B2 EXAM Speaking: From Data to Discussion I

*Introduce yourself to another type of speaking task that may appear in your upcoming "**Centralizētais eksāmens par vispārējās vidējās izglītības apguvi: ANGĻU VALODA** (optimālais mācību satura apguves līmenis)"*

Last year, you learned how to successfully complete a speaking task based on two written sources. This year, we will focus on another possible version of the speaking paper, where one of the sources may be presented as a graph or chart.

Pay attention to how information in a graph or chart can be described, summarised and compared, and how you can use the data to support your own ideas during the speaking task.

PAPER X

Task instructions:

You are taking part in an English debate club discussion on children using technology.

You should give a 3 to 5-minute talk in which you present your opinion on the issue.
After your talk you will answer three questions and justify your opinion.
Use the two sources provided below to plan your talk.

You have 5 minutes to prepare. You can make notes on the paper.

In your talk you should:

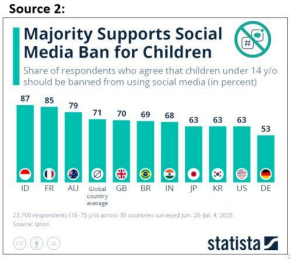
- **formulate the issue raised in the material,**
- **compare the information provided in the material,**
- **state your opinion on the issue,**
- **support your opinion with at least two arguments, including reasons and examples,**
- **come to a conclusion.**

Source 1:

A study reveals that 60% of children begin using technology before learning to read. Many parents use screens as bargaining tools for chores or homework, as well as for managing children's behaviour in public settings. Parents' top concerns include children's safety and mental health - 73% of parents believe their children need a "digital detox". Parents admit there are other negative effects like reduced family time, emotional reliance on technology, and increased anxiety about in-person interactions.

adapted from investors.brighthorizons.com

Source 2:



1. Read an example speech by a Year 11 student. Complete the gaps with the missing words. As you read, pay attention to how the student formulates the issue and compares the information from the two sources.

Formulate the issue raised in the material (explain the issue; you can outline the situation in the present day as well):

The issue presented in both sources is children's use of technology and the possible [1] _____ effects it can have on their lives. Nowadays, technology is part of childhood from a very early age. Children use phones, tablets and social media not only for entertainment, but also for communication and learning. However, both sources [2] _____ that many adults are becoming increasingly concerned about how much technology children use and whether some restrictions are necessary.

Compare the information provided in the material (express the contrast between the two sources in your own words; you can do a deeper analysis by linking it with actual real-life examples as well; analyse the data from the graph):

The first source focuses [3] _____ on children's everyday use of technology and parents' concerns about it. One particularly interesting fact is that 60% of children start using technology before they learn to read. This [4] _____ how early digital devices enter children's lives. The source [5] _____ mentions that parents sometimes use screens as a reward for doing homework or chores, or simply to keep children calm in public. At the same time, many parents are worried about the consequences. For example, 73% believe their children need a digital detox. The source also refers to [6] _____ such as less family time, emotional dependence on technology and greater anxiety about face-to-face communication.

The second source looks at the issue from a slightly different [7] _____ because it presents public attitudes towards banning social media for children under the age of 14. The graph shows that, on average, 71% of respondents support such a ban. However, there are quite large [8] _____ between countries. Support is highest in Indonesia, at 87%, followed by France at 85% and Australia at 79%. In [9] _____, Germany has the lowest figure shown, at 53%. The United States, South Korea and Japan are all at 63%. I also know that this issue is already being discussed and addressed in different countries, for example, some governments and schools have [10] _____ stricter rules on young people's access to social media and smartphones.

2. Continue reading the example speech. Choose the correct part of speech in each empty gap. As you read, pay attention to how the student states their opinion, develops at least two arguments with reasons and examples, and brings the speech to a clear conclusion.

State your opinion on the issue and support it with at least two arguments, including reasons and examples (start with an argument, explain your viewpoint and give relatable examples; solutions may be provided, too):

In my opinion, children should definitely have clear limits on their use of technology, especially when they are very young. My first reason is that excessive screen time can replace [1] _____ real-life activities. Children need to spend time talking to their families, playing outside and communicating with other people face to face. For example, if a child spends every free moment watching videos or [2] _____ through social media, they may have fewer opportunities to develop communication skills. I think this connects [3] _____ with the first source, which mentions anxiety about in-person interactions.

Secondly, children may not yet be prepared for everything they can experience online. Social media can expose them to inappropriate content, cyberbullying and [4] _____ to compare themselves with other people. A thirteen-year-old may [5] _____ how to use an app technically, but that does not necessarily mean they are emotionally ready for it. This is one reason why I can understand the strong support for age restrictions shown in the graph. However, I do not think simply banning technology would solve everything. Parents and schools should also teach children how to use technology [6] _____ and explain the possible risks.

Come to a conclusion (summarize your speech by paraphrasing your own words; your role or experience concerning the issue can be included as well as some future predictions or suggestions):

To conclude, technology itself is not necessarily harmful. It can be extremely useful for education, communication and entertainment. The real problem is how early children start using it, how much time they spend online and whether adults provide enough guidance. In my view, a combination of reasonable restrictions, digital education and more opportunities for real-life interaction would be more [7] _____ than simply allowing children unlimited access to technology. As technology [8] _____ even more important in our lives, I think finding this balance will become increasingly important.

3. Now take a look at the final part of the speaking task.
Read the student's answers to the interviewer's questions and match each answer to the correct question.

1. Do you think children benefit from using technology at an early age? Why/Why not?
2. Should social media be banned for teenagers between 14 and 18? Why/Why not?
3. How can parents and schools encourage healthier habits for children?

_____: *Parents and schools can encourage healthier habits by setting reasonable limits on screen time and offering alternatives. For instance, children can be encouraged to do sports, spend time outdoors or take part in activities with friends and family. Schools can also teach students about digital wellbeing and explain why taking regular breaks from technology is important.*

_____: *I do not think it should be completely banned for teenagers in this age group. Social media can be useful for communication, learning and keeping in touch with others. However, there should be clear limits and better protection from harmful content, cyberbullying and online pressure. In my opinion, teaching teenagers how to use social media responsibly would be more effective than banning it completely.*

_____: *Yes, I think they can benefit from it if technology is used in a balanced way. For example, children can use educational apps, watch useful videos and develop digital skills from an early age. However, I do not think they should spend too much time on screens, because they also need real-life communication and physical activity.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS