2 Improving Fluency and Coherence

Two of the criteria your examiner will use to assess your speaking are **Coherence** and **Fluency**. Coherence means how easy it is for the listener to follow and understand your ideas. Just as in writing, your notes can help you to organise and link your ideas in a logical way.

2.1 Video 10 Watch Melanie giving her talk. As you listen, look back at the task in 1.2.

1 How does Melanie begin her talk?
2 Fill in the blanks in Melanie's first sentences.

> You _____ a time when I _____.
>
> To that aim, _____
> Aniseto.

3 How does she use the information in the question to help organise her ideas?

One way of linking your ideas is by using words and phrases like *after that, because of this, but, also,* etc. We also connect ideas using pronouns.

2.2 Below there are some examples of good coherence from Melanie's talk. The words and phrases she uses to connect her ideas are in bold. Complete extracts 1–8 with endings A–H.

> A I decided to take English lessons.
> B I helped him.
> C I could help him a little.
> D he couldn't speak English at all.
> E it wasn't just for him, it was also for me.
> F it wasn't a good thing.
> G he was very friendly.
> H I've chosen to talk about Aniseto.

1 You asked me to describe a time when I helped someone. ***To that aim*** ...
2 I went to visit my uncle just as a tourist ***but then*** ...
3 I met a Venezuelan boy ***and*** ...
4 I'm not very good at English ***but*** ...
5 So, ***that's it, that's how*** ...
6 I wanted to do that ***because*** ...
7 I could practise my English ***too, so*** ...
8 Some people say that ***now*** he has a French accent, ***so maybe*** ...

2.3 Watch again to check your answers.

2.4 It is important to use a variety of language. Do you think Melanie uses a variety of connecting words and phrases or does she repeat the same ones?

2.5 Melanie also connects her ideas using pronouns. Look again at the sentence endings A–H and highlight all of the pronouns.

Fluency refers to the speed of your delivery and how hesitant you are. Candidates who are hesitant often say *er* ... a lot.

2.6 ▶ Video 11 Watch Saida's talk and think about coherence and fluency.

1 What words and phrases does Saida use to link her ideas?
2 What other connecting words could Saida have used?
3 Does she use pronouns?
4 Does Saida talk fluently, or is she quite hesitant?

3 Organising your notes and your talk

Making notes can help you to plan your ideas and to give you a fresh start during your talk. Your notes will help you to

- start you thinking about the topic.
- organise your ideas (improve your coherence).
- keep going during your talk (improve your fluency).

3.1 Read this Part 2 task and look at two different candidates' notes.

Describe a person who has been an important influence in your life.
You should say
who this person is and how long you have known him or her
why you chose this person
how this person has influenced your life
and explain how you feel about him or her.

Candidate 1

Who and how long? *older brother / 36 years old / a lawyer / lives in America / not see often / known him all my life*

Why I chose him *when young had problems at school / learning difficulties / his dream – to be a lawyer / failed many times / finally succeeded*

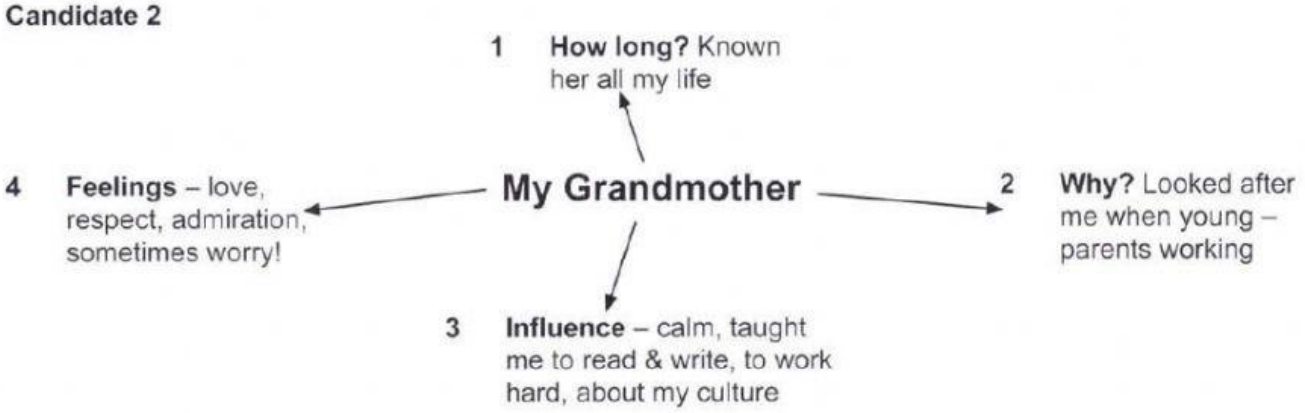
How he has influenced my life *taught me to keep going / have a clear goal / don't give up / last year: I failed important test / disappointed but didn't give up / trying again soon*

