



SPEAKING PART 1: OCCUPATIONS

In Part 1 of the Speaking test, the examiner asks you some general questions about your personal situation. These may include questions about your occupation (or the way you spend your time if you don't have an occupation). It's a good idea to prepare some ideas for speaking about this. What can you say that is interesting or unexpected? Can you give some opinions as well as the basic information?

Try it first!

Try talking about your occupation as if you were doing Speaking Part 1. If you are working with a partner, take it in turns to play the roles of examiner and candidate. Here are some typical questions.

Examiner: I'd like to ask you some questions about your occupation.

- Do you work, or are you a student?
- What's the most interesting part of being a [*candidate's occupation*]?
- What's the most difficult part of being a [*candidate's occupation*]?
- Would you say it's a good occupation? (Why? / Why not?)
- What kind of work would you like to do in the future?



Spotlight 1

Useful language for talking about your occupation

Grammar: present simple or present continuous?

Your choice of grammar shows how you feel about your occupation.

Present simple

I work for a company which makes car engine parts.

This implies you feel the job is long term.

Present continuous

I'm working for a company which makes car engine parts.

This implies you feel the job is temporary.

If you're a student, it's common to use the present continuous to describe your course:

I'm doing a Master's degree in Forest Management.

1 Choose the best sentence from each pair.

- 1 a I study Chemistry at the local university.
b I'm studying Chemistry at the local university.
- 2 a I don't work at the moment.
b I'm not working at the moment.
- 3 a My family owns a chain of opticians, and I run one of the branches.
b My family is owning a chain of opticians, and I'm running one of the branches.

Vocabulary: prepositions with work

2 Choose the best preposition to complete each of these sentences.

- 1 I work *to / for* a marketing company.
- 2 I work *in / at* advertising.
- 3 I'm working *of / at* the local library.
- 4 I work *by / with* some interesting people.
- 5 I'm working *on / about* a very interesting project at the moment.
- 6 I work *as / at* a theatrical lighting designer.

Vocabulary: expressions connected with work

3 Complete the sentences below giving opinions about occupations using the expressions in the box.

career prospects	job satisfaction	job security
paid by the hour	physically demanding	work long hours

- 1 Doctors often have to
- 2 I work in a restaurant, and I don't have a regular salary. I'm
- 3 I love seeing children learn. That's why I get so much from being a teacher.
- 4 I don't work for any one newspaper. I'm a freelance journalist. That means I have no
- 5 In sales, you can start at the bottom and work your way to the top. It's a job with excellent
- 6 I'm a road mender. My job mostly involves filling holes in the road. It's tiring and work.

Tip

There are many fixed expressions in English. Learning and using them can make your English seem more 'natural', and will help improve your score in both the Speaking and Writing tests.

Giving plenty of detail in descriptions

Don't just say *I'm a student* or *I work in a restaurant*. Give more details in your answer. For example:

- *I'm a third-year student studying Law at the local university.*
- *I'm working as a waiter in a pizza restaurant in the main square of this town. You may have seen it. It's called Pappagallo.*

The examiner may ask for your opinion or feelings about your occupation. It can be a good strategy to contrast a positive and a negative opinion. For example:

- *It's not an easy subject. There's a lot of reading, and the exams are very difficult, but it'll be worth it.*
- *I'll be able to get a good job when I graduate, and the career prospects for lawyers are excellent.*
- *It's hard work and – I have to be honest – the pay isn't great, but it can be a lot of fun, especially when the restaurant is busy. I work with some really nice people.*

Tip

Adding your feelings and opinions can make your speaking more interesting and can help improve your score. However, extreme and intolerant opinions should be avoided, especially concerning race and religion.

1 Write a description of your occupation. Include some suitable opinions/feelings.

Language check

2 Look at your description from Exercise 1. What tenses have you used? Can you change them to include more advanced tenses? Can you change the vocabulary to include some more advanced words and phrases?

