



Cracking the Code of the ECPE Speaking test: Q&A

A webinar for teachers



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Hellenic American Union

Administering the ECPE since 1957



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ECPE



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Speaking

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)

Duration: 25 -35 minutes

ECPE Speaking Q&A





Introduction

How comfortable are your students with Speaking?

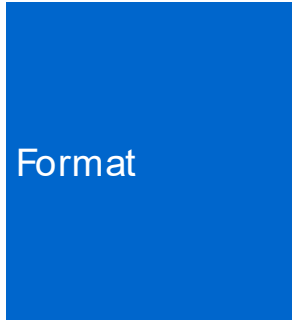




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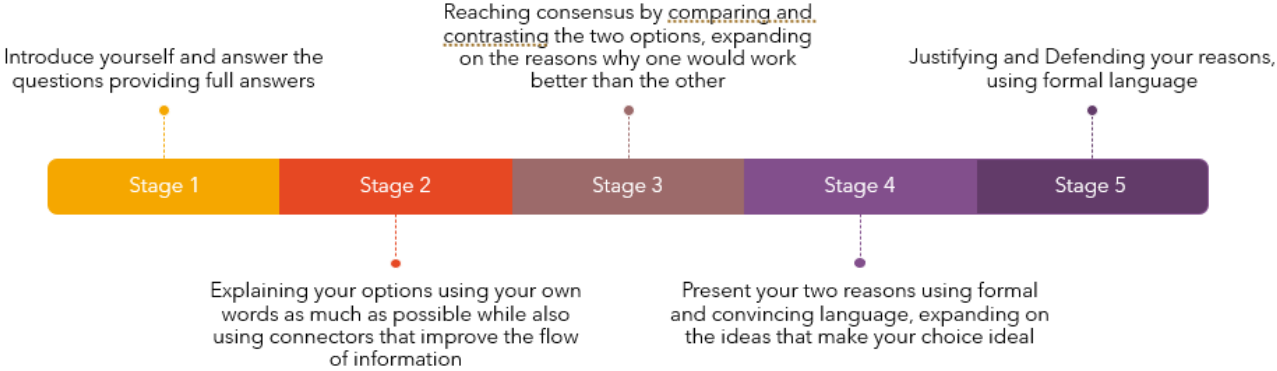
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- Stage 1:** Introduction
- Stage 2:** Explaining + Recommending
- Stage 3:** Consensus reaching
- Stage 4:** Presenting + Convincing
- Stage 5:** Justifying + Defending





Timeline





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Skills elicited by the ECPE speaking task

- Asking and answering specific questions and elaborating
- Explaining and paraphrasing information, making logical assumptions
- Comparing and contrasting options, being interactive and in context
- Explaining, supporting, elaborating and providing feedback
- Presenting in formal register, elaborating and defending decisions





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

Assessment

ECPE Speaking Q&A



Official Speaking Rating Scale



Discourse and Interaction









Linguistic Resources
(Range/Accuracy)



Delivery/Intelligibility



Official Speaking Rating Scale

	Discourse and Interaction	Linguistic Resources (Range and Accuracy)	Delivery/Intelligibility
Stages 1-3			
Stages 4-5			



Can I produce independent spontaneous speech?

Do I contribute consistently to the interaction?

Can I understand information to engage extensively in the interaction?

Can I regularly paraphrase information?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Discourse
and Interaction



Can I use a range of complex grammatical structures?

Can I use a broad range of vocabulary?

Is my range of resources accurate and effective?

Linguistic
Resources
(Range/Accuracy)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

ECPE Speaking Q&A



Am I fluent and articulate using the correct register?

Does my voice contribute to intended meaning?

Do pauses in my speech cause strain to the listener?

Delivery/
Intelligibility

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

ECPE Speaking Q&A



ECPE Speaking Rating Scale

Expert

	5	Expert	Discourse and Interaction <i>Development, Functional Range, and Listening Comprehension</i>		Linguistic Resources <i>Range and Accuracy</i>		Delivery and Intelligibility
			Grammar	Vocabulary			
			Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains concisely and accurately; little to no reliance on written material Provides coherent explanations without prompting on all topics Presents decisions persuasively and appropriately for varying contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a wide variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and effectively Uses a range of grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses broad range of vocabulary Collocations, colloquial language, idiomatic expressions used accurately and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent and articulate delivery Often uses rate of speech and/or prosodic features to add meaning, aid listener, and/or to shift style/register appropriately 	
			Contribution to Extended Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently contributes appropriately to development of interaction; very aware of listener Recommendations are appropriate and supported with explanations Justifies position, regularly paraphrasing and elaborating to explain and/or clarify Communication breakdowns are rare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Slips of the tongue" may occur, often self-corrected; (fossilized) errors may be present throughout discourse but do not impede interaction 			
			Listening Comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic information in order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction 				



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ECPE Speaking Rating Scale

Limited

	Discourse and Interaction <i>Development, Functional Range, and Listening Comprehension</i>	Linguistic Resources <i>Range and Accuracy</i>		Delivery and Intelligibility
		Grammar	Vocabulary	
1 Limited	<p>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to explain; merely reads information provided • Occasionally able, when prompted, to elaborate on concrete and familiar topics; explanations usually lack organization • Usually able to present basic position on concrete topic; very little elaboration; usually repeats language already produced <p>Contribution to Extended Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently unable to contribute to the development of discourse on topics that have been provided; considerable reliance on interlocutors • Usually able to state a recommendation or opinion but unable to provide supporting explanation • Rarely able to justify and defend; attempts are almost always unclear and repetitive • Almost always unable to repair communication breakdowns <p>Listening Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme limitations in comprehension result in an inability to engage in extended discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses only basic structures that regularly contain errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited vocabulary • Regularly searches for words • Frequently uses vague expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow and halting delivery • Production is often word by word, resulting in a lack of sentence rhythm and flat intonation • Errors in rhythm, stress, and intonation disrupt intelligibility, often causing considerable listener effort • L1 influence may disrupt intelligibility



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Level Bands

Band score	Scaled numeric score
Honors (H)	840-1000
Pass (P)	750-835
Low Pass (LP)	650-745
Borderline Fail (BF)	610-645





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Your Questions





What are the Stage 1 personal questions?

