



# **Notes and guidance: Non-exam assessment**

## **Supporting student success in the spoken language endorsement**

This guidance has been produced for teachers to support their work with students in preparing, completing and assessing the spoken language endorsement with the aim of making it a properly meaningful experience and supporting all students in fulfilling their potential. Additional guidance can be found in the Lead Verifier's reports which are available through the Centre Services section of the AQA website, whilst other documents on the NEA section provide information about the process and administration.

Instructions for conducting and recording audio visual evidence can be found in the appendices.

## GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – 8700 – NON-EXAM ASSESSMENT

Contents	Page
<a href="#">What is the assessment?</a>	3
<a href="#">The place of spoken language in the English Curriculum</a>	4
<a href="#">1. Understanding the requirements</a>	6
<a href="#">2. Identifying the topic</a>	10
<a href="#">3. Planning the talk</a>	19
<a href="#">4. Rehearsal and revision</a>	23
<a href="#">5. Performance, questioning and assessment</a>	24
<a href="#">References</a>	28
<a href="#">Appendices</a>	30

Version 1.2  
October 2025

## What is the assessment?

All students are required to deliver **a formal extended individual presentation and respond to questions.**

It is worth considering the significance of the terms used:

Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>planned and organised</li> <li>using Standard spoken English</li> <li>to an audience including the teacher (and recorded on video)</li> </ul>
Extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ideas on a specific topic developed in detail</li> <li>substantial in content/length</li> </ul>
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>independent choice of topic</li> <li>prepared and presented individually</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>direct communication</li> <li>performance to engage the audience</li> </ul>
Respond to questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>multiple, from different audience members</li> <li>arising out of the talk</li> <li>to show knowledge and understanding and thinking</li> </ul>

The specification sets a maximum of 10 minutes for the presentation and questioning to reflect the status of the task.

- It is the final assessment of the student's learning journey in spoken language communication and is an important milestone in a student's educational career as its separate reporting emphasises.
- It is a summative assessment and as such, the expectation is that it will be completed during the final year of the GCSE programme allowing maximum time and experience for students to develop their maturity, skills and confidence.

As will be evidenced through this guidance, there is significant commonality of skills to be assessed in the non-literary examination whilst the opportunity to develop cognitive skills through speaking, listening and questioning can only be of benefit to students' personal growth and independence.

Preparation and completion of the presentations offers a valuable opportunity to explore different topics, building knowledge, experience and confidence to express opinions and ideas with influence and impact whilst offering an alternative to the necessary, if stressful, written practice which typically forms part of exam revision in Year 11.

## The place of spoken language in the English Curriculum

The teaching of oracy, the art and skill of spoken language communication, is empowering all to find their voice thus equipping them to function effectively not only in school but also in wider society whether by engaging with friends in conversation, complaining in a shop, contributing to a team discussion, asking for a pay rise or speaking in a public forum.

Discursive teaching is a key starting point to building this confidence and the English curriculum naturally invites such an approach. There is interesting research on the value of metacognitive talk and dialogic teaching across the curriculum in terms of how it can foster independent confidence in learners to question, enquire and reason and focused discussion activities are deemed to be central to this.<sup>1</sup>

We need to be mindful that confidence in spoken language communication is not an innate talent but something which can be nurtured through explicit teaching of knowledge about language, communication skills and through practical experience. This has recently been re-emphasised in terms of establishing a curriculum for oracy as part of essential preparation for adult life.

*Voice 21* are a prominent organisation in the ongoing campaign to recognise the importance of such an approach defining oracy as *the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language*<sup>2</sup> making the important point that oracy is also a route to social mobility, empowering all students, not just some, to find their voice to succeed in school and life.<sup>2</sup>

The oracy framework<sup>2</sup> developed by Voice 21 in partnership with Oracy Cambridge identifies four key areas of skill: physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional. These skills align clearly with the subject specific content for spoken language in the GCSE specification as set out below:

- AO7 Presenting information and ideas.  
Selecting and organising information and ideas effectively and persuasively for prepared spoken presentations; planning effectively for different purposes and audiences; making presentations and speeches.
- AO8 Responding to spoken language.  
Listening to and responding appropriately to any questions and feedback.
- AO9 Spoken Standard English.  
Expressing ideas using Standard English whenever and wherever appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

At Key Stage 4, the introduction to the programmes of study states that: *all the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.*<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, we should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills<sup>4</sup> as an integral part of the GCSE English Language and Literature curriculum such that students are equipped with the confidence and capacity to speak their minds in any context whether private or public.

Building on the emphasis on communication at primary schools, the Key Stage 3 programmes of study encourage a focus on students giving short speeches and presentations; expressing

their own ideas and keeping to the point; learning about developing arguments and using language to persuade, by participating in formal debates and structured discussions.

Dramatic activities such as improvising, rehearsing and performing play scripts and poetry can help build appreciation on how to use presence and voice as communicative tools. It is also important to work through role play practice to extend linguistic repertoire and develop confidence through empathy. All of these activities serve to support the growing skill base and confidence necessary to succeed in the GCSE spoken language endorsement assessment.

Building the confidence and skills necessary for the spoken language presentation can obviously be developed within all aspects of the KS4 English curriculum. There are strong arguments for embedding it within work on non-literary texts, since these can offer ideas and models for expressing them with influence. Alongside this work also supports the development of the cultural capital which allows students to produce effective responses in expository writing, widely acknowledged as an important target within secondary education and not only in English classes.

The knowledge and skills required to facilitate success in the assessment can be identified as follows:

- Communicating original ideas, arguments and opinions.
- Developing these with selected examples and explanations offering individual interpretations.
- Understanding how viewpoint and perspective shape communication.
- Using varied and precise vocabulary choices for purpose and influence.
- Guiding the audience through careful management of structure, organising text to support clarity and understanding. Starting and ending with impact.
- At all times being aware of the needs of the audience, what will matter to them, what examples will have the most impact; how to create such impact through their control of delivery by building a relationship and taking account of how the audience are reacting and responding.

Providing the necessary knowledge and experience has been developed through KS3 and a focus on purposeful talk and questioning has continued in KS4, students will be ready to embark on the preparation for the final assessment which has 5 main stages:

1. Understanding the requirements: familiarity with the nature of the task and the assessment priorities.
2. Identifying a topic: defining purpose, task and where appropriate, title for the talk.
3. Planning the talk: researching ideas, considering structure, vocabulary and developing a range of methods to engage the audience.
4. Rehearsal and revision: practice.
5. Performance, questioning and assessment.

## 1. Understanding the requirements

It is helpful if time is spent unpacking what the endorsement requires, the assessment criteria (appendix 1) and illustrating the end goal since this will serve to inform all stages of the preparation process and build confidence.

**Presentations must be formal but may take a wide variety of forms, including talks, debates, speeches and dialogues<sup>3</sup>.**

- The most appropriate form for the presentation is an individual talk to an audience where full independent control can be exercised and there is no reliance on external questioning to provide a structure or govern the development of the talk.
- A speech given as part of a formal debate can also achieve this.
- Pair and group work or one-to-one interviews are inappropriate for this component since they necessarily invite collaborative talk when here, all students must give an extended individual presentation. Where this is challenging for particular students, extended discussion *can* serve as a support but there should always be a prepared opening statement from the student. This approach is effectively modelled in the recordings for Holly and Josh in the standardising materials.

The nature of the task needs to be made explicit and the criteria to be matched need to be known and understood. The most effective way to achieve this is the provision of an opportunity for students to see presentations in action and to work with the criteria when viewing recorded presentations and discussing the outcomes. There are a wealth of appropriate real-life examples freely available online, many posted by students undertaking this assessment. Discussion of the many and varied presentations familiar to the students from tik tok videos, Ted Talks, podcasts (focused listening is a valuable skill to develop) or more formal examples, such as those recorded as part of the youth parliament contributions (link in references) or, to give some specific influential examples, speeches by Greta Thunberg, Emma Watson and Malala Yousafzai.

Modelling effective questioning can be accommodated here. Whilst there may be concerns that the topics presented in the standardising material are now several years behind the priorities of young people today, several topics remain relevant (and fully so) in informing teachers of the standards.


However, the best resource for inspiring students and illuminating discussion of what is required, is that being recorded and collated every year in centres and how better to celebrate the ambition and independence shown and the successes achieved? Viewing selected examples of these against a response agenda can be very useful in building confidence about what it is students are going to be required to do.

**Table 1** Reviewing sample presentations with qualitative comment.

Question to consider	Response, comments, examples/details
1. Was it clear what specific issue they were talking about?	
2. Was the purpose clear?	
3. Were you convinced by what they said? How? Why?	
4. Were the examples/details used effective/relevant/interesting?	
5. Which parts of the talk made the biggest impact on you and why?	
6. How did they keep you interested?	
7. How well did they answer the questions?	
8. What question would you have wanted to ask? Why?	



