

Making speaking exam preparation authentic & meaningful

Rachel Appleby, MOSCOW – Trendy English, 2018

Getting started ...





Homework:

Write 3 sentences using a fronted adverbial.

where e.g. *in the distance*

how e.g. *courageously*

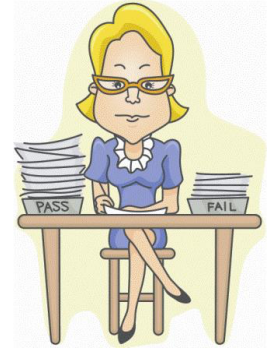
when e.g. *suddenly*

What words come to mind?

exams!

In pairs, on your phone, go to **menti.com**.
Type in the code.

You may write 3 ideas .., then “submit”



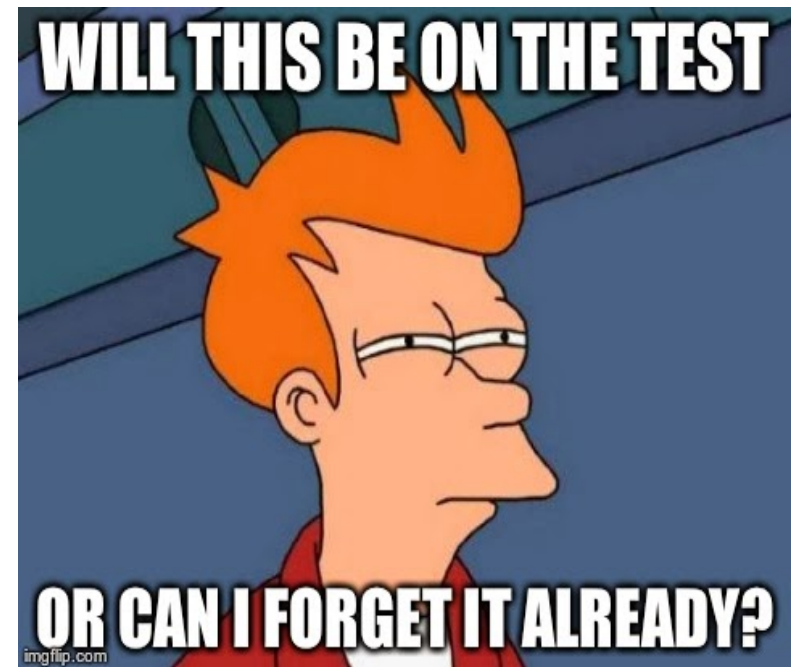
As a teacher / student, what
words come to mind when
you think of “exams”?



Mentimeter

Today ...

- Why are exams stressful?
- What can we do?
- Sample speaking exam activities
- Classroom activities



“ the influence of testing on teaching and learning

KATHLEEN BAILEY, (1996). 'Working for washback: a review of the washback concept in language testing'



Please can we just do
practice tests?

Chinese student preparing for IELTS

Washback: negative & positive

- Teachers **only** teach **what's on the test**
- Students **only** study **when there is a test**
- **Over-test-familiarity** and practice



- Students are motivated to **achieve learning goals**
- T / Sts can track progress & **set learning objectives**
- Classroom activities support **real-life learning, and test success**



Based on: KATHLEEN BAILEY, (1996).

What makes a good test / exam?

- focuses on a **single skill**
- **measures** the **performance** of **doing sth** through language
- uses a **task-based** approach
- reflects and encourages **good classroom practice**

KEITH MORROW



Euroexam – sample speaking item

- Euroexam Level B2 – SPEAKING – Dialogues, Task 3

You are in a restaurant. The food is awful.
Complain to the waiter.

Your friend has just moved into a new
flat. Ask him/her what it is like.

You want to buy a camera but the one
the assistant has shown you is too
expensive. Ask for a cheaper one.



Exam extract: Task 3, Dialogues

Réka & Alexa:



You are in a restaurant. The food

Your friend has just moved into a new flat



- Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Dialogues, Task 3

You are in a restaurant. The food

A. What **language / skills** is this task testing?

- ✓ Ability to identify the situation (in/formal)
- ✓ ... to respond (very briefly) to interlocuter's comment
- ✓ Familiarity with everyday English in typical settings
- ✓



- Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Dialogues, Task 3

You are in a restaurant. The food

B. What **activities** could you do in the classroom to help prepare students for this?

- Audio: Who are the speakers? Where are they?
- Rewrite conversation – more or less formal
- Choose a picture with 2 people. Write a 5-line dialogue; swap / mix up / match / compare / etc.
- Give just one side of dialogue; students write other side
- Handout 3 x 3-line dialogues, jumbled. Sts group & order
- Look at the 3-line dialogues: underline stressed words
-



Exam preparation with a coursebook?

