

Cambridge English  
**BEC Vantage**

**Sample Material for Special Requirements Versions of  
Speaking Tests**

**Examinations from 2018**

# Introduction

## What happens?

For most examinations, blind candidates and candidates with visual difficulties may choose to take the speaking test **alone** or **with a partner**. For the *B2 Business Vantage Speaking* test there is **NO** single candidate format.

B2 Business Vantage Speaking tests have two examiners; the Assessor and the Interlocutor.

The partner may be:

- another candidate who is visually impaired
- a 'dummy partner' (a colleague or friend **who is not taking the examination, has a similar level of English to the candidate, and is familiar with the format of the Speaking Test**). The dummy partner can be either visually impaired or sighted.

## Who are Special Requirements versions for?

On the following pages are sample materials for paired candidate formats, which include:

- Standard written prompts
- Enlarged written prompts.

Enlarged print versions with written prompts are for candidates with visual difficulties, and candidates who have a physical disability which makes it difficult for them to read normal-sized print or focus on pictures/photographs.

Brailled material will be supplied for blind candidates, or those with severe visual impairments who prefer to work from Braille. Sample brailled material is not provided here, but note that brailled written prompts are the same as those used in enlarged material.

Braille users should also note that written prompts for Part 2 and Part 3 tasks are brailled on separate Braille sheets.

Braille users may apply to use a Braille Notetaker or other forms of access technology to prepare their presentations if they wish.

## What material is used with candidates who are visually impaired?

Most Cambridge Business Speaking Tests like *Cambridge B2 Business Vantage* use written or visual prompts as a stimulus for interaction. The tasks do not contain any pictures or graphical elements. For visually-impaired candidates, a special version of the speaking test is produced.

Candidates can opt to use standard or enlarged written prompts, or written prompts which have been brailled.

All printed text is enlarged to a uniform font size and type (Arial 18 point bold).

Examiners are given adapted scripts (called 'interlocutor frames') to use with the material. These interlocutor frames are designed to keep the test as close as possible to the standard *Cambridge English: B2 Business Vantage* Speaking test in terms of structure and candidate experience.

## The paired candidate format

A paired version of the test materials can be provided using:

### Written prompts

- Enlarged written prompts
- Braille prompts

### What happens in the paired candidate format test?

Special interlocutor frames are prepared for blind and visually impaired candidates taking speaking tests with a partner.

Blind candidates can take the test with another candidate who is blind or with a 'dummy' (non-assessed) partner. Both partners must use written prompts (in Braille or print versions).

Visually impaired candidates can take the test with another candidate who is visually impaired or with a 'dummy' (non-assessed) partner. Both partners must use material in the same format.

As far as possible, the paired format for the speaking test procedure will be similar to that of the standard speaking test. Some further time is given for candidates to look at/read materials but the structure of the test is the same as in the standard test.

### What about timing?

For paired format tests, interlocutors allow candidates additional time to process texts or questions before replying, or to read and think about written material. The amount of additional time is at the discretion of the examiner, but candidates are always given sufficient time to read and process tasks. Approximate timings are shown in the following sample interlocutor frames.

If you have any questions about how Special Requirements speaking tests are carried out, please contact the Cambridge English Language Assessment Helpdesk: Tel: +44 1223 553997  
Email: [helpdesk@cambridgeenglish.org](mailto:helpdesk@cambridgeenglish.org)

## **WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?**

### **Part 1 Interview**

Material for this part is used unchanged. The interlocutor asks each candidate general and then more business-related questions.

### **Part 2 Mini-presentation**

Examiners choose a task for each partner from the selected tasks.

2 candidate booklets are provided with enlarged task material. These booklets should also be used with sighted partners.

Brailled versions of the tasks are provided separately for blind candidates to replace booklets.

The booklets/Brailled task sheets are handed to the candidates as appropriate. Candidates are invited to read the written prompts following the wording of the interlocutor frame. When the task is completed, the examiner will retrieve the material with the request

*“Can I have the booklet(s)/task sheet(s), please?”*

Blind candidates may apply to use a Braille Notetaker or other forms of access technology to prepare their presentations if they wish.

### **Part 3 Collaborative task and discussion**

Examiners choose a task from the selected tasks.

1 candidate booklet is provided with enlarged task material. This booklet should also be used with sighted partners.

Brailled versions of the written prompts are provided separately for blind candidates to replace the booklet.

The relevant booklet/brailled task sheet is handed over to/placed in front of candidates as appropriate, and candidates are invited to read the written prompt following the wording of the interlocutor frame. When the task is completed, examiners retrieve the material with the request

*“Can I have the booklet/task sheet, please?”*

**Candidates are allowed sufficient time to read and think about brailled material or to scan and process enlarged print.**

# **Paired candidate format Written prompts**

**For candidates using:**

- Enlarged written prompts
- Braille prompts\*

**\*Braille prompts will have the same wording as the enlarged written prompts**

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## Part 1, phase 2 for 2 candidates

### Frame 1: Customer Loyalty

Now I'm going to ask you both some questions about customer loyalty.