When working with less confident students whose metalanguage might not be so well developed, a continuum response form can be helpful with a following discussion of the reasons for their decision and areas of disagreement, with reference to details from the talk which will obviously have been chosen to encourage rather than intimidate. This can permit exploration of how different aspects of the talk might be further improved as appropriate. They should still be asked to think about the questions they would ask as this serves to support understanding and awareness of appropriate information content.

**Table 2** Reviewing sample presentations – where verbal feedback is preferred.



Response level	Low				High
Focus point	1	2	3	4	5
Did the start get your attention?					
Was the purpose for the talk clear?					
Were the examples /details relevant/interesting?					
How well did they hold your attention?					
Did they end well/clearly?					
How effectively did they respond to questions?					

Copies of these tables are in the appendix and can be adapted as needed.

As in all aspects of English, there is a progression in skill quality through the levels and the assessment should be informed by an understanding of the expectations already shared with students in their GCSE studies. Below is a table which explores this progression in relation to the specific elements of the assessment criteria to guide teachers in the preparation and assessment of the component.

	Pass		Merit		Distinction
<b>Ideas and Content</b>	At Pass, there is typically more description than explanation and use of examples/illustration of the idea or argument is not detailed or properly developed with any comment. Students tend to report information rather than shaping it with their own comments or judgements. By Merit, we expect this alongside greater depth of detail, consideration of alternative viewpoints with reasoning which by Distinction rises to independent interpretation and analysis with considered hypotheses showing full breadth of coverage and a secure, owned knowledge base. In other words, students move from the personal to the objective by considering social, cultural and political significance of what they are talking about.				
<b>Purpose</b>	At Pass, this is typically ‘what I know’ but to reach the higher levels, there needs to be clarity as to what the student wants the audience to understand and think about the topic, which means that they have considered why it matters to more than themselves. By Distinction, this intention to influence the audience to change their point of view and perhaps act differently, should be expertly managed, consistent and seen to drive the content and direction of the talk.				

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – 8700 – NON-EXAM ASSESSMENT

	Pass		Merit		Distinction
<b>Structure</b>	At Pass, a chronological/linear structure is typical with obvious linguistic signals to guide the reader. By Merit, more creative approaches are used with revision and recap forming part of the talk whilst at Distinction, the development of the talk is seamless and fluent and cohesion is properly mastered. Students at higher levels may well choose to employ a specific register, to either separate themselves from their audience (you) or unite with them (we/us) as a deliberate act.				
<b>Vocabulary</b>	The progression here is, as in other criteria, from clear to sophisticated. We expect students at the higher levels to show that they have made deliberate choices of language to match what is being discussed and to convey their attitude. It should be varied, precise and ambitious but always appropriate to their talk and purpose. Rhetorical techniques are a relevant resource but need to be appropriately used and owned to be effective.				
<b>Strategies to engage</b>	<p>Reading rather than talking to an audience will influence what they can achieve. They need to be considering this as a performance. Eye contact and presence are crucial to matching higher level criteria but for Merit and Distinction, we need to see a range of strategies, both verbal and non-verbal which show understanding of who their audience is, both in the room and behind the camera.</p> <p>These include attempts to involve the audience by posing questions, detailing scenarios, selecting evidence and examples for maximum impact, using direct address and inclusive pronouns. Control of pace, expression and tone should be assured at Distinction level.</p>				
<b>Response to questions</b>	As they progress through the levels, students need to be prepared to explain, provide reasons, defend their arguments, address challenges and ultimately use their knowledge base to offer perceptive comments. This necessarily means that the questions must offer scope for this quality of response and the teacher’s role is important here not least in ensuring that the questioning is sufficiently extended to allow for the higher-level criteria to be matched.				

As with all NEA components, it is expected that centres make arrangements to undertake internal standardising with reference to the published standard but also in relation to the presentations recorded in centre. This not only supports consistency in awarding but also encourages useful discussion of process, topics, tasks, and skills and serves to emphasise the status of this assessment within the GCSE and its importance to students. Expectations relating to internal standardising are detailed in the specification and it is especially important that the final sample chosen to be sent for external verification has been subjected to careful review.

## 2. Identifying a topic: defining purpose, task and where appropriate, title for the talk

**Students must identify the subject for their presentations in advance and agree it with their teacher<sup>3</sup>.**

The principles which underpin this component are independence, ownership, the opportunity to be heard and listened to, and to hear and listen to the opinions and ideas of others as a responsive audience. The topics which lend themselves most effectively to this experience are those that have relevance both to the student and beyond the classroom: to other students, to the wider society and even the world since these offer the scope for developed consideration of consequences, of alternatives, of potential changes which may be hoped for or worked towards. Thus, the talk is meaningful, there is a genuine information gap created because they have something individual to say and clear motivation both for talking and listening. This naturally leads to purposeful questioning in extended exchanges where the student can properly demonstrate both that they really know their topic and that they have thought through the implications of what they are saying and why it matters.

Verifiers are always impressed by the range of topics selected by students and the depth of thought applied to these. The Lead Verifier's report on each series presents a summary of these to reflect what is of current topical relevance to the students and this can be a useful resource to guide teachers and students in appreciating what the specification and the KS4 Citizenship programmes of study envisages – the exploration of socially significant issues relevant to their eventual full participation in society.

*Where students chose the topic that affected their own lives, on a personal and political level, they were able to express interesting ideas. (Lead Verifier's Report 2018)<sup>5</sup>*

This is the only part of the GCSE English Language specification where students have independent control of the topic they focus on and this is to be highly prized and fully exploited. The use of common or directed tasks, however well-intentioned, is contra-indicated as is the use of English Literature set texts as the basis for students' talks unless that is their deliberate choice. There are of course challenges when asking students what they want to talk about, hence the requirement for teacher support and, in this assessment, prior approval. It remains true however, that *the best tasks are individually chosen through personal interest and research. (Ibid 2019)<sup>5</sup>*

## Working to build ideas

Ideas are a highly prized commodity and underpin the development of what is often referred to as 'cultural capital' a key goal in education in preparing students for adult life. More specifically, being able to develop and appreciate ideas, viewpoints and perspectives, around a topic is a vital skill when tackling the writing task for the English Language Paper 2 exam and relevant too when exploring the new framing of context in the study of set texts for English Literature.

Knowledge and information are not the same as ideas or issues, but they offer a secure foundation to build on and research is therefore encouraged and required. If speaking about their own experience alone, there is little reasoned need for such research to be undertaken so a wider frame of reference is needed.

For students to match the 'challenging' and 'sophisticated' descriptors, they need to show that they can use information effectively to inform and shape their ideas around a topic, that they can explore, interrogate an issue and present interpretations and/or solutions. That topic therefore needs to offer scope for such independent enquiry and go beyond the reporting of personal experience to offer relevance to a wider audience through objective exploration.

In the identification of a topic and the development of a task the key question students need to answer is *Why does it matter?* to them individually, to their peer group, family and friends, local community, nationally and globally. The wider the frame of reference they use when developing their ideas, the greater depth, substance and influence their talk is likely to achieve.

So, ideas matter – but how do we support students in developing them? Start by inviting them to explore what matters in their lives and for their futures.

In all the following activities, the emphasis is on purposeful discussion and the *Questioning Cards for Socratic Talk* in appendix 2 can offer support here whilst also serving to promote metacognitive skills.