Practical English Restaurant problems

EPISODE 2

1 IN THE NEW YORK OFFICE



a 28 Watch or listen. Mark the sentences T (true) or F (false).

- 1 The New York office is smaller than the London office.
 - 2 Barbara is the designer of the magazine.
 - 3 Rob has never been to New York before.
 - 4 Barbara is going to have lunch with Rob and Jenny.
 - 5 Holly is going to work with Rob.
 - 6 Holly wants to go to the restaurant because she's hungry.
- b Watch or listen again. Say why the F sentences are false.



2 VOCABULARY restaurants

Do the restaurant quiz with a partner.

RESTAURANT QUIZ

What do you call...?

- 1 the book or list which tells you what food there is
- 2 the three parts of a meal
- 3 the person who serves you
- 4 the piece of paper with the price of the meal
- 5 extra money you leave if you are happy with your meal or with the service

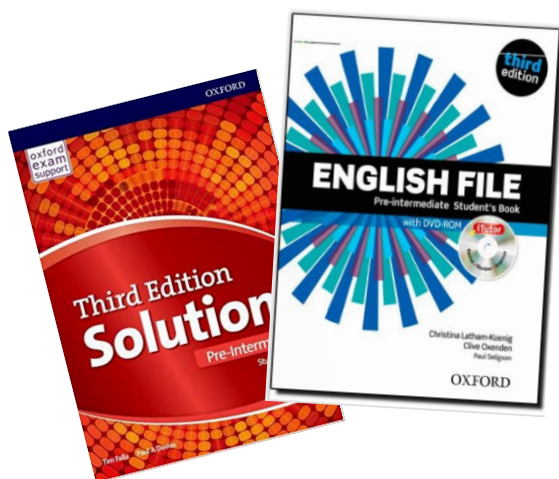
What do you say...?

- 1 if you want a table for four people
- 2 when the waiter asks you what you want
- 3 when you are ready to pay

3 AT THE RESTAURANT

a 29 Cover the dialogue and watch or listen. Answer the questions.

- 1 What do they order?
- 2 What problems do they have?



Exam preparation with a coursebook?

Practical English Restaurant problems EPISODE 2

3 AT THE RESTAURANT

a 29))) Cover the dialogue and watch or listen. Answer the questions.

- 1 What do they order?
- 2 What problems do they have?



29)))

Waitress Are you ready to order?
Jenny Yes, please.
W: Can I get you something to start with?
Jenny No, thank you. I'd like the tuna with a salad.
W: And for you, sir?
Rob I'll have the steak, please.
W: Would you like that with fries, or a baked potato?
Rob Fries, please.
W: How would you like your steak?
Rob Well done.

Exam preparation with a coursebook?

Practical English Restaurant problems EPISODE 2

3 AT THE RESTAURANT

a 29))) Cover the dialogue and watch or listen. Answer the questions.

1 What do they order?

2 What problems do they have?

29)))



[...]

W: The tuna for you ma'am, and the steak for you, sir.

Jenny I'm sorry, but I asked for a salad, not fries.

W: No problem. I'll change it.

Rob Excuse me.

W: Yes, sir?



Rob Sorry, I asked for my steak well done and this is rare.

W: I'm really sorry. I'll take it back to the kitchen.

Exam preparation with a coursebook?

Practical English Restaurant problems EPISODE 2

Watch or listen again. Complete the **You Hear** phrases.

 You Hear	You Say 
Are you ready to _____?	Yes, please.
Can I get you something to _____ with?	No, thank you. I'd like the tuna with a green salad.
And for you, sir?	I'll have the steak, please.
Would you like that with fries or a baked _____?	Fries, please.
How would you like your steak? Rare, _____, or well done?	Well done. Nothing for me.
OK. And to _____?	Water, please.
_____ or sparkling?	Sparkling.
The tuna for you ma'am, and the steak for you, _____.	I'm sorry, but I asked for a green salad, not fries.
No problem. I'll _____ it.	Excuse me.
Yes, sir?	Sorry, I asked for my steak well done and this is rare.
I'm really sorry. I'll _____ it back to the kitchen.	

