BRITISH COUNCIL Aptis

APTIS FOR TEACHERS: SPEAKING PRACTICE TEST 1

Part One

TIP: *Always give full answers to the questions, and try to use as many different structures and expressions as possible. 30 seconds is longer than you think!*

Q1: Please tell me about your favourite teacher.

IDEAS & VOCABULARY: Say why you like/liked them, what makes/made them special for you. Use positive adjectives like *patient / friendly / inventive.*

Think about what made that teacher special, and explain why you liked her or him. Say how she or he made you feel. Try to use a variety of structures and vocabulary. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **The best teacher I've ever had was …** (my English teacher). **She/He loved her/his job, and she'd always try to get the best out of her students**
- **What I liked about her/him was …** (his/her enthusiasm for her subject, how approachable she was, the way she made lessons fun …)
- **She/He made me feel …** (like my opinions mattered, that I could do well in class, that I wanted to study and pass my exams …)

Q2: What kind of lessons do students like?

IDEAS & VOCABULARY: Talk about the importance of motivating students and getting them involved. Use adjectives like: *interactive / participative / interesting.*

Not all students are the same, so consider different groups. Think about your own classes, or your experience as a student. Try to include vocabulary specific to classes. For example:

- **Well, it depends on …** (the age-group, how motivated the students are, whether they need to pass an exam …)
- **My own students love …** (being active in class, learning through doing, having fun while studying, doing interactive exercises using technology, playing games …)
- **In general, I'd say what they like most is …** (having a good variety of activities, working in pairs and groups with their friends as well as individually …)

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Q3: Please tell me about your first experience teaching.

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Use a variety of past forms, such as used to + infinitive, would + infinitive as well as past simple. Use past continuous for contrast (what the students were doing when you arrived, etc). Use past perfect to talk about what you'd done beforehand to prepare, etc.

If you haven't taught yet, talk about your experience as a trainee teacher. Try to include a range of tenses as well as expressions and vocabulary to do with education. For example:

- **I'll never forget my first experience. It was with …** (young learners, children, teenagers, adults … in a nursery/infants/primary/secondary school, college …)
- **I had to give a class on …** (maths, PE, science etc …)**, and I'd prepared every detail of my lesson plan …**
- **There was one particular moment when …** (I went completely blank, the technology wouldn't work, I went bright red, the students started talking …)

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Part Two:

TIP: *Make sure you answer the specific questions they ask – don't just talk generally about the topic.*

Q1: Describe this picture.



USEFUL LANGUAGE: This photo shows … / in the background / in the foreground / look like + noun / look + adjective / look as if + clause / might be / could be / must be …

You have to describe the people, what they're doing, what they're wearing (if it's useful – for example, it could tell you something about the weather), but more importantly (especially at B2+), speculate as to where they are and how they might feel. Give reasons to support your ideas. Focus on the ***useful language*** *of* ***speculation & deduction****. In this part we're giving you sample B2 answers.*

This is a children's classroom**. It looks as though** it's in an Asian country – **it could be** Japan – **because** all the children have black hair. **They look** about four or five years old, and **they seem** happy. They're wearing school overalls, and **they're dancing, or maybe playing** a game. **The teacher looks** European, so **it's probably** a language school. **In the background** some women **– maybe** the mothers – are filming the activity, so **it might be** an end-of-course show.

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Q2: How are foreign languages normally taught in your country?

VOCABULARY: age-group / class size / language facilities /IT / methodology …

This is your chance to use a lot of language-teaching vocabulary. Try to include some passive forms too.

Language classes in Spain follow quite a **modern methodology** now. **There used to** be more **grammar and writing** than **speaking and listening**, but nowadays there's a lot of **emphasis on communication** and teachers aren't so worried about students **making mistakes**. Younger learners **are often taught through** songs and games, and **technology is used** a lot with older children and teenagers. Students use **tablets** in class for **interactive exercises.**

Q3: Do you think all students should have to learn a foreign language? Why? Why not?

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Use a variety of modal verbs (should, ought to, etc). Say what you think: in my opinion / if you ask me / personally, I believe / to my mind. Give reasons: that's why / because / for those reasons …

Here the examiner is asking for your opinion – try to give it in a variety of ways. Give reasons to support your opinion. Try to include modal verbs. Remember to use the gerund *('ing' form of the verb) if you want to use a verb as the subject.*

I think students ought to **learn** at least one **foreign language,** because **we all travel a lot (in normal times!) and** being able to communicate **is so important. I know we've got Google Translate now, but** in my opinion **that's not the same! People** respond better **when you try to** speak their language**, so we** should all make **more effort.** I believe **that** studying **a foreign language** opens students' minds**, and language teachers** must try **to encourage this.**

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Part Three:

TIP: *The examiners are looking for the language of making comparisons, giving reasons and expressing opinions here.*

Q1: Tell me what you see in these two pictures.