**Activity 1: A Listening diary**

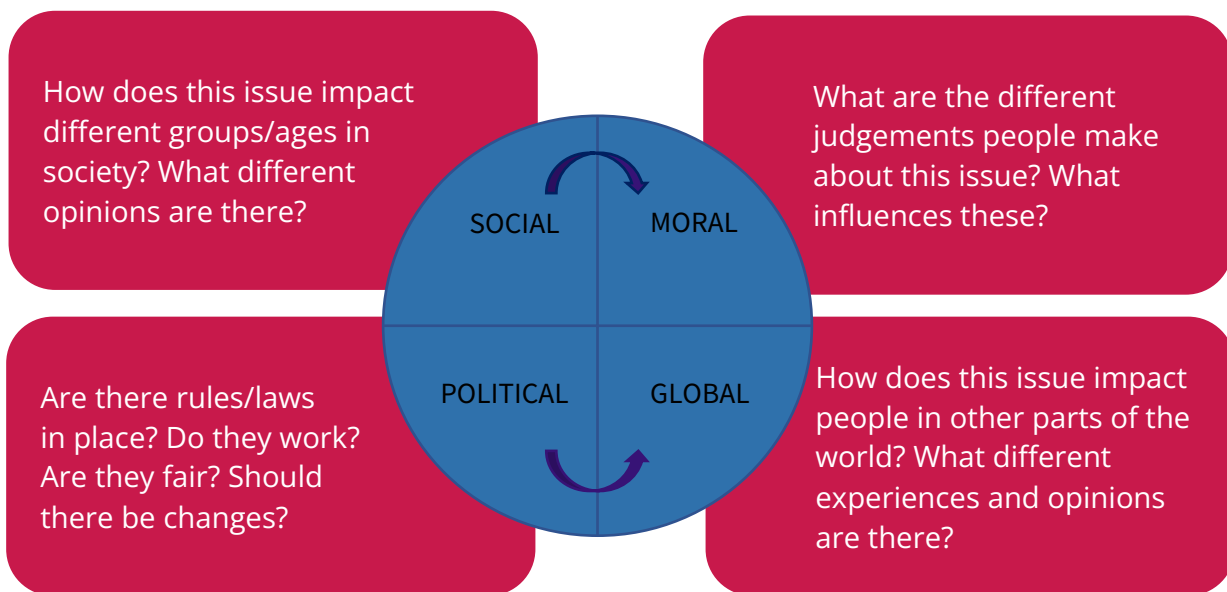
Students, and sometimes adults, believe that the talk young people engage in and hear is not always meaningful when in fact, they will experience and share many thoughts about important social issues and events, especially where they are relevant to their own lives. The results are often surprising to students who typically underestimate the range and relevance of their talk and it is important that we recognise that there is a wealth of opinions and ideas in circulation which can be tapped in to for inclusive and meaningful classroom discussion. Asking them to keep a note of the topics they hear discussed, at school, on the bus, in the street, on television or digital media over the course of a week will often yield surprisingly rich material around which to explore different ideas and perspectives.

What follows is group discussion where their observations can be shared offering an opportunity to expand on what they report in relation to four key questions:

1. Why are people talking about this issue/topic?
2. Are there different opinions/ideas/attitudes being shown?
3. What is my opinion on this issue/topic?
4. Is there more to discover, explore and debate?

Questions 2 and 4 are useful parameters when gauging whether a topic might prove productive as a choice for their talk as they begin to address interest and engagement, both key for motivation.

Depending on student engagement here, the introduction of the wider frame of reference could be considered to support extension of thinking skills and purposeful discussion. The tie-in with citizenship and PSHE programmes is obvious here. Equally important is the opportunity this activity provides to challenge assumed or partial knowledge resulting from the influence of digital media platforms in society today.



The conscious act of listening and noticing is beneficial to students’ metacognitive development and experience whilst the ensuing discussion fuelled by instinctive questioning, offers the opportunity to practise many important skills such as explaining, interpreting, analysing and hypothesising without the pressure of producing a piece of writing.

**Activity 2: What’s in the news?**

It is the hope of all English teachers that their students do pay attention to what is happening in the world around them. Here, there is good reason to make it a focus since it can encourage independent thinking, curiosity and discussion leading to greater social awareness and, hopefully, good ideas for appropriate formal topics.

Students are asked to note down three headlines, and only the headlines, which they have seen and which ‘catch their eye’ on any media platform. These are then shared in group discussion where the focus is not on the news story being reported but, on the issues and ideas which the headline leads them to think about – preferably in the form of questions. The task is to map these out (as in the example below) and these could then individually become the start of new maps according to students’ interests. The process of doing this supports metacognitive skills relating to explaining, interpreting and analysing with consequent development of vocabulary alongside the cultural capital they will be building through exploring the issues and listening to different points of view.



Obviously, teachers will need to be conscious of the abilities of the students they are working with which is why it is important to work with what they bring to the discussion whilst also having some appropriate examples to hand. The activity can be modelled with the whole class, if appropriate, and suggestions made could be subjected to immediate follow-up questioning to explore how the link was made and what the idea means to them.

### **Activity 3: Put them on the spot!**

- Groups of students identify five issues they feel are important in their lives.
- Written on individual cards, these are then distributed to other groups, face down in the centre of the table.
- With a 3–4-minute timer in play, each student in turn, picks up a card and makes an opening comment/expresses their opinion and then each student in the group is required to add their own comment or opinion. Unlike in traditional group discussion activities, the requirement to build on the contributions of others is not the priority. The activity is focused on gathering multiple ideas.
- At the end of the controlled time, the group is asked to choose one of the topics given to them to consider in more detail.
- Five minutes of discussion then follows before one or more students in that group give a statement to the class which summarises the response of the group to that issue. This can be extended by asking the next group to pose one or more questions to them which have to be answered by a different student.

In this way, the essential structure of the presentation is modelled and the rehearsal of it builds confidence:

- research, here in the form of sharing opinions
- plan, here by gathering and organising thoughts to share orally with the class
- deliver
- respond.

It does not matter if the same topic is issued by or chosen by different groups since individual opinions will differ and listening to the views of others is a positive personal, social and learning experience. Socratic talk exercises can work in a similar way, but the priority here should be to ensure that all students are involved and engaged by being actively required to participate at all stages.

The requirement to arrive at a target number of ideas within a time limit is itself a relevant training activity for examination performance. This activity could purposefully be extended to include construction of polemical statements similar to those used in the exam writing task. These can then be tested – do they offer the scope for different, individual responses?

Familiarity with the form and structure of these can only be beneficial to confidence and the creation of them itself allows for application of cognitive and language skills.

**Activity 4: From topic to task**

Students will often declare an interest in a topic but not realise that they also need a point of focus within it. Thus their talk often begins with a generic statement: *I'm going to talk about social media*. Presentations based on a question or polemical statement arising from an aspect of the chosen topic are often more successful as evidence and examples need to be selected and adapted for purpose.

Typically, those students who shift their focus from the general to the specific are able to demonstrate more individual and independent thinking, showing ambition as they seek to probe more deeply. Attempting to cover every aspect of a topic is not easily attainable in this task and will often result in under-developed discussion of key points and ideas and, thus, limit attainment. A specific focus, an angle, viewpoint/perspective which is perhaps not as familiar to the audience is potentially more impactful.



General	What is my opinion?		Why does it matter?	More specific
Social media	We use social media too much	Social media creates peer pressure	Mental health issues	Tech success and wealth
	Linked to bullying	Too much advertising	Social media can affect sleep patterns	Future careers, IT matters
	Body image/shaming	Phones in schools should be regulated	Privacy versus oversharing	AI is the new threat

The point here is that the topic informs the task rather than being the task. Mapping out the ideas allows a student to identify which aspect of the topic they have a strong opinion about and that will often make a better starting point for their talk and provide the arc which gives their talk purpose.



This approach, using connective shapes whether pentagons or hexagons, is useful in many areas of planning where students need to build from a starting point to explore connected ideas and expand detail. The significance of the shape form is to help the student understand that there are many different links to one idea – more than one possible direction to follow. Once a focus has been identified, it could be placed centrally with shapes added around the centre containing linked details thus showing the scope and range of the talk. An arrow or numbering system can then be employed as the student looks to plan the structure and sequence of the talk. The point of using these shapes is to emphasise how a talk or piece of writing needs to flow. Where a join appears, there is typically a need to include a link, signal the connection whether it be an example, a consequence or a solution to an identified problem. This also keeps the planning fresh and accessible to all abilities, in the form of ideas, notes, comments, questions, observations – representing thinking and reflecting, rather than immediately setting out to write as some students might be tempted to do.

## How to help students build a wider frame of reference

However, much time is devoted to exploring suitable topics and ideas, there will still be some students who opt to focus on something personal to them. Helping them to understand how to frame their talk for wider relevance is worthwhile, especially given the expectation that what is delivered will be based on at least some research and have substance. Questions can help students consider other aspects of their chosen topic to broaden its relevance to their audience. The key point is to help them establish a link between their lives and our world using the social, moral, political and global framework introduced earlier.

The examples below reflect the kinds of topic seen where the scope is narrow and there is a reliance on either personal experience or on factual recall without discussion of ideas or opinions. In other words, there is no clarity of purpose other than ‘this is what I know or have experienced’. Through questioning, they can be helped to move their focus from sharing knowledge to influencing an audience.