Are they always related to the topic?





Stage 2

- During the paraphrasing section, is it permitted for students to use link words and phrases and to elaborate on points or is it just paraphrasing the information?
- Do the test-takers have to paraphrase the information given to them in the second part?
- How much paraphrase is enough paraphrase for part 2-5? Are terms which can't be paraphrased ok to be used as they are?





Stage 2

- When the candidates explain their 2 options to their partner in the beginning, do they just paraphrase and say the information or do they also have to give explanations/arguments for each bullet point?

Or do they give explanations/arguments/advantages/disadvantages only when they have each chosen one option later on?

- ECPE Speaking. If a candidate does not know/understand a bullet in Stage 2, can he ask for clarification?
- When presenting the drawback in Stage 2, can they also explain why they don't believe it's a strong reason to reject that option?
- What if a candidate merely reads the prompts from their paper instead of paraphrasing them?





Stage 3

- Considering the length and interaction of it, most of my students who have previously sat for the ECPE are asked to talk more?
- What happens if one of the candidates is over-talkative in Stage 3 and does not allow the other to speak?
- In Stage 3, what exactly do the candidates have to do?





Stage 4

- When students plan the presentation, should they explain the points they choose or just mention which ones they choose?





Stage 5

- In Stage 5, please explain the task.
- Are questions in part 5 based on what the speakers say or do the examiners have them ready beforehand?
- In Stage 5, can a candidate justify his answer to a challenge question using points he didn't present himself previously in Stage 4 (points the other candidate presented)?
- In Stage 5, can a candidate justify his answer to a challenge question using points he didn't present himself previously in Stage 4?





General ECPE Speaking questions

- How many points are deducted due to mispronounced words, grammatical mistakes, syntactical mistakes?
- How to develop their speaking skill in order to succeed in the exam?
- Please give us more information about level 3.
- What makes marking in the ECPE session so difficult to have a decent uniformity?
- A couple of tips that will guarantee our students' success.
- Have they changed anything?

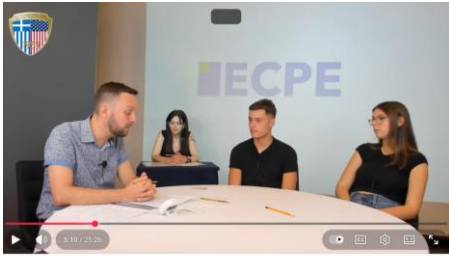




General ECPE Speaking questions

- Supposing a candidate hasn't practiced the ECPE speaking test at all, to what extent is the fellow candidate affected and what can he/she do to handle this situation?
- Do grammar mistakes and serious lexical errors result in failure?
- How is candidate B's lack of participation reflected in candidate A's grade, given that the latter would not be able to sustain interaction?
- Why do the examiners have to be so strict with the candidates in the final stage of the test? Why do some of them make embarrassing remarks? There are some videos on YouTube but they don't give information or grading—everything looks so subjective.





ECPE Speaking test_2025
Hellenic American Union Athens
3.3K subscribers

A speaking test video sample

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOAOxBWHBeE>





**Selecting a Location
for a Class Trip**

- The two (three) of you are students in a high school class that's going on a three-day trip in the spring.
- You are on the selection committee to decide the location.
- Four (six) locations have made it to the final selection process.
- Each of you will be given descriptions of two of the four (six) locations.
- You will need to describe the two locations to the members of the committee so that both (all) will know the four (six) locations.

Examiner 2 is the school principal.

Test Taker 1

**Selecting a Location
for a Class Trip****New York City, New York**

The following list provides some relevant information about New York:

- 2 hours by train
- 20°C
- tours of art museums
- discounted Broadway show tickets
- shopping at specialty stores
- visit to Statue of Liberty
- accommodations will be expensive

Aspen, Colorado

The following list provides some relevant information about Aspen:

- 4-hour flight and 1-hour bus ride
- 16°C
- bicycles available for rent
- camping in mountains
- well-marked hiking trails
- optional river rafting
- students may suffer from altitude sickness



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Test Taker 2

Test Taker 3

**Selecting a Location
for a Class Trip****Vancouver, Canada**

The following list provides some relevant information about Vancouver:

- 6-hour flight
- 18°C
- whale-watching tour
- beach campfire on last night
- free aquarium tickets
- scuba diving lessons available
- only for students with passports

Williamsburg, Virginia

The following list provides some relevant information about Williamsburg:

- 5-hour drive
- 25°C
- tour of historic village
- small amusement park
- camp in nature preserve
- stop at waterfall on way
- parents must drive

**Selecting a Location
for a Class Trip****Orlando, Florida**

The following list provides some relevant information about Orlando:

- 2-hour flight
- 31°C
- discounted tickets to Disney World
- golf lessons provided
- trip to alligator park
- hotel near new shopping mall
- weather very humid

Washington, DC

The following list provides some relevant information about Washington, DC:

- 4 hours by train
- 23°C
- White House tour
- walking tour of national monuments
- bus trip to zoo
- Air and Space Museum visit
- high crime rate



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Thank you



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