

10.2 Giving a short talk

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

Objective

Build the skills for **giving a short talk** 做简短演讲 — planning and delivering a few minutes of connected speech on a topic card.

You must be able to:

- plan a short talk in the preparation time you are given
- structure it so it has a beginning, a middle and an end
- speak from notes rather than reading or reciting

1 Worked examples

■ **Use the preparation time for a plan, not a script**

You will not have time to write a talk, and reading one aloud sounds wrong and scores badly. Write **five short lines**:

Card: A place that is important to you

1. My grandmother's kitchen — the smell of it
2. Why it matters — where everyone talks
3. One story — the power cut, candles, three hours
4. What has changed — she moved last year
5. What I take from it — a place is the people

Five lines is enough to speak for two minutes without ever being lost.

■ **The shape**

- **Open** with something concrete — a place, a moment, a sound. Not *"I am going to talk about..."*
- **Middle:** two or three points, each with a detail or a short story.
- **Close** with a thought, not a summary: what it means, or what you would do differently.

■ Language that holds a talk together

- **Signposting:** *The first thing I'd say is... / What surprised me was... / The other side of it is...*
- **Sequencing:** *At first... / Later... / By the end...*
- **Concluding:** *So for me... / What I take from it is...*

■ Delivery

- Look up. Notes are prompts, not a text.
- Vary your pace — slow down for the point that matters.
- If you lose your place, say so naturally: *Sorry, where was I — yes, the power cut.* That is normal speech, and it costs almost nothing.
- Do not recite a memorised passage. It is audible, and it stops you responding to follow-up questions.

2 Practice

2.1 Write a five-line plan for the card: *A skill you would like to learn.* [3]

2.2 Write an opening sentence for that talk that begins with something concrete. [1]

2.3 Write a closing sentence for it that gives a thought rather than a summary. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Write a five-line plan for: *Something you have changed your mind about.* [3]

3.2 Explain **two** reasons why memorising a talk word for word is a bad strategy. [2]

3.3 A student's talk consists of six unconnected facts about their topic. Explain what is missing and how they would fix it. [2]

Solutions

2.1 Any five-line plan with one idea per line: a concrete opening; a reason it matters; a specific example or story; a difficulty or change; a closing thought.

2.2 Any concrete opening, e.g. “There is a piano in the hall that nobody plays, and every time I walk past it I think the same thing.”

2.3 Any closing thought, e.g. “I think what I actually want is not to play well, but to be the kind of person who finished learning something.”

3.1 As 2.1, applied to the new card.

3.2 Any two: a recited talk sounds unnatural and the examiner can hear it, so it does not demonstrate real fluency; if you lose your place in a memorised text there is nothing to fall back on, whereas notes let you continue; a memorised talk cannot adapt, so follow-up questions expose that the language was not produced spontaneously.

3.3 The talk has no structure and no development — six facts with nothing connecting them, and no point being made. The fix is to choose two or three of the facts, give each an example or a short story, and end with what they add up to.