



ISEB
Independent Schools
Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 13+

LISTENING AND SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

1. Delivery of examination materials

Audio files for listening exams for each exam will be available to download as MP3s from a secure website. The files will be released at 4pm on the day before the relevant exam. Passwords for downloading files will be provided via email at the time of their release.

Listening: you will receive the examination papers for each candidate, and copies of the transcript of the recorded material.

Speaking: you will receive the examination papers for each candidate, and copies of the examiner's papers.

Speaking Examiner's Marksheets and Speaking Record Sheets should be downloaded from the ISEB website.

On receipt of the boxes of examination papers, the Head of centre should check that there are enough papers for the candidates listed.

All Listening materials **must** be kept in a secure place in their sealed packets, and **only** opened in the examination room, on the day of the examination, in the presence of the invigilator supervising the session and within sight of the candidates sitting the examination.

All Speaking materials **must** be kept in a secure place in their sealed packets, until **after the last teaching session** prior to the examination, when the Head of centre may distribute the papers to examiners conducting the tests.

Mark schemes for each exam will be available to download as PDFs from a secure website. Mark schemes will be released at 4pm on the day before the relevant exam. Passwords for downloading the mark schemes will be provided via email at the time of their release. These must be stored in a secure location and remain **unopened** until the end of the day on which the relevant examination has taken place.

2. Listening

At the start of the examination, candidates are allowed **three** minutes to read the questions. This time is recorded on the recording, after the instructions.

Each extract will be played twice, in accordance with the instructions in each section, and there will be a pause between sections. At the end of the examination there will be a further **two** minutes for completion of the tasks. All pauses are recorded on the audio.

Candidates may make notes or answer the questions at any time.

Dictionaries are not allowed in any part of this examination.

A transcript of the recorded material is provided for the examiner's use only.

For candidates granted additional time under **access arrangements**, ISEB does not provide separate audio with extended pauses. However, the invigilator may use the transcript of the recording to determine when to pause the standard audio manually, in order to give candidates extra time to write their answer. The tracks may not be replayed at any stage. The invigilator should allocate the extra time across the test as a whole, and in accordance with the needs of the candidates, up to the maximum extra time for the test.

For the listening examination, extra time candidates should be accommodated in a separate room, in order not to confer an advantage on regular time candidates.

For candidates with a significant hearing impairment, making it difficult to follow speech at normal speed, a teacher who teaches the language being examined may read the transcript of the recorded material at a pace suited to the candidate's needs, so that he/she can lipread comfortably. Additional repetition of the material is allowed, if necessary. An invigilator must be present in the examination room at all times.

All candidates with access arrangements which may distract or disturb other candidates, should be accommodated in a separate room.

3. Speaking (5 or 8 minutes + 10 minutes' preparation time)

Candidates must have a quiet place in which to prepare the Role-play Card, where they will not be able to communicate with, or be distracted by, anyone else.

No written notes may be taken into the preparation room, and candidates must not have access to any material other than the role-play card, a bilingual paper dictionary, lined paper and a pen/pencil.

During the preparation time, candidates may make notes for Parts 1 and 2 of the test **only**. These notes can be referred to during the test, but they must be written on lined paper, **not** on the role-play card, and must be collected in at the end of the test.

4. Recording the speaking examination

Prep schools may use CDs, memory sticks or any other digital equipment for recording candidates, but are expected to liaise with senior schools about the most appropriate method.

Recording equipment should be tested in advance. The microphone should be turned towards the candidate and all extraneous noises excluded, if possible.

For each individual senior school, the examiner should record the name of the prep school at the beginning of the CD/memory stick/digital file, and each candidate's name as he/she begins the examination.

Pauses due to hesitation in the candidate's delivery of answers must remain on the recording. During the changeover of candidates, if machines are fitted with a PAUSE button, it is better to use this than the STOP control.

5. Action after the examination

The Board expects all papers to be marked by the senior school for which a candidate is registered. Signed speaking examination mark sheets, record sheets and listening

examination papers for each candidate should be sent to senior schools, together with the recordings. These should be sent by next-day delivery or courier by the last day of the speaking examination period. Packets containing speaking examination media must be clearly marked with the **language** and **level**, and include the sender's name and address. Senior schools will undertake to return media **only** when a return label has been supplied. Emails containing digital speaking files should include all relevant details.

