



**HELLENIC AMERICAN UNION**

An educational public charity

**CENTER FOR EXAMINATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS**



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## ECPE Speaking Test: Dos and Don'ts

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ECPE



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# Hellenic American Union

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Administering the ECPE since 1957

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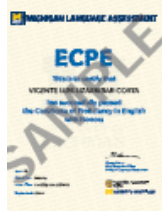
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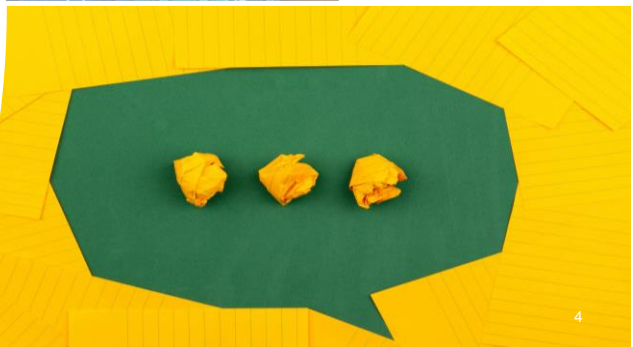
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## Takeaways

Share the oral examiners' experience with your students



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# Speaking

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**Format**

A decision-making task for two test-takers in 5 stages

Two examiners present

(Examiner 1 **Stages 1-3**, Examiner 2 **Stages 4-5**)  
**informal**                      **formal**

Duration: 25 -35 minutes

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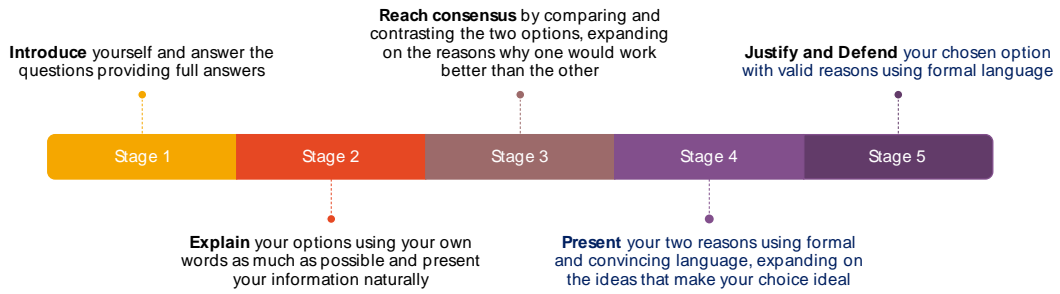
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## Steps per stage



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**Discourse and Interaction  
Linguistic Resources (Range and Accuracy)  
Delivery / Intelligibility**

**Assessment  
Criteria**

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# Introduction

Say a few things about yourself

Interact naturally

Maintain eye contact with the examiner and fellow test taker

ECPE Speaking Stage 1

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## Dos

Speak naturally

Answer specific questions and elaborate

Keep eye contact with examiner and fellow test taker

Ask for clarifications if necessary

## Don'ts

Recite pre-rehearsed presentation

Give 'dry' yes-no answers

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# Explaining & Recommending



ECPE Speaking Stage 2

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## **Explaining & Recommending**