My dog/cat/pet	A sporting interest eg football	My favourite film/video game	My trip to Spain
Why do people have pets?	Why is football so popular?	What makes this... special?	Why holidays matter.
Is pet ownership on the increase?	What are the benefits of playing football?	What have other people thought about this...?	The benefits of travelling to different places.
What are the benefits to owning pets?	What makes a good team?	Is there anything unique or ground-breaking?	Is tourism always a good thing?
Why are so many pets abandoned?	Should there be more sport in schools?	Technology, skills?	What impact do tourists have on the local environment?
What can we do about this?	What are the problems/issues in football at the moment?	What issues, ideas, themes does it present and why are these important?	How do you/other people feel about tourists?
What can animals teach us?	How can these problems be addressed?	Is the film/gaming industry fair to all?	Are tourist taxes fair?
How should we treat animals?	Do footballers make good role models?	Do film stars make good role models?	Is tourism impacting climate change?
Why are we fascinated by animals?			

Once the initial consideration of topic has been achieved, the student can begin their research and planning ready to receive teacher agreement for their choice and it is helpful if they are given some key questions to answer to support their progress and to emphasise the importance and formality of the assessment they are preparing for. These then become the agenda for the approval conversation.

**Table 3** Making the approval of the task formal (included in appendix 3)

	Topic/title	
1	Why did you choose this topic?	This question is too frequently asked at the end of a student's presentation when it should be asked before to make sure there has been proper thought, that there is a genuine interest in the topic and that they have an opinion about the topic to get them started and drive the structure of their talk.
2	How is this topic relevant to your audience?	Making sure they have considered this will inform the teacher's advice relating to how they might develop their talk, but it also supports the student in their goal to engage the audience in their presentation by considering the necessary wider frame of reference.
3	What is the purpose of your talk?	Why does it matter? is a question students need to ask themselves. They need to be clear about the goal of their talk, whether it be to inform, persuade, inspire or a combination of these. Knowing their purpose can help them frame their opening and ending and lead to an actual title if they choose to use one.
4	What is your main point about this topic?	Many students only state this at the end of their presentation. That may be a reasoned decision but for the majority of students, identifying the main point will give them an arc which will help them organise their talk successfully.
5	What information do you need to find about this topic? How/where can you find it?	This is means of reminding students that they do need to show proper preparation and the talk should be more than just 'what I know and think about this'. They will be asked questions. Helping students identify what they need in terms of evidence and examples will serve to support the positive development of the talk. It is also useful to remind them about reliability of sources/use of google/Wikipedia.

By this point in the process, students need to be clear about who their audience will be and throughout this resource it is assumed that they will be presenting to their class with the teacher present. A real audience offers a genuine incentive to develop the presentation for a real purpose and to fulfil all the assessment criteria in a way that presenting to a class teacher alone does not. In addition, this can offer a purposeful experience of listening to varied points of view, learning to appreciate different perspectives and further developing valuable social and interactive skills as they are invited to ask questions. Whilst this was not always achievable during Covid restrictions, it bears reiterating that the essence of the task requires an audience of more than just the teacher and it is clearly outlined in the specification that one-to-one presentations are to be the exception. What is also needed at this point is a clear timescale for when different stages of the preparation are to be completed and the final assessment will take place.

### 3. Planning the talk: researching ideas, considering structure, vocabulary and methods to engage the audience

**Presentations must be planned and organised. Students should be advised that that lack of preparation is likely to prevent access to the criteria for the higher grades<sup>3</sup>**

Ideas to support planning and organisation of the talk have already been referenced and students will already be equipped with strategies to support planning which they can apply to this task. However, it needs to be emphasised that they are preparing a presentation, to be performed to an audience, such that anything they prepare is suitable for oral delivery. This is not an essay writing task or, as is pertinent given recent trends, an exercise in developing professional PowerPoints. Research is expected to evidence the preparation for the task with the aim of extending their knowledge and understanding of the topic area chosen such that they can present as 'experts'.

#### Research

This may not be a skill which has been widely practised so some appropriate guidance on where to look for information and how to use it effectively is recommended, especially since it will necessarily form part of any study course beyond GCSE. FE students tend to be more confident in this. With the availability of ChatGPT, it is possible to gather a significant number of sources together in one place providing the question is precise. Searches on the web again need a precise question and then some sorting to ensure what is selected is relevant to the talk, for example, offering evidence from the UK rather than America is typically preferable in many instances. Students are very digitally literate so accessing information may not prove challenging but deciding whether it is appropriate and useful requires a different skill set. Their aim is to find details which support what they have already planned in terms of ideas and content – it is their talk and anything they include needs to receive proper comment and, at higher levels, evaluation. Appropriate attribution is also important.

#### What kind of information/evidence/examples can be useful?

This will necessarily depend on the topic and purpose of the talk but well-chosen statistics, anecdotes, quotations from experts in the field, the media or government data could all be considered. They might also need to locate specific images to evidence the problems/issues being discussed. However, it is important the students consider their audience and choose these for relevance. They should also be encouraged to talk to their peers, adults and friends outside of school to gain additional perspectives on their topic. One area often overlooked in the presentations seen is the need to consider solutions to the problems identified and detailed and these too need to be 'tested' if they are to be accepted as positive directions to follow. Wider reading around the topic can be of great value here. There are a few suggested avenues to explore for topic based research in the reference section at the end of this document.

## Structure

The most often explored model of expository or polemical writing is based around the familiar structure of introduction, arguments for, arguments against, conclusion and such an approach does have merit for some students. As has already been mentioned however, talk is different from writing and the speaker needs to use a range of methods to support the audience's understanding of their argument especially where, at higher levels, they are seeking to influence not just inform. Connectives will be part of their repertoire as will be functional language to signal stages in a developing text. Consideration of what signals they use and how they use them represents purposeful planning for fluency and coherence to avoid the sometimes observed over-reliance on 'and' and 'also'. What should also be considered under this heading is the choice of 'voice', the register used to address the audience remembering the formal element of the task. Is the speaker separate from or aligned with the audience? The choice of pronouns used at key points can signal this and have powerful impact.

## Start and end with power and passion

Many students make effective use of emotive 'imagine' scenarios, rhetorical questions, powerful statistics or dramatic statements in their openings. Clearly, they are making conscious efforts to engage the audience and this matters to the impact their talk will have.

Those that simply state the topic of their talk with no communication of attitude or emotion are typically less successful here in securing audience interest and attention. There are students who begin with what seems like a thesis: 'In this talk I will....' Although this is clear, it might not support ongoing attention if all that is to be said has already been introduced.

Students need to plan for impact at the start of the talk: What idea do I want my audience to engage with and how do I want them to feel about it? The opportunity to explore openings in polemical texts is worth exploiting here given the Paper 2 writing task challenge.

Activity 3: Put them on the spot in section 2 above can be used to practise opening gambits. Once students have a topic and an opinion about it (purpose), they can collaboratively develop an opening for a talk which is then shared and evaluated by other groups for its potential for success in engaging an audience. Extend again by passing this on to the next group who are charged with creating a suitable ending. This activity can also be done as a pre-viewing exercise for presentation examples with students working from topic and purpose to anticipate how the talk might begin. Helping students notice and evaluate key techniques in action is invaluable to their developing skill repertoire.

Endings are often frustratingly 'unfinished'. Students often just stop talking and wait for the audience to realise the end has arrived. Some suddenly say, 'that's all I've got' or 'that's the end' clearly suggesting that the way to finish their talk has not been planned. Others provide very powerful closing images and appeals for our continued attention to the issues raised, exhort us to change our behaviours if only in taking the matter more seriously, and we are influenced, their words stay with us – impact and purpose achieved.

Also effective are the many that, having restated their opinion or explained their ideas for a solution, simply say 'thank you', thus acknowledging the audience's engagement in the activity.

Vocabulary has already been mentioned and is always a key target for any creative work undertaken by students. Here though it can also serve as a tool to engage – to support visualisation of an issue, to appreciate the seriousness or scale of a problem and, once again, the purpose the student is working to will decide the choices made.

## What does it mean to engage the audience? What does engagement mean?

This is a target not only for the spoken language presentation but also in their written responses in the GCSE examinations. It is worth exploring what it is to be engaged and how being engaged as a reader can support effective understanding of a text and the writer’s intentions as this is targeted in the reading sections of both examination papers.

ENGAGEMENT – what does it mean to be ‘engaged’	
interested in curious about questioning thinking about/visualising	making sense of considering responding to connecting with

What are the range of strategies students can employ to achieve this? A number have already been mentioned above and it is helpful at this point to differentiate those that are verbal and those that relate to delivery and performance – non-verbal. The physical and social and emotional skill strands of the oracy framework referenced earlier, establish some key targets here.

The list below does not seek to include everything that could be considered but reflects what is seen to be employed effectively in the most successful presentations. It is noteworthy that humour and irony are challenging to employ effectively and consequently are not frequently witnessed, although they could prove an interesting avenue to explore with more able students when encouraging their ambition.