My feelings *grateful / admiration / proud*

Test Tip When you are making your notes, try not to write too much. It is important to use this time to think and note down ideas or words, but you also need to be able to quickly look at your notes during your talk and easily find your next idea. Try to find a way that helps you do this (e.g. organise your ideas clockwise on your page, rather than in a random order).

Speaking skills

Candidate 2



3.2 Think about your own notes.

1 When you make notes, do you write them

- **A** in a list?
- **B** scattered randomly on the page?
- **C** in a mind map or diagram?

2 Do you write

- **A** single words?
- **B** long phrases?
- **C** whole sentences?

3 Try to decide which style of notes would be most helpful for you during the exam.

3.3 Use the two sets of notes in 3.1 to give a talk about the different people. Use all of the details, and time yourself. Concentrate on connecting your ideas and use the ideas below to help you.

- I've decided to talk about ...
- I've known him/her ...
- I chose him/her because ...
- I think s/he has influenced my life by ...
- When I think of him/her, I feel ...

3.4 Choose the style of notes you feel most comfortable with and write detailed notes about a person who has influenced you. Then, give a talk about him or her. Make sure you time yourself. Record or video yourself if possible.

3.5 Were your notes helpful? Did you write too much or not enough?

3.6 Answer the rounding-off question below. Try to expand on your answers in the same way as Sanem and Emanuele did.

- Who do you think has the most influence in your life: your family or your friends? Why?

Speaking skills

3 Part 3 – Talking about abstract topics

In this unit you will practise:

- talking about abstract topics
- giving your personal opinion
- agreeing and disagreeing
- improving your Lexical Resource score

1 Talking about abstract topics

In Parts 1 and 2 of the Speaking test, the topics and questions are familiar and personal. In Part 3, the topics and questions are more general and more abstract. The questions gradually become more difficult.

Test Tip Listen carefully to the examiner's questions to make sure that you answer them fully and appropriately.

1.1 ▶ Video 12 Listen to how the examiner introduces Part 3. Complete the paragraph below. You may need to watch more than once.

We've been talking about **1** _____, and I'd like to **2** _____ one or two more **3** _____.
So, let's consider first of all **4** _____.

The examiner has a list of topics and ideas to guide them, but they will also adapt their questions to your answers.

1.2 ▶ Video 13 Watch and complete the questions the examiner asks.

A Can you tell me some of the practical things _____?

B Why should _____?

C You live in quite a small town ... Do you think _____?

D So why don't they _____?

E Let's go on and think about _____.
Some people don't _____?

F Do you think that the _____?

G But doesn't that sometimes mean that _____?

H So, Emanuele, do you think that some people _____?

Test Tip In each part of the test, it is very important to answer all of the questions as fully as possible so that the examiner can assess your language. This will also help improve your score. Make sure to expand on your answers as much as possible.

Speaking skills

1.3 ▶ Video 13 Watch Emanuele answering the questions from 1.2. Match the extracts 1–8 from his answers to questions A–H.

1 I think governments should create ... the right base.
2 But sometimes I understand that it's difficult to help some people.
3 You may have a problem some day and if there is someone that can help you, it's a good thing.
4 I think the most common action you can do would be to lend him something he doesn't have.
5 Life in cities is quite stressful.
6 I think that everyone should help each other first, then the government can create the structure and can act in the right way to allow people to be helpful.
7 I think it depends on the country. For example, the experience I had here in England showed me that people are much more helpful here.
8 You should always try to be helpful because you can't base your attitude on a past experience.

