

GAC014 Academic English III: Listening & Speaking Skills

GAC Academic English

What this module is, and how it is marked

GAC014 is Academic English III, listening and speaking, and it is the last English module before university. Its six units are the subjects a university actually argues about: education, medicine, law, politics, communications, the future.

Assessment is the heaviest of the three levels. A typical set is a **listening and group discussion** with a consensus to reach, a **listening skills test**, a **seminar presentation** 研讨课展示 with follow-up questions, and **coursework**.

- The seminar is the new thing. You present for about ten minutes, then **lead a discussion** about what you presented, and both halves are marked.
- △ You are now expected to **evaluate** what you hear — to judge validity, reliability and bias — not only to understand it.

Education: critical listening

- **Critical listening** 批判性倾听 asks what a speaker is claiming, what supports it, and what they have left out.
- Separate **evidence** from **assertion** while listening, in real time. Most speakers mix them.
- Listen for **qualification** 限定: *in this sample, under these conditions, so far*. A claim without qualification is usually a claim being oversold.

Medicine: abstract topics and precision

- Level III topics are **abstract** 抽象的: risk, consent, fairness, trade-offs. The vocabulary is ordinary; the reasoning is not.
- Say what you mean precisely. *Most patients improved* and *patients improved on average* are different claims, and the difference is examinable.
- Handle **numbers** aloud with care: a rise from 1% to 2% is a doubling and a one-point rise, and which you say frames the whole argument.

Legal studies: validity, reliability and bias

- **Validity** 效度 asks whether a study measured what it claimed to measure.
- **Reliability** 信度 asks whether it would give the same result again.
- **Bias** is systematic error in one direction — in sampling, in measurement, or in the reporting.
- A source can be reliable and invalid: a badly worded survey question returns the same wrong answer every time.

Worked example. "A survey of visitors to a hospital website found 78% support for the new appointment system."

Validity: it measures the view of people who use the website, not of patients. Reliability: it would probably repeat. Bias: sampling — the people most affected by a digital system are the least likely to be surveyed by one.

Naming all three, in that order, is the marked answer.

Political studies: presenting with digital media

- A Level III presentation uses **digital media** 数字媒体 as evidence, not decoration: a chart you interpret, a clip you analyse, a document you quote.
- Everything shown needs a **source on the slide**, and everything quoted needs a citation.
- △ Choose neutral, well documented topics for this unit — public health, urban policy, education systems, the environment. The skill assessed is the analysis, and a topic that invites heat rather than evidence works against you.

Communications: the seminar

- A **seminar** presents an argument and then **defends** it in discussion.
- Prepare the argument, then prepare the three strongest objections and your answers.
- **Fielding a question** 应对提问 is scored: restate it, answer it, and say what you cannot answer.
- Bring the discussion back when it drifts: *That connects to my second point, which was...*

Worked example. Two responses to the same hard question.

Weak: a long restatement of the presentation, hoping the question dissolves.

Strong: "That is a fair point about cost. My data covers the first two years only, so I cannot speak to the long run — but within that window the saving was consistent, and here is why I think it holds."

The second concedes the limit, keeps the claim inside it, and gives a reason. That is a Level III answer, and it is the same move an academic makes at a conference.

The future: consensus and closing

- Group tasks at this level require a **consensus** with reasons, not just a vote.
- Track what has been agreed and what has not, aloud, so the group knows where it stands.
- Close on time. An unfinished discussion is marked as an unfinished task, whatever was said in it.