Verbal	Non-verbal
Crafted openings and endings	Presence and posture – confidence and control
Imagine scenarios	Voice projection and clarity of pronunciation
Emotive language	Eye contact and eye movement – engaging
Vocabulary for influence and impact	Appropriate expression
Direct address	Pace – with variation for impact
Use of questions – engaging with responses	Tone – with variation for impact
Examples, statistics, opinions, evidence	Gesture and movement if appropriate
Rhetorical techniques	Use of props
Selective repetition or re-statement	
Use of humour and/or irony	

Expectations are key here. The many presentations available as models demonstrate how important the performative aspects of talk are and reinforce the need to ensure that students have valid experience of this throughout their secondary experience, not just in English classes. Confidence in this context should not be assumed, it needs to develop such that students feel secure to face this challenge. If, as many are, the talk is being recorded, the

audience is also behind the camera and this can further affect confidence. Having a receptive and focused audience is key to supporting students in their presentations and knowing what this means and what is expected of an audience in a formal context should be addressed as part of the preparation for the assessment. Whilst it might be assumed that this is already known and understood, there have been occasions in the samples submitted for verification where the expected supportiveness and respect have not been demonstrated and this has impacted students' performances particularly during questioning. This is explored further in section 5 below.

## A note about notes

**Students may use pre-prepared notes, PowerPoint etc. to assist them during their presentations but this is not a requirement<sup>3</sup>**

But...

Teachers should advise students that reading entirely from pre-prepared notes is unlikely to enable them to access the criteria for the higher grades which require engagement with the audience<sup>7</sup>.

The endorsement is an assessment of competence in **spoken language communication**. This needs to be continually reinforced and the means by which its delivery can be managed, explored in detail with students since engagement with an audience is key to their success. Note cards are continually seen to be the most effective support to a speaker but these too need consideration – the key word being 'note'. This approach is demonstrated in the standardising materials and, with impressive confidence, by many of the speakers in the UK Youth Parliament debates. Whilst many in the media might have auto-cues, there is a very definite skill in making text come alive from a screen and even where verifiers do not see the screen, it is almost always obvious that one is in use. If students are reliant on a written script, if they are reading, their engagement with the audience will be reduced. Giving a presentation requires presence and interaction.

PowerPoints, however impressive they might be, are most typically a distraction for the audience, especially where the whole talk appears there. They can also impede the flow of the talk where a student is preoccupied with making the technology work. It is clear that many students dedicate significant time and effort to creating the PowerPoint they show and this time could be more appropriately dedicated to developing and refining their own talk. Where a screen can be useful, and managed effectively as a strategy to engage, is where it is used to display key images, a diagram necessary to the audience's understanding or an important quotation relevant to the message being communicated. Such an approach is exemplified in the standardising materials in the recording of Laura. Judgement is crucial here – PowerPoint is a tool, an aid they need to be confident employing; it can be used to create a strong impact, but it should not be a prop they rely on. Students should ask themselves – Is what is on the screen essential to the audience's understanding of what I am talking about? Will it add impact? If not, then it is probably not appropriate or necessary.

## 4. Rehearsal and revision: practice

As has been mentioned above, the performative element of this task can prove challenging. Just as no professional speaker would give a presentation without rehearsal, and we would not expect a student to go cold into an exam, so it is important that students have an opportunity to find out if all their plans and decisions in relation to their presentation are appropriate and effective.

Rehearsal groups can offer this opportunity and can take place within the classroom, since the projection and presence of the final presentation are not required at this point. If students have chosen to use PowerPoint, this may be more challenging to accommodate but, if used in the manner outlined above, any image or detail they wish to show to illustrate their talk can be explained.

The performance aspect of the talk falls under the student's responsibility, working on their own, recording and replaying on their phones in front of a mirror, or possibly employing their family as an audience. It is clear in the review of samples submitted that many students have never delivered their talk before the day of the assessment. This puts them at a disadvantage over those that clearly have in the way that they are able to show command of their material and confidence in its delivery.

Where students might not have this opportunity or motivation outside of the classroom, organised rehearsal is especially important and provides further opportunities to develop metacognitive talk as students offer constructive comment on what is shared.

### How rehearsal groups work

1. Students are allocated in groups of at least three or four with the teacher guiding this, in order that the ability range is similar and to avoid the universally positive support a friendship group might result in. A mixed ability group could result in certain students feeling less rather than more confident as they approach the assessed performance. The teacher can obviously be a useful support here and the activity can inform where students are not on track and might need more guidance.
2. The students present to each other in turn; at this point notes/other material might well be still in full use but this can form part of the directed feedback. Each student listening is required to ask at least one question, in accordance with the discussion of what makes good questions, and this is to be written on the feedback form. This form might differ according to the ability of the students.

In Section 1 above, there are two models presented for reviewing sample presentations and either could be used successfully here with the familiarity gained from working with them previously supporting student confidence. The gradation table – Table 1 – has the advantage of permitting full attention on the speaker, whilst students working at higher levels may well wish to make notes as they listen. They are available in appendix 3.

3. Feedback notes are given to the speaker and are theirs to review, as they continue their preparation. The scope of questions can also be a useful tool to support any final revisions. The tangible sharing of these serves to encourage a positive approach to being an audience.
4. When the final assessment takes place, the students know that, since they were part of the rehearsal group, questions from other students will typically be preferred.

## 5. Performance, questioning and assessment: making the assessment a positive experience

Too often verifiers see classroom audiences who are doing other things rather than actually listening to the speaker presenting. The issues already discussed in relation to notes and use of PowerPoint may be a factor in this but, if all planning and rehearsal has gone well, students should be ready and prepared to make their impact and it is beholden on the audience to be receptive and respectful as befits the formality of the assessment.

There are a number of behaviours which could be actively encouraged to support speakers and, this again, reflects what has been seen and is known to be beneficial whilst highlighting areas where, in the evidence seen, the context was not wholly conducive to success:

- Complete attention – being able to listen with focus is an important life skill which is perhaps too rarely practised
- Eye contact
- Facial reactions
- Active response when requested – a survey question for example
- Respectful applause at the end – remembering the formal context.

However, it is possible to further encourage the responsibility of the audience by asking them to react to each presentation against a short feedback agenda as is occasionally witnessed – with it again being known that these will be shared with the speaker afterwards.

More productively though, since meaningful questioning is a priority learning objective, each student could be asked to write down one question that they would wish to ask, whether or not they are actually chosen to ask it.

We have identified how the topics, ideas, structure and vocabulary are all relevant to students' developing skill set and this event has learning benefits for all students, so making this explicit through an accountable response is valid.

## Asking meaningful questions

As part of, or following, the presentation students must listen to and respond appropriately to questions<sup>3</sup>

This statement bears repetition since it is a key area where current practice is not effective in too many samples reviewed. The key considerations are as follows:

- All students should be asked several questions and proper time should be allowed for this in the planning of the assessment.
- The teacher should be involved in questioning.
- Questions should arise out of what has been said and not be pre-prepared.
- Questions should seek clarification, additional explanation, - they should go beyond what has been presented to offer the student an opportunity to show their preparedness and their thinking around the topic.
- Where students are clearly working at higher levels, questions should challenge students to reason, evaluate and/ or hypothesise in order that the questioning criteria can be fully matched.

The standardising materials model effective questioning at all levels and should be used to inform teacher practice. Helping students realise what makes a good question comes from open discussion and modelling, as was suggested in the opening section and in the preparation activities.

Questioning has been mentioned at other stages as a support to the development of the presentation. Consultation of any learning skills model will easily illuminate different levels of questioning according to cognitive skill progression and the *Questioning Cards for Socratic Talk* in appendix 2 are again a relevant resource here.

The emphasis should always be on open questions and because we are encouraging higher level questioning, the questioner themselves will be showing their engagement through their selection of details. A few examples appear below:

- Why do you think that.... *where a specific opinion is identified* – asking for justification.
- How do you think that this issue can be resolved? - asking for extension of reasoning.
- What do you think is the most important...? – inviting selection and synthesis.
- What would happen if.... ? – inviting hypothesis.
- You mention ‘teenagers’, who else might be affected by this issue? – inviting analysis, application.
- Are there other ways to address this problem/other benefits to consider? – inviting hypothesis, analysis and application of understanding.
- Don’t you think that...? – inviting analysis and evaluation.

As was mentioned earlier, the one question which is completely inappropriate to ask at the end of the presentation is ‘Why did you choose this topic?’. All questions asked should be specific to the actual content of the presentation seen and heard. The role of the teacher is crucial here in ensuring students who have demonstrated skill levels of Merit or Distinction are asked questions appropriate to that level whilst equally, supporting pass students by re-framing questions when hesitancy occurs.

## Make the assessment meaningful

This presentation is the culmination of their speaking and listening curriculum journey; it has separate status on the exam certificate; it matters. A representative sample of the students' presentations need to be recorded to be submitted for external verification, but it is up to the centre to decide whether all presentations are video recorded. This can raise issues affecting confidence, but it can also be demotivating for a student to be told that theirs will not be recorded. Whatever decision is made regarding filming, it seems reasonable to enact some form of formal recording process which can be shared with the student to properly acknowledge what they have achieved commensurate with the expectations of a summative assessment.

Yes, there is a non-mandatory tick list proforma available, but this offers no more than a summary of what has been achieved and it is impersonal. Just as we would not return a piece of written coursework without personalised feedback, so this task merits proper reporting. Many teachers do make detailed notes, this is sometimes witnessed on the recordings, so finding a method of using these to inform feedback seems sensible. The practice seen in some centres of announcing the level awarded immediately following the performance with no context or explanatory comment is not appropriate to the substance or formality of the assessment.

There is a suggested model of an assessment record sheet in appendix 5, where each element of the assessment priorities is identified with space for skill notes and examples. Also included are completed sheets for three of the standardising videos and you can see immediately how much more effectively they allow for relevant evidence to be recorded to inform and illuminate the final award made. These have been typed for clarity but that should not be the expectation – the presentation is live and real, so can be the notes. What this sheet does above all, is provide space to reflect in detail on what has been seen before determining the level to be awarded and that level requires justification which may well be confirmed at a later point when the evidence is reviewed. In this way, this sheet can also inform purposeful internal standardising where teachers' comments are discussed and shared to illuminate the qualities at the different levels of award. Where samples are collated for an internal modelling resource, these sheets become useful reference points for teachers in making appropriate selections to use with their future teaching groups.

Imagine this sheet on quality paper, customised with the school's name and crest and with formal detail of the student's name and year. It could be extended with a section overleaf for the first stage proposal and approval of the student's chosen task, as discussed earlier. A space for the teacher's signature and date could well be added and a copy of this given to the student to mark their achievement and to share with their family who, if experience is correct, know all too well the efforts invested in the preparation for the assessment and the pride taken in what has been achieved.

## Some closing observations

There have been many changes to the GCSE requirements for speaking and listening over the last 25 years and many teachers may lament the separation of this element from the final mark profile and the potential impact of this on students. It is important to recognise though, that the skills of effective spoken language communication are as important today as they have ever been if not more so, given the influence of digital media and the consequences of Covid. Explicit teaching and rehearsal of these skills matters at all key stages and across the curriculum if students are to be properly equipped for their futures.

The experience of preparing and delivering a presentation can be made purposeful and meaningful as this document has sought to show. Students can be encouraged to perceive its value not least in that it offers them a rare element of autonomy and independence, allowing them to voice issues and opinions about their lives, society and the world of their future. Equally important is the experience of sharing ideas with others, listening and respecting their views, reflecting on their significance. When afforded proper time and space within the curriculum, the experience for all is invariably fulfilling and inspiring as the evidence submitted for verification readily confirms.

So far, this guidance has been directed at teachers. To conclude, it is appropriate to add some top tips for students based on the observations of the verifying panel whose privilege it is to watch their presentations.

Key priorities are identified in bold.

- Choose **a topic which interests you** and then identify an angle – a point of view to give your talk **purpose** and shape.
- Give your talk **status** – think about how what you are talking about affects others, society, the world.
- Think about your **audience** – how will you help them to see your point of view? **Organise your ideas.**
- Do your **research** – facts, evidence, examples, statistics can have impact but choose and use them with care to support **your viewpoint**; own the information.
- Make an **impact** from the start and make sure you end with similar passion and power.
- Show **control** of your talk, use your voice, expression, pace, eyes and posture to make your audience pay attention.
- Use notes, not a script, and **practise** (use a mirror, friends, family; record yourself and listen back) so you can **present with confidence**. Be ready to perform.
- **Answer questions with authority** – show that you know your subject.

## References

1. Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning: [Seven recommendations for teaching self-regulated learning & metacognition. Guidance report](#) published by the Education Endowment Federation. (Section 5 Promote and develop metacognitive talk in the classroom).
2. Voice 21: [An oracy education charity](#)  
[Oracy framework](#): Voice 21/Oracy Cambridge.
3. [AQA GCSE English Language Specification](#)
4. [The National Curriculum for English](#)
5. AQA Series Report (8700/C): Lead Verifier's reports on the examination. Provides information and guidance on task setting, approaches to the endorsement and issues affecting outcomes. The latest report is available from the Centre Services section of the AQA website.
6. *Board games 'help to teach maths skills'* i newspaper 11/7/23. The report on the study is also available on YouTube, Science Daily and Earth.com websites.
7. [Joint Qualifications Alliance Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments](#) (reformed GCE & GCSE specifications): Appendix 2 Spoken Language Endorsement for GCSE English Language specifications designed for use in England.

## Information on Oracy and the development of effective spoken language communication skills.

- [Oracy Cambridge](#), The Hughes Hall Centre for Effective Spoken Communication: Focused on developing oracy across the curriculum and exploring its cognitive benefits with research on the impact of interventions.
- [English-Speaking Union](#): Association to support development of effective spoken language communication with resources for schools and relevant research papers. They run speech and debate programmes and competitions, all focused on promoting success in oracy.
- Thomas, Peter, *12 Ways of Making Speaking and Listening Matter Again* in Issue 10 of Teaching English NATE magazine. Published 2016. [IllumiNATE Extract: Ways of Making Speaking and Listening Matter](#)
- Mannion, J., McAllister, K., Mercer, N. (2018). [The Learning Skills curriculum: raising the bar, closing the gap at GCSE](#). *Impact, the Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching*.

## Youth Parliament links – for powerful examples of public speaking on topical issues

[British Youth Council](#): Young people speaking and writing about important social issues with presentations and debates which take place in the House of Commons. [Recordings of the formal parliament sessions](#).

## Appropriate research sources for presentations

- [BBC Bitesize](#): A useful source of information and evidence presented in a variety of ways about a wide range of topical issues typically presented in accessible formats so appropriate for all abilities.
- [The Guardian archive](#) of op-ed articles is a treasure trove of quality polemical writing of the type often selected for examination sources. Clearly this is a resource more suited to able students or for selecting class study articles but able and ambitious students will find plenty to inspire here. There is a searchable index and a vast range of topics.

## Appendices

	Page
Appendix 1 Spoken language assessment criteria	32
Appendix 2 Socratic question model	33
Appendix 3 Printable tables	34
Appendix 4 Instructions for conducting and recording audio visual evidence	36
Appendix 5 Assessment record sheets	39

## Appendix 1

### Spoken Language assessment criteria for Pass, Merit and Distinction

#### General criteria

To be awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction a Learner must:

- be audible, and
- use Spoken Standard English which, for the purposes of the spoken language assessment, means that a Learner must:
  - be intelligible, and
  - generally use language appropriate to the formal setting of the presentation.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>In addition to the general criteria, to be awarded a Pass a Learner's performance in his or her spoken language assessment must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expresses straightforward ideas / information / feelings</li> <li>• makes an attempt to organise and structure his or her presentation</li> <li>• makes an attempt to meet the needs of the audience, and</li> <li>• listens to questions/feedback and provides an appropriate response in a straight forward manner.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to the general criteria, to be awarded a Merit a Learner's performance in his or her spoken language assessment must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expresses challenging ideas / information / feelings using a range of vocabulary</li> <li>• organises and structures his or her presentation clearly and appropriately to meet the needs of the audience</li> <li>• achieves the purpose of his or her presentation</li> <li>• listens to questions/feedback responding formally and in some detail.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to the general criteria, to be awarded a Distinction a Learner's performance in his or her spoken language assessment must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expresses sophisticated ideas / information / feelings using a sophisticated repertoire of vocabulary</li> <li>• organises and structures his or her presentation using an effective range of strategies to engage the audience</li> <li>• achieves the purpose of his or her presentation</li> <li>• listens to questions/feedback, responds perceptively and if appropriate elaborates with further ideas and information.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Socratic question model