Examiner provides the context of the role play

Test Takers are given the Speaking prompts

Test Takers aren't allowed to look at each other's information sheet

Test Takers get 2 minutes to familiarize themselves with the prompts

Test Takers explain information to each other and make recommendations

Finally, they decide on one of their own options

ECPE Speaking Stage 2

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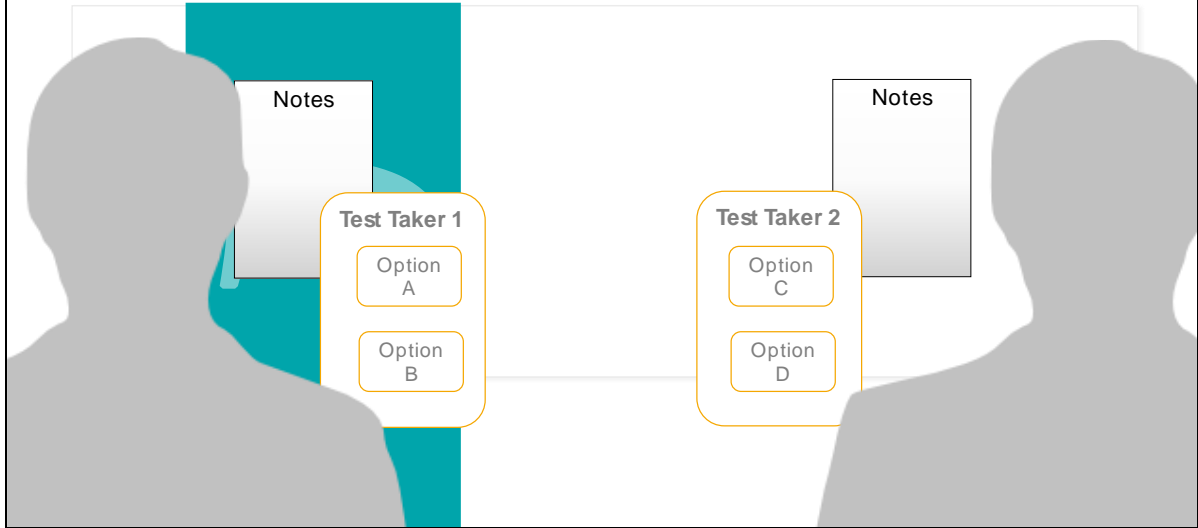
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# Explaining & Recommending



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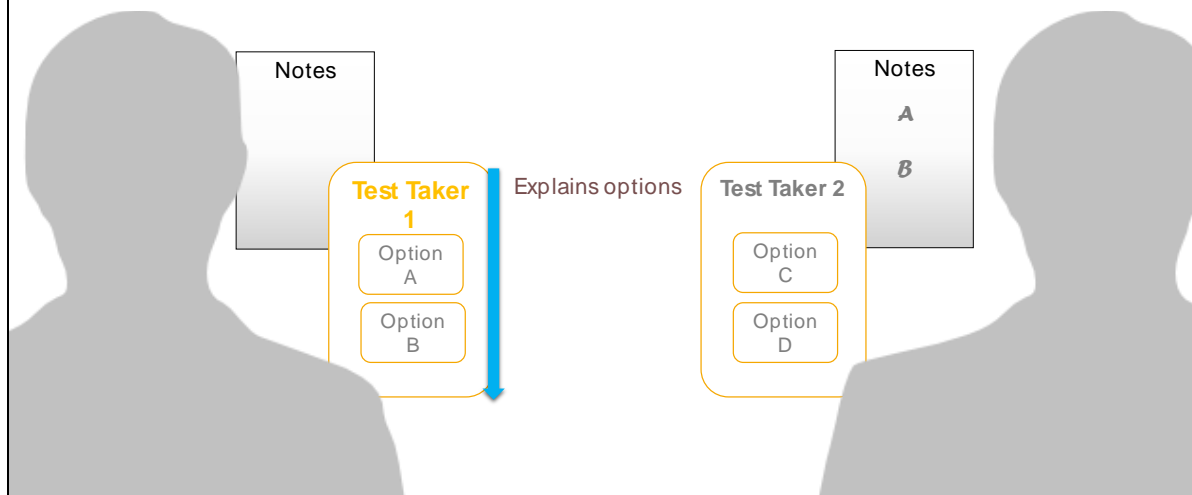
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# Explaining & Recommending



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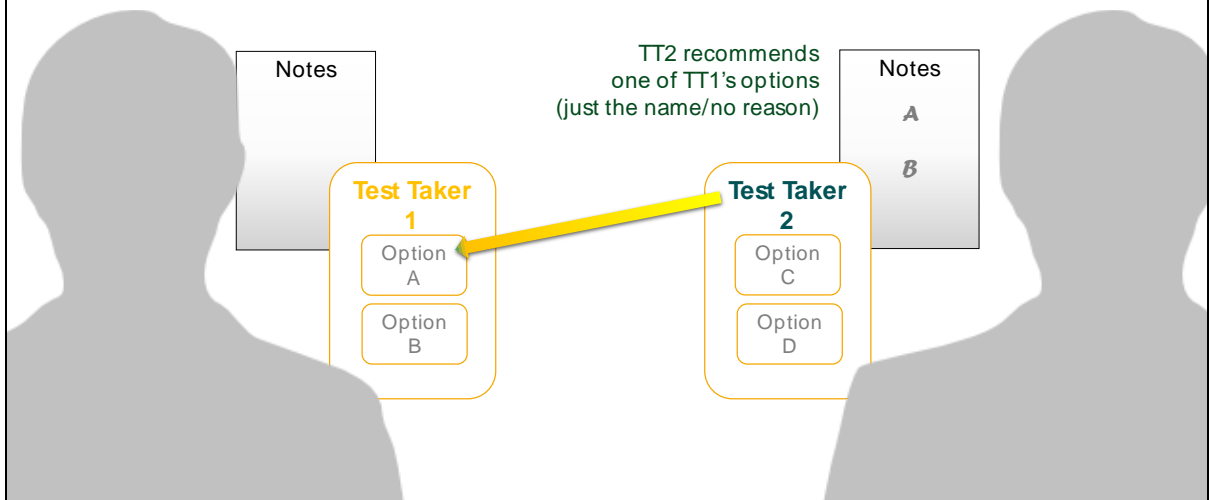
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# Explaining & Recommending



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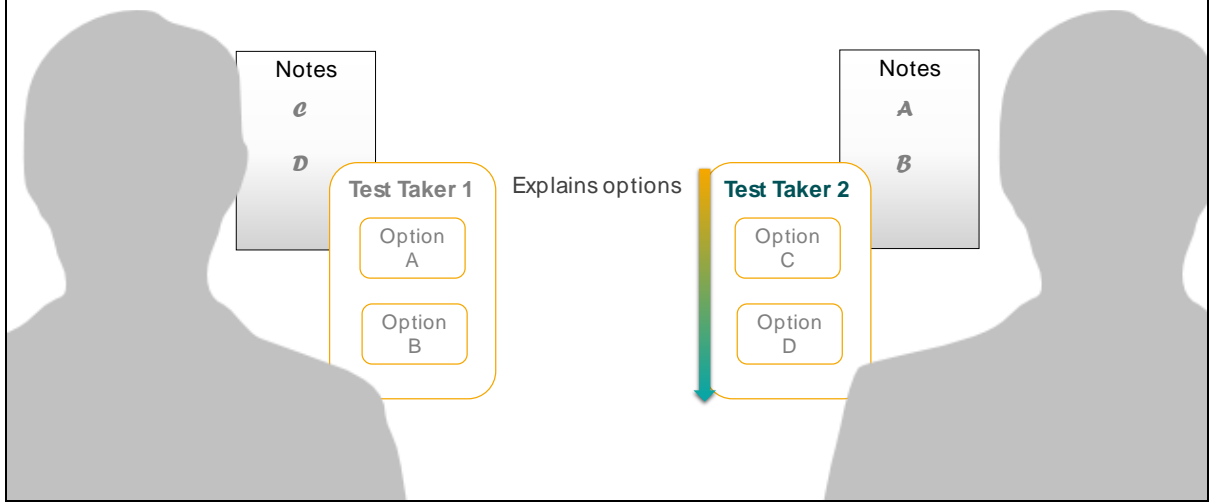
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# Explaining & Recommending



