

C2 Proficiency Speaking Part 3 on science

Work in groups of at least three people. Take turns being Candidate A, Candidate B and the examiner, with the examiner using the script below.

Cambridge Proficiency Speaking Part Three Examiner's script

"Now, in this part of the test you're each going to talk on your own for about two minutes. You need to listen while your partner is speaking because you'll be asked to comment afterwards.

So, *(name of Candidate A)* I'm going to give you a card with a question written on it and I'd like you to tell us what you think. There are also some ideas on the card for you to use if you like.

All right? Here is your card, and a copy for you *(name of Candidate B)*. Remember, you have about two minutes to talk before we join in."

(After two minutes) "Thank you."

"(Name of Candidate B) wh.../ how/ do/ are/ is/ should...?" (question about the same general topic as Candidate A spoke about, but not usually related to what they said)

"(Name of Candidate A) what do you think/ do you agree/ how about you?"

(After about one minute) "Thank you" *(taking back the cards)*

"Now, *(name of Candidate B)*, it's your turn to be given a question. Here is your card, and a copy for you *(name of Candidate A)*.

Remember *(name of Candidate B)*, you have about two minutes to tell us what you think, and there are some ideas on the card for you to use if you like. All right?"

(After two minutes) "Thank you."

"(Name of Candidate A) wh.../ how/ do/ are/ is/ should...?" (question about the same general topic as Candidate B spoke about, but not usually related to what they said)

"(Name of Candidate B) what do you think/ do you agree/ how about you?"

(After about one minute) "Thank you" *(taking the cards back)*

"Now, to finish the test, we are going to talk about *(the topic they both just spoke about)* in general."

(The examiner asks a discussion question on the topic to Candidate A)

(The examiner turns to Candidate B and asks them to comment on what Candidate A said, asks them the same question, or asks them a different question).

(The examiner asks Candidate B a new question, if the previous question was not new).

(Continue alternating which candidate gets new questions, with some questions thrown out to both candidates, for up to four minutes).

CPE Speaking Part Three prompt cards on science

What helps people to think more scientifically?

- education
- reading
- thought processes

How important is it to supervise what scientists do?

- ethics
- unintended consequences
- financial costs

Is it better to let scientists make decisions or to pass their advice onto politicians and civil servants to use as they wish?

- bias
- public opinion
- the big picture

What are the advantages and disadvantages of pushing more and more people into STEM subjects?

- future careers
- national wealth
- well-rounded people

What can be gained by studying a mix of arts and science?

- cross-fertilisation of ideas
- broadening your mind
- future careers

How easy is it to give all children a basic knowledge of technology, maths and science?

- teaching methods
- different learning styles
- natural aptitudes

What part should scientists play in making social policy?

- research
- advice
- positions of authority

What are the most important qualities needed to be a good scientist?

- character
- actions
- education

Which is preferable in scientific education, learning the basic knowledge or doing your own experiments and coming up with your own ideas?

- at school
- in university undergraduate courses
- in postgraduate courses

How much are researchers' conclusions affected by their own biases?

- in natural sciences
- in the arts
- in humanities/ social sciences

Why is it important to learn maths and science at school?

- intellectual stimulation
- future life
- connections to other subjects

What creates interest in science in small children?

- lessons
- trips
- media

Why do some people avoid maths and science?

- experiences of school
- jargon
- media

What responsibilities do scientists have?

- research
- communication
- education

Take turns asking the other two or three students questions about science made from these question stems:

- At what age...?
- Do ... need to...?
- Do you think it is true that...?
- Do you think men and women...?
- How can people...?
- How do... benefit from...?
- How important do you think... is?
- In a global world, should...?
- In the past,... Is this a good thing do you think?
- In what ways do people need to...?
- Is it better to... or...?
- Is it easier to... or...?
- Is it more important for children to... or...?
- Is it more important for... to... or...?
- Is it natural for... to...?
- Is it sometimes good to...?
- Should (all) children be expected to...?
- Some people say that... What do you think?
- Sometimes... What do you think about that?
- Today,... Is this a good thing in your view?
- What can... learn from...?
- What do you think is the best... for...?
- What is the appeal of...?
- What is the best way to...?
- What makes some people...?
- What role does... play in...?
- What... has had the greatest impact on...?
- Why are so many people interested in...?
- Why can...?
- Why do some people prefer not to...?
- Would... be better if...?

When your teacher stops you, ask about any questions above which you couldn't understand, couldn't make questions out of, couldn't answer, etc, working together to think of suitable questions and answers each time.

Take turns asking the other two or three students questions from below.

When your teacher stops you, ask about any which you are not sure you can answer well, discussing good answers as a class each time.

- At what age would you let children do experiments with potentially dangerous chemicals?
- Do scientists need training in ethics?
- Do you think it is true that people put too much faith in scientists?
- Do you think scientific education has more value for the country than the arts and humanities?
- How can people know when to believe the conclusions of scientists?
- How do children benefit from studying more advanced mathematical techniques?
- How important do you think mathematical training is for most people?
- In a global world, should most research be funded by international organisations?
- In the past, people tended to trust science and scientists more. Is this a good thing, do you think?
- In what ways do people need to stay informed about the latest scientific advances?
- Is it better to study a broad range of subjects, or to specialise as soon as you can?
- Is it easier to know what you should and shouldn't eat nowadays, or was it easier in the past?
- Is it more important for young children to learn arts or science?
- Is it natural for some students to hate maths and science?
- Is it sometimes good to ban scientific research on a particular area?
- Should all children be expected to master elementary algebra?
- Some people say that the government should run by expert technocrats. What do you think?
- Sometimes people distrust modern scientific developments and try to live their lives as traditionally and naturally as they can. What do you think about that?
- Today, more and more of our food is based on scientific discoveries. Is this a good thing in your view?
- What can children learn from nature documentaries?
- What do you think the best advice is for someone who finds maths and science difficult?
- What is the appeal of cosmology?
- What is the best way to learn about animals?
- What makes some people better at maths and science than others?
- What role does the government play in stimulating scientific innovation in a country?
- What future scientific discovery could have the greatest impact on our lives?
- Why are so many people interested in discoveries about distant stars and planets?
- Would university education be better if everyone had to study a mix of humanities, arts and science?

Change groups and use the same questions in a more realistic exam style, with the examiner filling the time with a mix of the same question, phrases like "Do you agree?", and switching straight to another question.

Extension

Write more presentation tasks and discussion questions like those above on a different topic like major life events, the future, nature, food and drink, consumerism, music and decisions.