1.4 Emanuele gave full answers to the questions. Look at these techniques for expanding on your answers in Part 3.

Techniques
A stating or explaining your own view
B giving relevant examples
C explaining how or why something happens
D saying what would, could, should or might happen
E suggesting a solution to a problem
F explaining another side to the issue

1.5 Match the sentence beginnings 1–6 to the correct technique A–F in 1.4. You may use any letter more than once.

1 For instance, when we ...
2 If that happened, then ...
3 Well, I think ...
4 On the other hand, some people believe ...
5 This happens because ...
6 One way of dealing with this is ...

1.6 Match techniques A–F with Emanuele's answers 1–8 above.

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1.7 The questions in Part 3 often ask for your opinion. Look at the questions 1–5 and answer them in your own words. Make sure you expand on your answer using techniques from 1.4.

1 Do you think it's more important to earn a large salary or to be happy in your job?
2 Do you think some people spend too much time on their computers these days? (Why?)
3 Do you think the government should try to control the internet, or should people be able to write whatever they want?
4 Pollution is a problem in many countries. What do you think governments can do about it?
5 Do you think newspapers and books will eventually disappear?

Test Tip For Part 3, it is important to have your own opinion. Try to read newspapers and watch the news to keep up with current issues.

2 Agreeing and disagreeing

2.1 Sometimes the examiner will give you an opinion and then ask 'Would you agree with that?' Look at the following responses to this question. Put the different answers into the correct column according to their meaning.

1 Oh no, not at all.
2 Well, I think there are valid points for both.
3 I totally agree with that.
4 I think I would probably have to say no.
5 To a certain extent, yes.
6 I completely disagree.
7 I can see your point, but ...
8 Yes, I think that's absolutely right.
9 Actually, I think it depends on the situation/country/person
10 It seems to me that there are two sides to consider.

Test Tip Don't be afraid to disagree with the opinions the examiner expresses. These are not necessarily what the examiner thinks or believes. It is simply a chance for you to showcase your language and ideas.

Strongly disagree	Disagree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree to some extent	Strongly agree

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2.2 Look at the statements 1–5 and decide whether you agree.

1 Video games in general are a lot more violent nowadays.
2 People should be made to retire earlier so that younger people have a better chance of getting a job.
3 Robots will play a more important role in our lives in the future.
4 We don't do enough to protect the environment.
5 Everyone should take some sort of further education.

3 Improving your Lexical Resource score

Another of the criteria your examiner will use to assess your speaking is called **Lexical Resource**. You will score well if you use a wide range of vocabulary and don't limit yourself to basic words and phrases. During the Speaking test, try not to repeat the same words too often and use some idiomatic expressions if you can.

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3.1 Create idiomatic expressions by completing phrases 1–6 with endings A–F.

1	I felt as though I didn't have	A	louder than words.
2	I couldn't keep	B	a bit of a slave driver.
3	Actions speak	C	a care in the world.
4	My boss was	D	by its cover.
5	My sister and I are like	E	a straight face.
6	You can't judge a book	F	two peas in a pod.

3.2 Match the completed expressions in 3.1 with the correct meaning.

A I was made to work very hard.
B We're very similar.
C Appearances can be deceiving.
D I was very relaxed.
E What we do matters more than what we say.
F I found it difficult not to laugh.

3.3 Below are some words/phrases that Emanuele used in Part 3. Are they basic or higher-level vocabulary? Circle the higher-level words.

holiday help it depends on experience
attitude small base (something) on
create the structure personal responsibility children
act in the right way allow people to everybody deserves
bad more or less house

3.4 Emanuele was given a score of 7 for Lexical Resource. Why do you think that is?

3.5 ▶ Video 13 Watch again and tick the words/phrases in 3.3 as you hear them.

3.6 Look again at the questions in 1.2 and answer them yourself.