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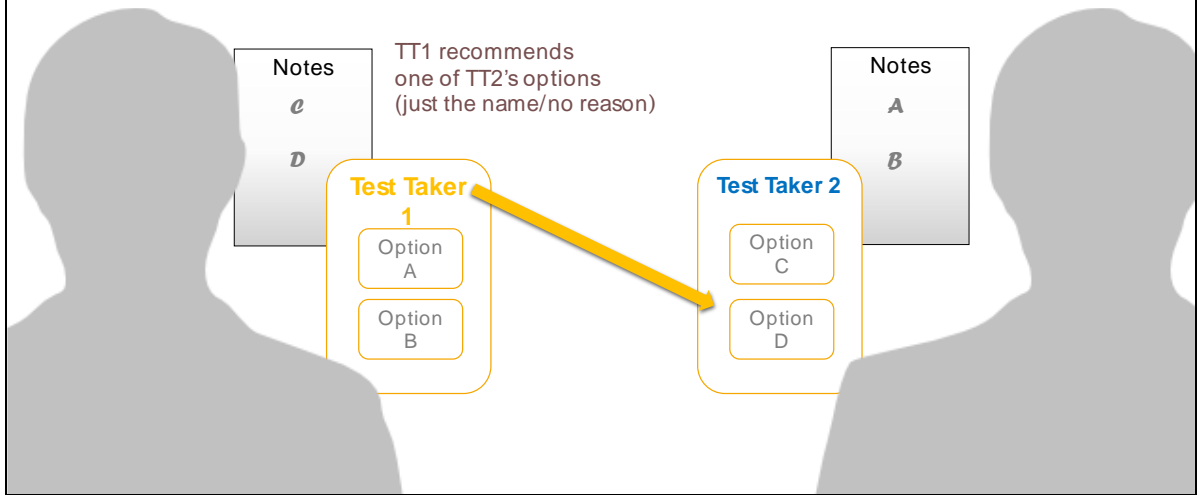
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# Explaining & Recommending



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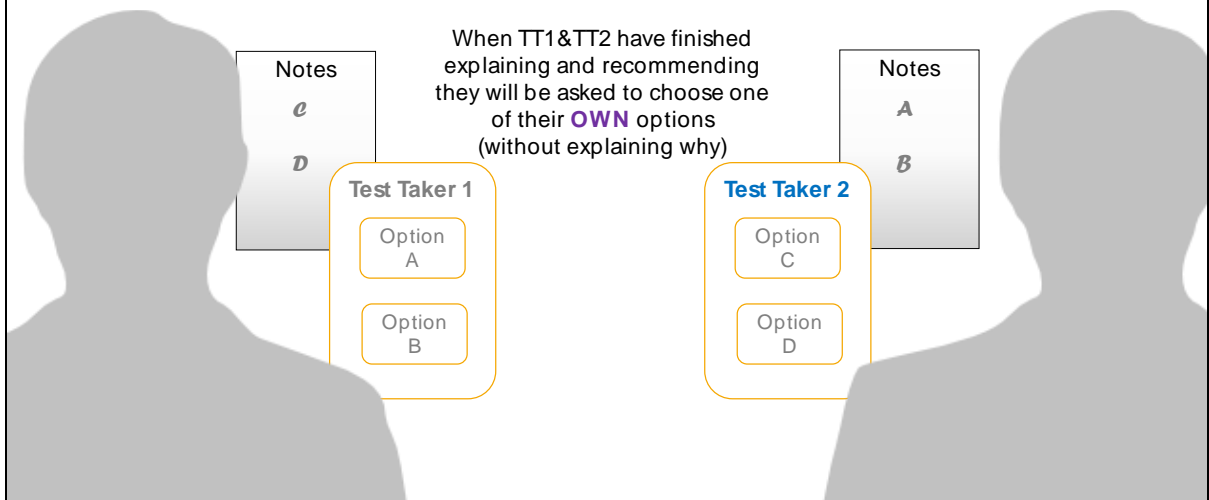
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# Explaining & Recommending



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Candidate 1

### Choosing a Program for a Secondary School

You are members of a school board. Your school needs to choose a program to fund.