If candidates' scripts are being marked internally, prep schools should liaise with the relevant senior schools **in advance of the examination period** to establish their requirements in respect of the despatch of recordings, candidates' scripts and the provision of results.

6. Action by senior schools

- (a) At least seven days before the examination period, senior schools will receive copies of the Speaking Examiner and Speaking Candidate examination papers for assessment purposes.
- (b) The **moderator's report form should be** downloaded from the ISEB website, **completed for each prep school** and returned as soon as possible after the test has been moderated. This provides valuable feedback to prep school examiners.
- (c) Senior schools will be responsible for the cost of returning recordings to prep schools **only when addressed labels have been supplied.**

SPEAKING EXAMINATION (all languages)

Level 1¹ and Level 2²

The speaking examination consists of three parts: Part 1, a role-play situation; Part 2, a text-based task and Part 3, an open, unprepared conversation.

Three Cards (A, B and C) containing Parts 1 and 2 of the examination will be provided, and the examiner must choose any one of the three Cards for each candidate.

The examiner may distribute the Cards in any order, but should ensure that all three are used more or less equally over the examination session.

Candidates must be assessed using the **same Card** for Parts 1 and 2 of the examination.

Where a role-play Card is based on information which may be particularly sensitive for a candidate, e.g. following a recent bereavement, the examiner may select an alternative Card with which the candidate is not familiar, but this should be explained to the senior school when submitting the accompanying report form.

Part 1: Role-play situation (about 1-2 minutes; 9 marks)

The role-play situation requires a candidate to carry out six tasks in the target language, which have been given in English. Candidates should be advised to focus on the role play for at least three of the ten minutes' preparation time.

The role plays may be based on any area of the specification, and will be of a transactional or social nature, such as conversations in a shop, at the station, in a café/restaurant etc., or discussing hobbies, school or family etc. with a friend.

The following points are important:

- As in the whole of the speaking test, English should never be used.
- The exercise must be introduced by the examiner in the target language, using the exact wording given in the examiner's script.
- One task in each role play will require the candidate to answer an unprepared question (at Level 1¹ this will be indicated on the examination paper by wording such as *Listen and choose which ... you prefer*, and at Level 2², by the words *Answer the question.*).
- The question for the unprepared task must not be rephrased, unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to respond to the original question. However, rephrased questions must not change the nature of the task set.
- Responses to the unprepared question at Level 2² will be open-ended, and therefore a range of appropriate answers will be acceptable.
- At both levels, full sentences in response to the unprepared question are not expected and the full mark can be given for an answer consisting of a short phrase or a single word, if appropriate.
- Each task must be carried out in full. If the candidate is unable to respond to one of the tasks set (including the unprepared question), the examiner should proceed to the next task.

¹ French and Spanish only

² French, German and Spanish

- If there has been considerable hesitation, a maximum of ½ a mark is to be awarded for the task.
- If a candidate requests a repeat, using appropriate language, and then answers promptly and correctly, he/she should not be penalised.
- The mark scheme for Quality of Language allows for minor errors to be tolerated. These might include, for example, an incorrect adjectival agreement or an imprecise verb form. Provided that full communication is achieved and there is no confusion, a candidate should not be penalised for such errors.
- Examiners should trust their own judgement and, if in doubt, be generous towards the candidate.

Assessment of the Role-play situation (all languages)

Each role play is marked out of 9, according to the following descriptors. There is a total of 6 marks for the tasks and up to 3 marks for the quality of language throughout the role play.

Mark (per task)	Completion of tasks
1	Full communication.
$\frac{1}{2}$	Task partly carried out; there may be considerable hesitation.
0	Failure to communicate.

Mark (overall impression)	Quality of language
3	High level of accuracy with no significant errors.
2	Level of language generally good but with a number of errors.
1	Marked weaknesses in the use of language.
0	Little or no effective use of the target language.

Part 2: Text-based task (about 2-3 minutes; 8 marks)

The text-based task is intended to engage candidates in interactions of a more social nature, and will therefore be based on the topics listed under Theme A: Socialising (see *Appendix I* of the relevant specification).

Candidates will be required to respond to five questions, basing their responses on information which has been given in English.

At Level 1³, candidates will be provided with six pieces of information in English, and Level 2⁴ candidates will be provided with seven. Candidates should therefore listen carefully to the questions asked, as there will be one piece of information which is not used at Level 1³, and two at Level 2⁴.

³ French and Spanish only

⁴ French, German and Spanish

Use of the near future tense may be required in this task, but the use of other tenses is not expected.

The following points are important:

- The exercise must be introduced by the examiner in the target language, using the exact wording given in the examiner’s script.
- The examiner should ask the **first**, and then any **four** of the remaining questions **in order**, using the exact wording given in the examiner’s script. No supplementary questions should be asked.
- Candidates may respond with just the basic information provided, but will need to include some of their own opinions and/or additional information to access the top marks.
- The text-based task is not intended to be a simple translation exercise. Candidates should be given time to develop their responses as well as they are able, but overly long answers should be discouraged.
- Although numbers etc. should be faithfully relayed, if key words are not known, the same message can usually be conveyed in other ways.

The examiner should not continue significantly beyond the maximum time allowed for this part of the examination, to allow ample time for the final section.

Assessment of the Text-based task (all languages)

The text-based task is marked out of 8, according to the following descriptors. Candidates’ responses to the five questions are assessed for **Communication only**. (A best-fit policy should be used and ½ marks may be awarded.)

Mark (overall impression)	Communication
7-8	Very good: all, or virtually all, of the responses are full, include a conjugated verb and are delivered clearly and confidently; the information is communicated successfully, and some additional details and/or opinions are offered.
5-6	Good: a mixture of short and longer responses, most of which contain a conjugated verb and are delivered clearly; the information is communicated successfully, and at least one additional detail and/or opinion is offered.
3-4	Satisfactory: responses may be short and may not contain a conjugated verb, but are understandable; most of the information is communicated effectively.
1-2	Limited: responses are likely to be simple but brief, and some may lack clarity; delivery may be hesitant, with some prompting required; some of the information is communicated effectively.
0	Weak: very brief, often single word responses; communication of the information is limited.

Part 3: Open Conversation (about 2-3 minutes; 8 marks)

Candidates will be required to take part in an open, spontaneous and unprepared discussion of at least one of the topics listed under Theme A: Socialising (see *Appendix 1* of the relevant specification), but they should not overlap with the topics used in Parts 1 and 2.

The Open Conversation should last the stipulated two to three minutes for each candidate.

Examiners are expected to use a wide range of topics and candidates should not know in advance which topics have been chosen.

With less able candidates, it may be necessary to cover more than one topic superficially, using questions of a more closed nature, tailored to the ability of the candidate. With more able candidates, examiners should attempt to ask some questions of a more open nature, or a series of related questions to follow up on what has been said, in order to explore a topic in greater depth.

It can be helpful to ease the candidate into the Open Conversation by asking a general 'starter' question relating to a particular topic, for example: 'Tell me a little about your family ...' and allowing him/her to lead the direction of the conversation.

Examiners are encouraged to enable candidates to develop their responses in order to demonstrate their range of vocabulary and knowledge of the language. Candidates may use only the present tense if they wish, but they would need to show a knowledge of past⁵ and near future tenses in order to access the top marks.

For **Part 3, the Open Conversation**, the following points are important:

- Striking a balance between candidate and examiner contribution is important.
- The examiner should avoid saying too much, but should not allow the whole exercise to become a pupil monologue; the candidate must also demonstrate an ability to listen and respond to questions.
- As far as possible, the examiner should make sure that questions are open-ended and avoid asking too many questions which require only short answers.
- However, candidates are expected to give natural replies to questions, so their answers need not be in the form of complete sentences, where a short answer is appropriate.
- The examiner should try to extend the candidate as far as possible, by giving him/her the opportunity to explain and justify his/her opinions.

Assessment of the Open Conversation

The examiner will give an overall impression mark (maximum of 8 marks) for spontaneity, quality of response, quality of language and range of tenses used. A best-fit policy should be used and ½ marks may be awarded.

⁵ Level 2 French and German only

As the descriptors for the Open Conversation vary according to the language being assessed, examiners are advised to obtain copies of the relevant mark scheme (*Appendix III*⁶ and *Appendix IV*⁷) from the most up to date version of the specification (available on the ISEB website).

Note that the highest marks are given for:

- good communication
- ready responses
- wide range of vocabulary
- good pronunciation

Of course, grammatical accuracy matters, and it is essential for good communication, but it is not the principal criterion by which a candidate's performance is judged. The best candidates have plenty to say in answer to the questions and communicate it effectively and convincingly, using the range of tenses specified in each language.

⁶ Level 1 French, Level 1 Spanish, and German

⁷ Level 2 French and Level 2 Spanish