 In pairs, roleplay the dialogue.

- A** You are in the restaurant. Order a steak or tuna.
B You are the waiter/waitress. Offer **A** fries, a baked potato, or salad with the steak or tuna. You begin with *Are you ready to order?*
A There is a problem with your order. Explain it to the waiter/waitress.
B Apologize, and try to solve the problem.

Make two 3-line dialogues

a. It's great. Much bigger than the last one. And near to Tom's place!

b. So tell me – what's your new flat like?

c. Yes please!

d. Thanks, but have you got a cheaper one? This is rather expensive.

e. Oh, really? That's great!

f. Well yes, but it isn't as good. Would you like to see it?

Answer: d, f, c b, a, e

Story time! (with words)



Story time! (with pictures)



... at the market ...

“Imagine the scene – a market crammed full, the noise and smells so powerful, the sights unforgettable. [...] You approach a line of grinning women, each brandishing a ladle dripping with white cream which they dangle over a kind of demi-john of smetana. They beckon to you, grab your hand and plop the white cream onto it, you lick it up, and then go onto the next woman [...] Each sample has a slightly different sourness, or thickness to the rest. Then you make your choice, hand over the jam jar you’ve brought specially from home, and then move onto the honey stalls!”

Dear Folks,

Well, how are you doing? No made my way to the computer I did it last week and forgot.

I'm fine. I should be, as I've and I had an extremely enlightening Friday, at midday an European Third World, was the cold and were finally to weird part about it was the amused. Luckily we had a Actually it was a private c... good. That's because we were squashed between...



So, the trip had started. We arrived at Helen's flat. She's a friend of Nick Lidwell who had agreed to put us up on the agreement that we then do the same for her in Budapest. Unfortunately, she wasn't feeling 100% as she had terrible tooth ache. Anyway, she made us feel at home and soon packed us off to a bar, where we met Nick.

Rather than go painstakingly through my stay, I'll just highlight the main features of the holiday. It was an amazing place to visit. It's sorrowful, interesting, beautiful, shabby, appalling, culturally fascinating all at once. Some of the highpoints included going to the market on the Sat morning. There was a surprising quantity of food but it's too expensive for lots of people. But stalls were piled high with fruit like pomegranates, pickles of all kinds (including whole apples), smoked meat, cottage cheese and sour cream they call 'smetana'. Imagine the scene - a market crammed so full you nearly lose your bag as you're pushed to and fro, the noise and smells so powerful, the sights unforgettable. One stall had the head of a cow on it, the other huge river fish and fiver lobsters. To buy the cream was an experience. You approach a line of huge, grinning peasant women, each brandishing a ladle dripping with white cream which they dangle over a kind of demi-john of smetana. They beckon to you, grab your hand and plop the white cream onto it, you lick it up, and then go onto the next woman, feeling terrible for not patronizing them, but most of them smile anyway. Each sample has a slightly different sourness, thickness to the rest. Then you make your choice, hand over the jam jar you've brought specially from home, and then move onto the honey stalls!

Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Picture Story, Task 2



The story starts like this:

“As usual on Mondays, Tim’s alarm clock went off at 7 o’clock.”

(+ 6 more pictures, not included here)

Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Picture Story, Task 2

A. What **language / skills** is this task testing?

- ✓ Ability to produce continuous speech with a cohesive, logical story
- ✓ Use of appropriate past tenses
- ✓ Use of linking words
- ✓ Use of descriptive language
- ✓
- ✓



NB: Students should not read from notes; they should focus on the story, not individual pictures

Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Picture Story, Task 2

B. What **activities** could you do in the classroom to help students for this?

story in a bag: include familiar words, as well as words to revise, e.g. 5-6 words per bag / per pair.



- Group, and re-order 2 jumbled stories
- Use pictures; students invent a story
- Before / after stories (1 picture); compare
- Round-the-class stories
- Give groups a set of linking words to add to a story
- Collect a list of phrases for every day activities

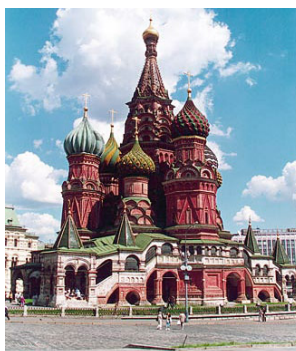


Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Discussion, Task 4

- What things could you recommend a visitor for a weekend in Moscow?