**Computers**

The following is a list of details about expanding the school's computer lab:

- costs \$16,500
- twenty computers
- 35 percent of students benefit
- completed in three months
- need to hire lab assistant
- parents request more computer classes
- construction noise will disrupt classes

**Instruments**

The following is a list of details about purchasing instruments for the music department:

- costs \$12,500
- eighty instruments
- 20 percent of students benefit
- ready in eight weeks
- additional band instructor needed
- student musicians earn better grades
- students must pay to use

**ECPE Speaking Prompts**

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## Presentation Suggestions

- ✓ Use accurate synonyms
- ✓ Change parts of speech
- ✓ Use active/passive voice
- ✓ Explain a word/idea in your own words
- ✓ Organize/connect the bullet points
- ✓ Use appropriate linking phrases
- ✓ Introduce points without linking words
- ✓ Point can be used to justify another
- ✓ Refer to the name of your option
- ✓ Explain something about the feature

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## Synonyms

**Tip:** Consider the context and use accurate synonyms!

- **costs** \$12,500
  - “the school will have to **spend** \$12,500... which is quite reasonable”
  - “the **price** of X will come up to \$12,500...”
  - “X is **worth** \$12,500....”
  - “the **expenditure** for X will be \$12,500...”

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## Parts of Speech

- 35 percent of students **benefit**  
→ “It will be **beneficial** to 35% of the students...”
  
- construction noise will **disrupt** classes  
→ “The noise from the construction will cause **disruption** for classes...”

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## Roundabout expressions

- student musicians earn better grades
  - “people who study music have a better academic performance”
  - “music students receive better marks”
  - “students who learn how to play music, do better at school”

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## Information Combo

- costs \$11,000
- seventy pieces of athletic equipment

→ “We will have to spend \$11,000 in order to purchase 70 pieces of...”

→ “The total amount for purchasing 70 pieces of athletic equipment, will come up to \$11,000...”

→ “If our school funds the Athletic Equipment program, we will have to invest \$11,000...”

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## Linking words/phrases

- three more teams formed
- students interested in team sports

### Compare:

→ “The students are very keen on team sports...**therefore** we will form additional teams in our school...”

→ “The students are very keen on team sports...**moreover**, we will form additional teams in our school...”

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## Introducing a point

“A great point concerning X is...”

“What looks like a great asset about X is that...”

“Another point worth mentioning about X is...”

“Another important feature of X is...”

“The information about X further states that...”

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## Explaining a point

- completed in three months  
→ “the computer lab will be completed in 3 months... I believe it’s a good thing that it won’t take long for our students to start using it...”
- students must pay to use  
→ “...a disadvantage is that students must pay to use these instruments...but that might help them appreciate the instruments more and keep them in a good condition...”

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## Recommendation example

- “Having heard about your two options, I think you should choose ... (name of option)”
- “If I were you I would choose... (name of option)”
- I believe (name of option) is much better than (name of option)

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## Dos

Listen to context read out by the examiner  
(it may help you make the most appropriate  
choice later – So, why not take a note here?)

Use your own words wherever possible

Make logical assumptions

Explain  
(Ask for clarification if there are unknown words  
in the information sheet during prep time)

## Don'ts

Start taking notes from beginning  
(read information first and ask if there's  
something you do not understand)

Just read bullet points/dictate

Try to paraphrase everything

Use set lists of linking words/phrases

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## **Dos**

Remember the other Test Taker can't see your information

Remember you can present information in any order you wish if it helps your flow

Take notes in pencil on a note-taking form (helpful for Stage 3)

Recommend one by mentioning its name (without explaining why)

## **Don'ts**

Fabricate information

Skip points

Write on information sheet

Use a pen (a pencil will be provided)

ECPE Speaking Stage 2

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# Consensus Reaching



ECPE Speaking Stage 3

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## Consensus Reaching

Compare and Contrast the points of the two options.

Discuss advantages and disadvantages of each point.

Always give feedback to your fellow candidate.

Talk about most of the features in the options.

Remember you and your fellow candidate are in the same team.

About 5 minutes pure talking time to reach an agreement.

ECPE Speaking Stage 3

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### Dos

Compare and contrast points  
(use notes taken in Stage 2 and compare)

Explain / support / elaborate

Give other Test Taker feedback

Use up time allotted  
(show off language skills in that time)

Remember context of role play  
to make the most appropriate choice

### Don'ts

Repeat information as presented in Stage 2  
mechanically + 'What do you think?'