Examples:

... the exams are very difficult. → *... the exams are really tough.*

I meet lots of interesting people. → *I've met lots of memorable characters.*

Prepare and practise

3 Prepare your ideas for speaking about your occupation. Write some brief notes on ways to answer these questions. Can you use the ideas in Spotlight 1 (page 12) and above?

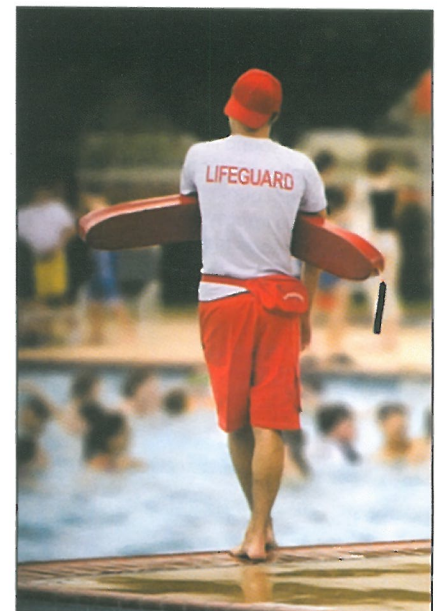
- Do you work, or are you a student?
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- What's the most difficult part of being a [*candidate's occupation*]?
- Would you say it's a good occupation?
(Why? / Why not?)
- What kind of work would you like to do in the future?


4 If you are working with a partner, role-play talking about your occupations as if in Part 1 of the Speaking test again – one person is the examiner and the other is the candidate. Use the same sample questions, and refer to the notes you made in Exercise 3 if you wish to. When you have finished, reverse roles and repeat.**5 Write a detailed description of your occupation. Use a dictionary to describe it as accurately as you can. This will help you to organize your ideas and to learn new words that will be useful.****Tip**

You won't be able to write notes in Part 1 of the exam (you can in Part 2), but doing it now will help you to organize your ideas.

Tip

Although it's a good strategy to prepare your ideas and learn useful language, don't memorize a speech and then give it in the test. What you say should seem spontaneous.



1  1 Listen to the recording, which is based on Speaking Part 1. Answer each of these questions using no more than TWO WORDS.

- 1 The candidate is doing a degree in
- 2 He is also working as a
- 3 The most interesting part of the job is conversations with the
- 4 The most difficult part is dealing with some of the parents of children who
- 5 In the future, he wants to work in a

2 Now look at the audio transcript on page 105 and check your answers.

3 Was the recording very different from your role-play (Exercise 4, page 13)? How was it different? How could you improve further? Discuss your ideas with a partner or in small groups. Think about these areas:

- 1 Did you have plenty of things to say?
- 2 Were your ideas joined together in a logical sequence?
- 3 Did you use the best possible vocabulary?
- 4 Did you use the best possible grammar?
- 5 Did you speak in a relaxed and confident way without a lot of hesitation?
- 6 Was your pronunciation good?

Pronunciation focus: sentence stress



1

Listen to the beginning of the recording again. Notice how some words in the sentence are stressed. For example:

I'm also working as a lifeguard at my local swimming pool.

In this case, *lifeguard* and *swimming pool* are the most important words, so they are stressed the most. *Working* and *local* are less important, so they have less stress. The other words (*I'm also ... as a ... at my ...*) are words which the listener can almost guess from the context, so they receive the least stress of all.



1

4 Listen to the whole recording again while reading the audio transcript on page 105. While you listen, underline the most important words in the candidate's responses – the words which are stressed the most. Then practise saying these sentences with the underlined words stressed.

5 Work in pairs, asking each other the questions below. Again, one person is the examiner, the other is the candidate. When you have finished, reverse roles and repeat. Try to include improvements you noticed when you listened to the recording, and try to improve your use of sentence stress.

- Describe the place where you work or study.
- How long have you worked/studied there?
- What do you like about this place?
- How do you usually travel there?
- What changes would improve your journey there?

Tip

The examiner will consider your pronunciation when deciding the grade to award you. You will not be expected to sound like a native speaker to get a high score, but of course it is a good idea to improve your pronunciation as much as you can.