- e.g. visit *St Basil's cathedral*

-
-
-



INTERLOCUTOR:



“First, make a **spoken list of 4-5 things**.

Then, when you’ve done that, discuss **which one is the most important**.

Remember to **give reasons** for what you say.

You have 3’ altogether.”

Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Discussion, Task 4

A What **language / skills** is this task testing?

- Taking turns in a conversation
- Functions, e.g. agreeing / disagreeing
- Appropriate in-/formal language
- Intonation
- Ability to clarify / circumlocution



Euroexam B2 – SPEAKING – Discussion, Task 4

B **Activities** to help prepare students:

Group phrases according to function, e.g. 3 groups:
inviting / accepting / declining.

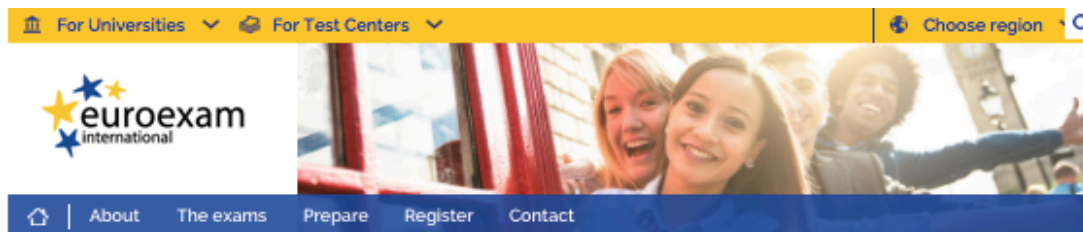
Put useful phrases on cards. Share them out. Student turn them over when they use them.

- ☐ Make a list of useful phrases on cards.
- ☐ Ask a 3rd student to tick them off, or ..
- ☐ .. indicate who use them during the conversation.

(re-order):

phrases Jumble in words. then re-order Students.

Exam prep – classroom activities



Exam Preparation - Classroom Activities Euroexam Level B2

SPEAKING (Task 3) – Transactional Dialogues



Classroom activities to help prepare students for this task-type:

The ideas below are very brief and basic, so think carefully about each stage of the activity, and how you're going to set it up.

Note that many of these activities can be done with extracts from the coursebooks you use!

- Teacher gives one prompt (e.g. sample exam task card): students come up with as many possible responses as possible.
- Rewrite a mini conversation as if between different people, e.g. boss + employer; 2 neighbours; 2 friends, etc. (focus on formality, style etc.). First, define situation, then brainstorm functional language, and then build dialogue around phrases.
- Handout 3x3-line dialogues, jumbled. Students group, & order them.
- Students read a 3-line dialogue, and underline the stressed / important words. Practice the dialogue in pairs, exaggerating the stressed words.
- Students brainstorm and write down every day transactional situations and places (e.g. asking a co-traveller in the city the best route to ...; trying to find a specific book in a shop; checking the ingredients of a meal in a restaurant). & then improvise dialogues. (Weaker students could write notes, then role-play.)



- FREE PRACTICE TESTS
- TEST AND COURSE BOOKS
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- SPECIAL NEEDS
- PRE-REGISTRATION



www.euroexam.com/exam-preparation-classroom-activities

To summarise:

- Focus on tasks which reflect **real-world language needs**
- Use **coursebook material** to support exam prep
- Prepare students for
 - further study
 - work
 - contributing to society
- Students will **enjoy the tasks** in their own right!



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CONFERENCE TALKS / TRAINING

Posted on April 16, 2016

(Please note that the date you can see above is when I started this blog; I update it regularly!)

2018 December, Moscow "Trendy English" conference
Making Speaking Exam Preparation Authentic and Meaningful



We get stressed about exams, and often there isn't a connection between what students are learning, and how they'll be assessed. In this workshop, we'll look at practical ideas for seamlessly building exam preparation into everyday lessons. When an exam involves real-life tasks, preparation is easier and classes are more fun!



Handout: coming shortly!

Powerpoint slides: coming shortly!

Edit

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