USEFUL LANGUAGE: The first photo shows ..., whereas/while in the second photo ... / in the background/foreground / look like + noun / look + adjective / look as if + clause / might be / could be / must be

Here the examiner is asking you to compare and contrast two pictures. You need to make sure you cover both photos, so don't spend too long on the first one. It's often a better idea to compare as you go, using words like, while and whereas.:

The first picture shows **a very** old-fashioned, formal **classroom,** while **the second photo** was taken **in a** modern **classroom with** new technology**. In the first picture all the** desks **are** in rows, **and the students are** separated from each **other,** whereas **in the second the desks** are pushed together **in a** semi-circle**. In the first room the teacher's desk is on a** raised platform, while **in the** more informal **class the teacher's** on a level with **the students.**

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Q2: How has teaching and learning changed over time?

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Use *used to + infinitive / would + infinitive* to talk about the past. Use present perfect to talk about changes. Use complex comparatives like *far more / much less …*

Make sure you use the present perfect to describe the changes. Contrast the present and the past – for example, by using 'used to' or 'would'.

Well, **I'd say the biggest change** has got to be **the use of technology in the classroom**. We **used to spend** hours in the library **looking things up** in encyclopaedias, but **that's all changed** now. Most of us **have instant access to** all the information we need, and **that's made a real difference** in teaching and learning of every subject. Students **have much more autonomy** now. And having **multimedia classrooms** gives teachers **far more choice**.

Q3: How do you think classes will change in the future?

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS: Say what you think: in my opinion / I think / on one hand … on the other hand. Use *will + infinitive* for predictions, and the 1st conditional to talk about possible changes.

This question gives you the chance to use future forms and conditionals as well as the language of opinion. Take that chance!

It's often said **that with all the new technology,** teachers will probably disappear from the classroom. If that happened, I think we'd lose **a lot**. There's already been **a lot of** online teaching **because of the pandemic, but most teachers and students** have really missed being at school. I imagine there'll be **more** hybrid classes **in the future – a mix of** face-to-face **and** distance learning. **But** students will always **want that personal touch,** if you ask me.

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Part Four:

TIP: *Definitely* ***use the minute they give you to make quick notes. Divide the paper into the 3 question headings to make sure you answer each part.***

Use the minute they give you to take ***notes*** *on what you're going to say. Don't try to write full sentences. Divide your paper into three columns, to make sure you include each of the three points. Your answers don't have to be equal in length – for example, how you felt will probably be the shortest part. But you must answer all the questions, so make sure you have* ***something in each column****. (Remember, the photo here is only decorative – do* ***not*** *describe it!)*

- **Tell me about a special occasion in your childhood.**
- **How did you feel about it?**
- **Do you think children have enough time to play?**



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- **Tell me about a special occasion in your childhood.**

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Use past simple to describe that occasion, but contrast it with habits (*used to + infinitive / would + infinitive*). Use past perfect to talk about what had led up to it.

This part gives you the chance to use a variety of narrative tenses and forms (past simple, used to, would, past perfect). Here are some ideas to get you started:

I'll always remember the time **when … (my sister was born, I got a bike for my birthday, I saw the sea for the first time, I was in the school play, I got my first pet …)**

- I must have been about four years old …
- The most memorable occasion was when …
- I remember spending hours playing with my friends …
- We would meet every day/play in the park …

- **How did you feel about it?**

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS: Use colourful adjectives like *excited /delighted / over the moon …*

Try to include imaginative, colourful adjectives and expressions:

I'd never felt so excited/surprised/delighted! I was over the moon! I couldn't believe my eyes! It was the best day of my life! I thought I was the luckiest child alive!

- **Do you think children have enough time to play?**

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Say what you think: in my opinion / if you ask me / personally, I believe / to my mind, etc. Use modal verbs (should, ought to, etc).

Try to use different ways of giving your opinion this time. Here's another sample B2 answer:

As I see it, **children today** don't have as much **free time to play as we** used to have. **There are so many** extra-curricular activities, not to mention **all the** private classes **so many kids have to do if they** fail their exams. It makes me wonder **if parents** place too much importance **on school, and** not enough on having time to play. **That** could have something to do with **the fact that in so many families, both parents have to work, and it's often cheaper to** enrol your children **in an** after-school class **than to pay for a babysitter. But play is** so important **in** a child's development. We should **all play more, in fact!**

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