Stick to own information without  
mentioning the other Test Taker's

Rush to agree  
(Oral Examiner will ask you to keep going)

ECPE Speaking Stage 3

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# Presenting & Convincing



ECPE Speaking Stage 4

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## Suggested presentation outline



Introduction

• TT1 refers to the situation and the chosen option  
*e.g. After careful consideration, we have come to the conclusion that ...*

Test Taker 1

• First point -> Justify     Second point -> Justify  
*e.g. The first reason why we believe X would be the best option is...  
Another advantage is the fact that ...*  
Turn floor over to TT2

*And now my partner will continue with 2 more points in favor of ...  
My partner, now, will carry on with 2 more reasons why we both believe that ...*

Test Taker 2

• Third point -> Justify reasons     Fourth point -> Justify reasons  
*e.g. One more reason why we believe X would be the best choice is..  
Finally, opting for ... would certainly be an asset for ... /wise  
decision as ...*

Conclude

• Refer briefly to the situation to wrap it up  
*e.g. That is why we both believe that ...  
We, therefore, believe that X would certainly be the best choice for...*

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# Presenting & Convincing

Use formal language to present.

Use a formal presentation structure.

Justify your points (2 bullet points each).

Be persuasive.



ECPE Speaking Stage 4

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**Roberto Rossi**

- chef trainer
- used to own a high quality restaurant

*As members of the HR department, we discussed in detail the various features of the four options provided and after careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that Roberto Rossi meets our requirements and high standards.*

*The first reason why we believe he serves our purpose lies in the fact that he trains chefs; he is not just a chef but due to his experience, he conveys his knowledge to people who study to become chefs. There is no doubt that he is an expert at what he does.*

*Another advantage is that he has also got managerial experience since he owned a well-known restaurant of high standards. We are convinced that he will be able to help us out with other issues that might occur besides organizing the kitchen.*

ECPE Speaking Stage 4 –Presentation example

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**Dos**

Use up time allotted to prepare formal presentation  
(it's not just about picking two reasons each)

Introduce / present / conclude

Use context to introduce presentation and support choice

Use formal register  
(remember who you are meant to be talking to)

Provide a conclusion in your presentation

**Don'ts**

Repeat information without explaining

Use one point

Use more than two points

ECPE Speaking Stage 4

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## **Justifying & Defending**

Challenge questions → Defend your option

Ideas/creativity are not assessed

Overall quality of language

Avoid general/vague answers



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### Choosing a Musician

*You are executives for a music company. You need to decide which musician or musical group you will give a recording contract to.*

#### Empty Pockets

The following list provides some relevant information about Empty Pockets:

- four-member group
- rhythm and blues
- played together for twenty years
- all original music
- currently performing in Chicago
- last CD used in a Hollywood movie
- recently arrested for possession of drugs



#### ECPE Speaking Stage 5 - Example

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### Examiner's challenge question:

"You said Empty Pockets have been in the music scene for twenty years. I'm worried that people will not buy the CD of an old band but they might prefer someone new and fresh...I am concerned whether they will appeal to today's market."

#### Answer 1

*"You have a point, but I don't think that they will have a problem...I think it's very important that they have been together for so long. It shows that they work well together and this is something that we want."*

#### Compare

#### Answer 2

*"I understand your concern, but this is nothing to worry about. Taking examples from the music industry ..like the Arctic Monkeys or the BTS, we see that fans are loyal to their favorite bands no matter how long they've been around. Contrary to your concern, I think it's a very positive point that this band has kept its fans for so many years.. I am convinced that it will still appeal to the market today..."*

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## Dos

Give full answers

Answer specific question  
(avoid vague answers)

## Don'ts

Attempt to answer using other points  
that were not presented

Agree with examiner 2

ECPE Speaking Stage 5

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## Hellenic American Union Publications

Practice Examinations Book series



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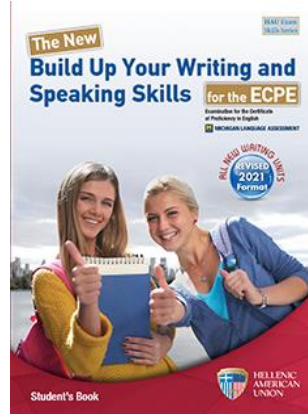
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# Hellenic American Union Publications

Build Up Your Skills Book series



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