Questioning Cards for Socratic Talk

Source: English hub school network (GCSE material for teachers) Summer 2016

<b>Questions for clarification</b>	<b>Questions that probe assumptions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are you saying that?</li> <li>• What exactly does this mean?</li> <li>• How does this relate to what we have been talking about?</li> <li>• What is the nature of...?</li> <li>• What do we already know about this?</li> <li>• Can you give me an example?</li> <li>• Are you saying .....? or ....?</li> <li>• Can you rephrase that please?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What else could we think of?</li> <li>• You seem to be saying ....?</li> <li>• What are you taking for granted?</li> <li>• Are you assuming that ...?</li> <li>• Please explain why/how...?</li> <li>• How can you prove or disprove that?</li> <li>• What would happen if...?</li> <li>• Do you agree or disagree with.....?</li> </ul>
<b>Questions that probe reason and evidence</b>	<b>Questions about viewpoints and perspectives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you know this?</li> <li>• Show me</li> <li>• Can you give an example of that?</li> <li>• What do you think causes...?</li> <li>• Are these reasons good enough?</li> <li>• How might it be refuted?</li> <li>• How can I be sure of what you are saying?</li> <li>• Why do you think that...?</li> <li>• Why is ... happening?</li> <li>• What evidence is there to support what you are saying?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there other ways of looking at that?</li> <li>• What do you think?</li> <li>• What is the difference between ... and ...</li> <li>• What other ways of looking at this are there?</li> <li>• Why is .... necessary?</li> <li>• Who benefits from this?</li> <li>• Why is it better than...?</li> <li>• What are the strengths and weaknesses of ...?</li> <li>• How are ... and ... similar?</li> <li>• How could you look another way at this?</li> </ul>
<b>Questions that probe implications and consequences</b>	<b>How to respond</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Then what would happen?</li> <li>• How could ... be used to ...?</li> <li>• What are the implications of ...?</li> <li>• Doesn't it follow that ...?</li> <li>• What are the consequences of that?</li> <li>• How does ... affect....?</li> <li>• How does ... fit with what we learned before?</li> <li>• Are you suggesting that ....?</li> <li>• What is the best ... Why?</li> <li>• Why is ... important?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I agree with your point, however ...</li> <li>• Are you saying ...?</li> <li>• I agree. I also think ...</li> <li>• When you said earlier that ...</li> <li>• Although I understand the point you have made, I believe ...</li> <li>• I disagree with your point because...</li> <li>• I believe ....</li> <li>• I think you are right because ....</li> <li>• I think you are wrong because ...</li> </ul>


## Appendix 3

### Printable tables

**Table 1** Reviewing sample presentations with qualitative comment

Question to consider	Response, comments, examples/details
1. Was it clear what specific issue they were talking about?	
2. Was the purpose clear?	
3. Were you convinced by what they said? How? Why?	
4. Were the examples/ details used effective/relevant/interesting?	
5. Which parts of the talk made the biggest impact on you and why?	
6. How did they keep you interested?	
7. How well did they answer the questions?	
8. What question would you have wanted to ask? Why?	

**Table 2** Reviewing sample presentations - where verbal feedback is preferred

Response level	Low				High
Focus point	1	2	3	4	5
Did the start get your attention?					
Was the purpose for the talk clear?					
Were the examples /details relevant/interesting?					
How well did they hold your attention?					
Did they end well/clearly?					
How effectively did they respond to questions?					

**Table 3** Making the approval of the task formal

	Topic/title	
1	Why did you choose this topic?	
2	How is this topic relevant to your audience?	
3	What is the purpose of your talk?	
4	What is your main point/idea about this topic?	
5	What information do you need to find about this topic?  How/where can you find it?	

## Appendix 4

### Instructions for conducting and recording audio visual evidence

#### Audio-visual recordings

For the assessment of the Spoken Language, schools and colleges are required to submit audio-visual recordings of the presentations of a sample of their students. Using their knowledge of students' likely performance, schools should select the sample following the guidance shown in the table below.

Number of students at the school/college	Number of students whose presentations must be recorded	Minimum number of students at each grade (D, M, P)
30 or fewer	All students	10
Over 30	30	10

The sample should be representative of the teaching groups within the school or college.

Schools/colleges are recommended to record slightly more than the minimum number at each grade to allow for students whose performance is awarded a higher or lower grade than the school or college had anticipated.

For full details of what is required, please refer to the Appendix in the JCQ document on the conduct of non-examination assessments.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments>

Schools/colleges are advised to plan in advance where and when the audio-visual recording sessions will take place. Spoken Language assessments can take place at any time during the two-year course so long as the sample of audio-visual recordings is submitted by:

- 7 May for the summer exam series
- 5 November for November resit exam series.

## Organisation and file naming

Audio-visual recordings should be conducted in an organised and structured way. Each recording must contain the following information:

- 5-digit centre number
- component-code 8700-C
- either:
  - a single 4-digit candidate number
  - multiple 4-digit candidate numbers, separated by a space
- description, which should include:
  - candidate name (forename and surname)
  - outcome of the spoken presentation (Pass, Merit or Distinction).
- file extension, as set by the application.

Each piece of information must be separated by an underscore “\_”.

eg individual files:

92345\_8700-C\_0001\_Joe Bloggs Pass.mp4

92345\_8700-C\_0005\_Jane Doe Merit.mp4

92345\_8700-C\_0010\_John Smith Merit.mp4

eg single file with multiple candidates:

92345\_8700-C-0001\_0005\_0010\_Joe Bloggs Pass - Jane Doe Merit - John Smith Merit.mp4

**Note:** the first part of the filename (CentreNo\_Component-Code\_CandidateNo\_) is used during the upload process to automatically tag (associate) the file with the candidate number specified.

Following this convention will make the process of uploading and submitting the samples a lot smoother and avoid needing to manually tag files to candidates.

The recording of each student’s presentation, including questions and feedback from the audience, must be complete and unedited. Any proceedings at the beginning or end which are not part of the assessment should not be recorded or should be edited out.

All students should identify themselves and their school or college at the start of the recording by either holding an A4 written sign to the camera or by stating their name and centre.

Schools/colleges can make the recordings on any audio-visual recording device that they have available, including on webcams, video recorders and iPads. Each recording must be of a good quality; the image of the student must be stable and clear and any participants in the assessment, including the student and audience members, must be clearly audible. It is the school/college responsibility to ensure that the image and sound on each recording is of a good quality. Awarding bodies will not be able to verify the school/college assessment of Spoken language if the recordings submitted are of poor quality.

## GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – 8700 – AUDIO-VISUAL EVIDENCE GUIDANCE

To ensure good quality recordings, schools/colleges are advised to:

- to check the quality of recording equipment in advance of conducting the recorded assessments
- stabilise the recording equipment
- position the recording equipment from an audience perspective so that the student and any support materials used in the presentation, such as PowerPoint or notes, are in view
- position the recording equipment close enough to the student and audience members so that speech is clear and audible
- remove any objects which may obstruct the image and/or sound of the recording
- conduct recordings in a quiet environment to reduce background noise.

### Supported video file formats

.flv .mp4 .mxf .gxf .ts .ps .3gp .3gpp .mpg .wmv .asf .avi .isma .ismv .dvr-ms .mkv  
.wave .mov

It's important that recordings are of sufficient quality for verifiers to identify students and assess their performance. However, schools/colleges should make efforts to avoid creating excessively large files as they may take a long time to upload.

It is not necessary for the contents of any slide presentation to be visible in the video. This can be uploaded as a separate file with the sample.

Ways of minimising file size are:

- record high-definition video at a resolution of 720p (1280x720) rather than 1080p (1920x1080). A resolution of 720p will result in files less than half the size of 1080p, usually with no significant impact on quality.
- if your video recorder permits other quality settings to be changed in addition to the resolution, it is often possible to significantly reduce file sizes while not significantly impacting quality.

Schools/colleges may choose to film each student in the sample in individual sessions or may film more than one student in a session. Schools/colleges that choose to record multiple students during the same session must ensure that the start and end of each individual assessment is clearly identified on the recording.

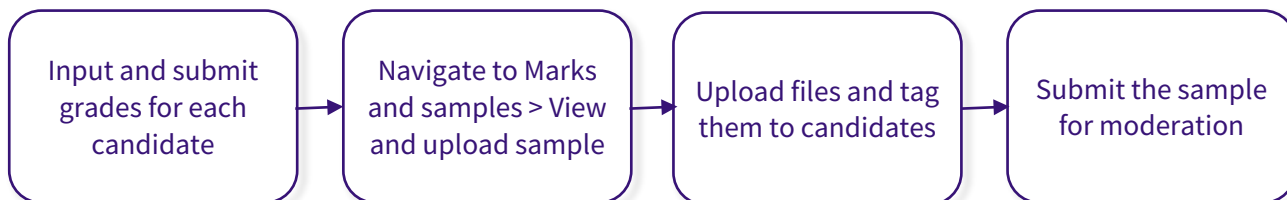
The Spoken Language assessment should be conducted as a formal exam session where possible. Mobile phones are not permitted, and no one should enter or leave the room during presentations. The audience, although they may respond as a normal audience, must not distract the presenter. Interruptions must be kept to a minimum.

