessment tasks which teachers had designed for use prior to the pandemic may now be unrealistic to pursue in the current circumstances. However, opportunities for students to build on their repertoire of speaking and listening skills remain and these skills can be further developed and refined.

Online Support Materials/Resources
CCEA has recently added to its support materials for *The Study of Spoken Language* thanks to the work conducted by Professor Karen Corrigan of Newcastle University, Dr Frances Kane and Dr Catherine Mairs (Queen's University, Belfast). These resources can also be used to develop students' speaking and listening skills by allowing them to investigate the way they talk to friends and family, or how they speak in more formal situations. Four units of resources and activities are available, and many include sound and/or video clips which both students and teachers can access at the link below:
https://ccea.org.uk/key-stage-4/gcse/subjects/gcse-english-language-2017/support

A series of video clips of students engaging in GCSE Moderation Tasks for Speaking & Listening can also be accessed on the English Language section of the CCEA website:

https://ccea.org.uk/key-stage-4/gcse/subjects/gcse-english-language-2017/assessment

In analysing how others speak, students can identify traits of successful (and less successful) speakers. For example, students could record a list of strategies speakers have employed and explain how and why the strategies have been effective in particular situations. Students can also gauge the degree of 'active' listening of the participants from selected clips. Such clips may be harvested from a variety of sources (e.g. recent political debates, reality television, etc.). Identifying *how* we know when others are listening will help students emulate this important skill.

Written Work to Complement Speaking & Listening Tasks

The skills of preparation and research which students frequently apply to written aspects of the study of English can also pay dividends for Unit 2: Speaking and Listening. Researching the types of dialect or register in the resources mentioned previously is just one aspect.

Students can also research elements of future speaking and listening formative assessment tasks in which they will participate. For example, students could engage in researching:

- Ofcom rules and rulings
- consumer rights
- the history of institutions such as the NHS or Greenpeace

Written preparation could also include the drafting of notes/cue cards for speeches to deliver for formal Individual Presentations.

Suggested Activities

As any teacher knows, making students feel comfortable when talking to each other is crucial, especially if lengthier or more meaningful discussions are to follow. Ice-breaker activities can be a fun way to enable students to form new friendships and practise some fundamental speaking and listening skills. Interrogating what others say is a key element of the Level 5 Assessment Criteria for Unit 2: Speaking and Listening but effective questioning can be the first step towards making 'interrogation' within group discussions an achievable goal. Activities which can help students develop this skill include:

- Who Am I?
- Hesitation game
- Yes/No game
- The teacher could provide a series of 'question starters' for students to engage with
- A provocative question could be displayed on the board for students to respond to using the 'Verbal Boxing Match' activity which would allow a variety of specified students to engage in the same discussion. (This could be further developed by assigning each student a 'role' that is known only to them e.g. one student could be a human rights lawyer, one a homemaker, one a business owner.)

Provocative stimulus statements/questions might include:

'Females should be paid less than males.'

'It's easier in the 21st century to be a girl than a boy.'

'Where do you draw the line between helping people and showing them how to help themselves? How do you strike that balance?'

'Would you rather wear a uniform to school or wear casual outfits to school?'

'All students should have an after-school job.'

General classroom interaction can also be exploited to help students develop core speaking and listening skills. For example:

- respectful interruption
- non-verbal cues
- bringing others into the discussion
- negotiating opinions

Practical considerations/advice during the academic year

Set aside specific days/periods for a focus on speaking and listening or for Unit 2: Speaking and Listening formative assessment tasks with planned topics, so that you have control of which students will be involved in speaking and listening at each time. Some of the written activities identified earlier in this document could be given to students who are not directly involved in speaking and listening activities during the formative assessment. Alternatively, students not involved could listen to the stimulus chosen for the Spoken Language Controlled Assessment (if school policy allows for ear-phones), drafting cue cards for an Individual Presentation or drafting questions for future Individual Presentations made by classmates.

Individual Presentation and Interaction

Consider individual presentations which emulate the *TED Talks* style. Students being assessed need not stand at the front of the classroom, in fact, the student can remain seated. Nominate 4 or more students prior to the presentation who will ask follow-up questions (this could be a useful, brief homework activity for those nominated).

Role Play

Role plays can be presented at an individual level or by groups of students. These must stem from real life contexts. Formative assessment tasks which have worked well in the past include:

- *Dragon's Den* style pitch
- Job interview
- Making a holiday or purchase complaint
- Interviewing an applicant for Camp America
- Interviewing an applicant for pet ownership from an animal shelter

Group Discussion

Facilitating group discussions for students depends on the facilities within each school/college.

For many schools/colleges, the classroom environment is the most convenient venue to facilitate group discussions. Remember that the group size does not have to be large. Paired discussions will allow each individual pupil to practise the skills of listening closely, making contributions and seeking clarification, etc. before introducing additional members to the group, once students are comfortable with the format.

Topics for tasks which often help develop student confidence while in a group discussion format include:

- Youth amenities for the local community
- Social media: advantages and disadvantages
- Uniform: does it have a place in 21st-century schools?
- The ideal 21st century college