Back up  
question

Why do you think many customers are loyal to particular brands, *A*?  
Why do many customers keep buying the same brands?

Back up  
question

What do you think, *B*?  
Why do you think many customers are loyal to particular brands?

Back up  
question

How do you think companies can persuade customers to stay loyal, *B*?  
How can companies encourage customers to stay loyal?

Back up  
question

What do you think, *A*?  
How do you think companies can persuade customers to stay loyal?

Back up  
question

*A*, do you think it's better to focus on loyal customers or to attract new customers? (Why?/Why not?)  
Is it better for companies to keep their loyal customers or to attract new customers? (Why?/Why not?)

Back up  
question

*B*, do you think companies should find out as much as possible about their loyal customers? (Why?/Why not?)  
Should companies find out as much as possible about their loyal customers? (Why?/Why not?)

Thank you.

## PART 2 for 2 candidates

⌚ Approx. 6 mins.

Now, in this part of the test, I'm going to give each of you a choice of three different topics. I'd like you to select one of the topics and give a short presentation on it for about a minute. You will have time to prepare this and you can make notes if you want. After you have finished your talk, your partner will ask you a question.

All right? Here are your topics. Please don't write anything in the booklets.

*[Place a Part 2 booklet or brailled Task sheet (open at an appropriate task) in front of each candidate so that the candidate can read the task. Allow candidates adequate time to make notes, using their preferred method].*

Now, **B**, which topic have you chosen, **A**, **B** or **C**?

Would you like to talk about what you think is important when *[interlocutor states candidate's chosen topic]*?

**A**, please listen carefully to **B**'s talk, and then ask him/her a question about it.

⌚ about  
60 seconds

Thank you. Now, **A**, please ask **B** a question about his/her talk.

Now, **A**, which topic have you chosen, **A**, **B** or **C**?

Would you like to talk about what you think is important when *[interlocutor states candidate's chosen topic]*?

**B**, please listen carefully to **A**'s talk, and then ask him/her a question about it.

⌚ about  
60 seconds

Thank you. Now, **B**, please ask **A** a question about his/her talk.

Thank you.

Can I have the booklets, please?

*[Retrieve Part 2 booklets/brailled Task sheets, pencils and paper (if used).]*



**A: What is important when...?**

Selecting staff for promotion

- Attitude to work
- Current performance
- 
- 

**Back up questions**

Is the employee's **attitude to work** the most important thing to consider? (Why?/Why not?)

Why is it important to consider an employee's **current performance**?

*Select from the following additional prompts (if the above have already been covered):*

How important is it to consider **ambition**? (Why?/Why not?)

How important is it for the candidate to have **skills appropriate** for the new post? (Why?)

**B: What is important when...?**

Considering a career change

- Further study or training
- Opportunities for future promotion
- 
- 

**Back up questions**

Why is it important to consider **further study or training**?

Is it important to consider **opportunities for further promotion**? (Why?/Why not?)

*Select from the following additional prompts (if the above have already been covered):*

How important is it to consider **financial rewards**? (Why?)

Is it important to consider **flexible working arrangements** when considering a career change? (Why?/Why not?)

**C: What is important when...?**

Renting retail premises

- Location
- Length of contract
- 
- 

**Back up questions**

Is **location** the most important thing to consider? (Why?/Why not?)

Why is the **length of contract** important?

*Select from the following additional prompts (if the above have already been covered):*

How important is **cost**? (Why?)

How important is it to consider the **condition** of the premises (Why?)

## PART 3 for 2 candidates

⌚ Approx. 5 mins.

**Now, in this part of the test you are going to discuss something together.**

*[Place a Part 3 booklet or brailled Task sheet (open at an appropriate task) in front of the candidates.]*

**First I will give you time to read this task carefully. Then you will have about three minutes to discuss and decide about it together. You should give reasons for your decisions and opinions. You don't need to write anything. Is that clear?**

**All right – can you read the task now please?**

*[Give candidates adequate time to read task.]*

**I'm just going to listen and then ask you to stop after about three minutes. Please speak so that we can hear you.**

⌚ about  
3 minutes

**Can I have the booklet, please?**

*[Retrieve Part 3 booklet / brailled Task sheet]*

*[Select one or more of the following questions, as appropriate, to redress any imbalance between candidates in Part 3, or to extend the discussion.]*

- What **other preparations** would the company make before having work experience students? (Why?)
- What are the **advantages** to a company of offering a work experience programme to business students? (Why)
- In what **other ways** can businesses develop close links with the community?
- What do you think is the **most useful** kind of work experience for business students? (Why?)
- What **help** would you give a student on their first day of work experience? (Why?)
- What areas of business would **you** like to have more experience of? (Why?)

**Thank you. That is the end of the test.**

### Work Experience Programme

Your company has decided to offer a 2-week work experience programme for a small group of business students.

You have been asked to help with the preparations for this programme.

Discuss the situation together and decide:

- what kinds of work experience should be offered to the students
- how the participants should be selected.

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