Schools and colleges are encouraged to check the recordings when completed to ensure that they can be played back. It is the school/college responsibility to ensure that the recordings submitted for monitoring are accessible and contain all the evidence submitted for each student.

## Storage

Audio-visual recordings must be stored electronically in a secure area on the school/college network before being submitted.

## Uploading samples on Centre Services - Centre marks submission



Schools/colleges can submit their grades for each candidate using Centre Services – Centre marks submission or by EDI (Electronic Data Interchange).

Once the grade submission is complete, samples must be uploaded via the **'View and upload sample'** screen on Centre marks submission regardless of how the grades were submitted.

Each uploaded file must be tagged (associated) with the relevant candidate. If the filename convention has been followed correctly, this step is done automatically.

The final step is to tick a checkbox onscreen and formally 'submit' the sample for moderation.

## Appendix 5

### Assessment record sheets

These are blank proforma and completed records for the presentations by Zain, James and Laura in the standardising material.

8700/C GCSE Spoken Language assessment record

Date:

Candidate name and number:

Title/topic of talk:

IDEAS	STRUCTURE
PURPOSE	VOCABULARY
ENGAGEMENT WITH AUDIENCE	RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
SUMMATIVE COMMENT	
LEVEL AWARDED	

8700/C GCSE Spoken Language assessment record

Date:

Candidate name and number: ZAIN

Title/topic of talk:

<b>IDEAS</b>	<b>STRUCTURE</b>
<p>Attempts definition in own terms. Range of aspects considered.                  Addresses different aspects – types, reasons, origins, key figures showing some research and planning around subject.                  Uses personal experience effectively – ‘paki’, football, influence on younger siblings. Legal situation.                  Attempts wider frame – ‘fascist ideology’ but not explored in any detail.                  Lack of security re topic conveyed through ‘good side of racism’.</p>	<p>Clear opening. Signals sections in talk in straightforward manner.                  Not fully ordered – sequential rather than cohesive but occasional effective links – ‘moreover’.                  Ending is not fully shaped – no clear point to close talk.                  Matches ‘attempt’</p>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>VOCABULARY</b>
<p>Focus is on sharing personal ideas and experience rather than shaping audience opinion.                  ‘discussing’ racism suggests lack of clarity as to purpose – about not why.                  Some selectivity of details to illustrate issues – detailing of football to convey reality.</p>	<p>Clear and appropriate SE throughout.                  Selfish, jealous, retaliate, inspirational; vocab is appropriate to topic and begins to show range anticipated at Merit.</p>
<b>ENGAGEMENT WITH AUDIENCE</b>	<b>RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS</b>
<p>Clear – direct communication if a little fast from nervousness. Sustained.                  Uses personal experience to relate to audience, interesting explanation of ‘Paki’.                  Example from football to emphasise inappropriacy of behaviour.                  Use of known figures – MLK and NM to provide relevant reference points.                  Variations in tone – questioning to signal attitude and invite audience empathy.                  Invites contributions of experience alongside questions – showing further interest and engagement but does not respond to that given.</p>	<p>Provides clear and appropriate responses – remains engaged/listens.                  Thoughtful re ‘human nature’ explanation.</p>
<b>SUMMATIVE COMMENT</b>	<b>LEVEL AWARDED</b>
<p>All criteria matched at PASS; some elements approaching merit. Sustained focus for 4 minutes + conveys extent of planning and range of detail. Could benefit from more questions perhaps given the first is an observation only and does not readily invite a response (although requested).                  Good example of where a potentially complex topic is not automatically ‘complex’ in content and presentation.</p>	
<b>LEVEL AWARDED</b>	PASS

8700/C GCSE Spoken Language assessment record

Date:

Candidate name and number: JAMES

Title/topic of talk:

IDEAS	STRUCTURE
<p>Clearly defines topic area. Engages with moral and social aspects – poverty, education, parenting. Introduces evidence to illustrate ideas. Not all detail developed – anecdote not fully explored. Full complexity of certain aspects not addressed – list of issues re home life. Final weighing of responsibility shows proper thought – could make a good starting point.</p>	<p>Clear outline of talk agenda – headline provided and agenda set with personal statement of belief – ‘Do we truly understand the causes of youth crime?’. Signals employed – fact, remember. Sections headlined – eg; ‘conclusion’; links between sections not always fluent. Conclusion does offer balance.</p>
PURPOSE	VOCABULARY
<p>Clear on motive for talk – consistent in belief throughout. Objective approach adds credibility to argument. Highlights range of facts to support argument. Uses appropriate statistics to illustrate issues linked to argument. Achieves what is set out at the start – does address causes of youth crime .</p>	<p>Consistent SE. and fluent talk. Appropriate and flexible to match subject area – ‘alarming’, ‘cycle’. Rhetorical phrasing employed for impact – ‘face an uphill battle’. Balanced phrasing to emphasise points. ‘I am of the opinion’ – shows formality of approach.</p>
ENGAGEMENT WITH AUDIENCE	RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
<p>Mainly sustains eye contact – tone and expression varied appropriately. Is reliant on notes at times so fluency does waiver. Compares experience between subjects of talk and audience using ‘we’ and ‘us’. Use of statistics and evidence for impact – chosen for relevance – GCSE results. Employs anecdote to add ‘real’ element. Vocab, structure, questions and rhetorical style employed for impact.</p>	<p>Confident and detailed responses to ‘new’ aspects/issues – gang violence, age of criminal responsibility – clear evidence of security of knowledge and ideas about the topic area. Handles challenge quite well, including moral debate – defends and expands on personal opinions.</p>
SUMMATIVE COMMENT	
<p>Challenge of topic and ideas with use of evidence and examples allows a match at M. Achieves purpose as stated in opening. Vocabulary, fluency and structure are varied for purpose and mainly confidently controlled – M matched. Audience engagement not wholly secure – note cards, hesitancy and lack of full detailing of certain points but does employ range of strategies sufficient for M. Handles questions well – detailed responses, measured statements with thoughtful comment related to personal beliefs.</p>	
LEVEL AWARDED	MERIT

8700/C GCSE Spoken Language assessment record

Date:

Candidate name and number: LAURA

Title/topic of talk:

IDEAS	STRUCTURE
<p>Explores truth behind 'façade' – what the public do not see. References personal interest and consequences of prestige – establishes wider frame for personal beliefs. Uses Grand National as exemplification – deliberate naming for link to image. Considers challenge for horses -acknowledges safety improvements but then questions them. Explores correlation between attitudes to horse vs human sporting events with consideration of moral/ethical dimension. Acknowledges reality of danger – not totally avoidable.</p>	<p>Use of questions as cohesive links. Maintains focus on truth versus surface view via apt choices of vocab. Well ordered for clarity of argument – problem, exemplification, analogy with human sport, potential means of addressing the problem. Shaped conclusion – restatement of opening opinion.</p>
PURPOSE	VOCABULARY
<p>Clear outline of planned focus – sustained through pattern of detail of what is known and not known. Use of 'expert' quote for credibility. Use of modal of obligation to stress intention. Employs statistics to emphasise reality of horse breeding. Demonstrates knowledge of the subject – ref to Animal aid. Honesty re challenges identified – realistic approach rather than sensationalist. Aim of evidencing personal belief achieved and reinforced in conclusion.</p>	<p>Façade, (halogous), prestige, downward spiral of neglect. Use of vocab associated with deceit – eg: myth, safety glazed over. Assured SE – ordered, varied sentence patterns for clarity and impact. Rhetorical techniques balanced and controlled. Sophisticated repertoire evidenced.</p>

ENGAGEMENT WITH AUDIENCE	RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
<p>Clear, confident tone throughout. Use of notes not intrusive. Presence and control of performance with well controlled pace. Eye contact effective.</p> <p>Use of 'we' to signal wider relevance – focus on animal cruelty made clear to build audience empathy 'killed for meat', 'make the grade'.</p> <p>Clarity of intention – signalled stages in argument. Use of examples and selective illustration for impact. Analogy with F1 to increase inclusivity.</p> <p>Emotive details – 'beaten for entertainment', survivor, details on consequences of whip use.</p>	<p>Developed responses (knowledgeable – conveys thoughtful preparation) with some perceptive comments – improvements considered from both animal and 'sport' perspective.</p> <p>Recognises complexity of human vs animal experience of risk.</p> <p>When challenged – provides detailed exemplification of how argument retains validity.</p>
SUMMATIVE COMMENT	
<p>4 minute sustained independent/individual presentation – shaped and ordered with precise choices of expression to match clarity of purpose. Addresses moral/ethical ideas around complex topic with secure depth of knowledge and substantive development of key points. Range of effective strategies to engage audience. Perceptive and elaborative in response to questions.</p>	
LEVEL AWARDED	DISTINCTION