

10.1 Conversation and interview

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills for the **conversation and interview** 对话与面试 part of the speaking test — answering at the right length and keeping a conversation going.

You must be able to:

- extend an answer beyond one sentence without rambling
- use the language of opinion, comparison and hesitation naturally
- keep going when you do not know a word

1 Worked examples

■ The length problem

- **Too short:** “Do you enjoy sport?” — “Yes.” The examiner now has to do all the work.
- **Too long:** four minutes on your cousin’s football team, and the examiner cannot ask what they planned to.
- **Right:** answer, reason, and one extension.

“Yes, I do — I swim three times a week. It’s the only exercise I’ve found that I actually look forward to, probably because you can’t check your phone in a pool.”

■ The three-part habit

1. **Answer** the question directly.
2. **Give a reason** — *because, the main reason is, what I like about it is*
3. **Extend** — an example, a comparison, or a contrast with the past.

Practise this until it is automatic. It converts a one-word answer into a scoreable one.

■ Language worth having ready

- **Opinion:** *I’d say, personally, what I find is, in my experience*
- **Comparing:** *whereas, compared with, the difference is*
- **Hesitating naturally:** *Let me think... / That’s a good question... / I suppose the main thing is...*
- **Not knowing a word:** *I don’t know the word in English, but it’s the thing you use for...*

That last one matters. Stopping dead loses far more than a paraphrase does; describing the word you lack is itself a skill being assessed.

■ **What lowers the mark**

- One-word answers, or answers that stop as soon as the question is answered
- Repeating the examiner's words back instead of adding
- Long silences with no attempt to fill them
- A memorised speech that does not answer the question asked

2 Practice

2.1 Extend each answer using answer, reason, extension.

[3]

(a) “Do you like where you live?” — “Yes.”

(b) “Is homework useful?” — “Sometimes.”

(c) “Would you like to travel?” — “Yes, a lot.”

2.2 Write a natural way to fill a pause while you think.

[1]

2.3 You need the word “screwdriver” and cannot remember it. Write what you would say instead.

[1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A student answers every question with one sentence and then stops. Explain **two** effects this has on the mark. [2]

3.2 Write a full three-part answer to: “What is the best thing about your school?” [3]

3.3 Write a full three-part answer to: “How has the way people spend their free time changed since your parents were young?” [3]

Solutions

2.1 One mark each for an extended answer with a reason and an extension, e.g. (a) “Yes, more than I expected to. It’s quiet, and I can walk to school in ten minutes — when we lived in the city that same journey took forty.”

2.2 Any natural filler, e.g. “That’s a good question — let me think for a second.”

2.3 Any workable paraphrase, e.g. “I don’t know the English word, but it’s the small tool you use to turn a screw.”

3.1 Any two: the examiner cannot assess a range of vocabulary and structures from a single short sentence, so the language mark is capped; the conversation does not develop, so the student cannot show they can extend or explain; the examiner has to ask more questions, leaving less time for the topics that would suit the student.

3.2 One mark each for answer, reason and extension.

3.3 One mark each for answer, reason and extension. *A strong answer here uses a comparison structure — “whereas my parents...”, “compared with...” — which is exactly what the question invites.*