Lesson plans

A2 Gold Speaking Part 1 – Teacher’s Notes

Description
This activity gives students practice in talking about the differences between two pictures. They also find out about the format of the A2 Gold Speaking test.

Time required: 🕒 30 minutes.

Materials required:
- a large picture
- Sample Papers can be downloaded from the website 🅿️
  https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/

Aims:
- to introduce students to Part 1 of the A2 Gold Speaking test and to the Speaking test in general
- to give students practice in talking about the differences between two pictures.

Procedure
1. Introduce the activity
   - Before the lesson, choose a large picture, in color, with lots of detail, either on a screen or a poster.
   - Tell the students that they are going to talk about pictures today and then they are going to try part of the A2 Gold Speaking test.
   - Ask students to describe what they see. Make sure all the students participate, not just the loud ones!

2. Useful language
   - On one side of the board, write some different sentence stems that may be useful for describing what you can see, e.g.:
     - In this picture, there is a helicopter in the sky
     - The man / woman / boy is eating a banana
There are three dogs in this picture

3. Looking for differences

Draw two rough pictures on the board that are similar but have obvious differences. For example, in one there are 2 trees and in the other there are 3. Include three differences as examples. The types of differences should relate to things like number, color, position, appearance, activity, shape, and relative size.

Ask students to tell you the differences. Encourage them to use phrases such as:

- in this/that picture
- here/there
- there is/isn’t

Explain that the students are going to work in pairs.

Explain that each student will get a picture. Their pictures are very similar but there are some differences. They have to describe their pictures to each other by making statements such as: In my picture there are two trees in order to find the differences. When they find a difference they should circle it in pencil on their picture.

They should not show their picture to their partner.

Give out the Sample Task Part 1, cut into two, to each pair so one has the test taker’s copy (top) and one has the examiner’s copy (bottom).

When they finish, they can look at each other’s pictures and see whether they found all the differences.

Monitor the students carefully and record any examples of good language or areas of difficulty, so you can give feedback once they have finished.

As a class, go through the differences and give any relevant feedback.

4. Important things to remember

- Explain that in the A2 Gold Speaking test they will do a similar activity with the examiner. This will be the first part of the test.
- If you have access to the YLE Speaking test Trainer’s DVD, play this now for children to have an idea of what the test will be like.
- If you don’t have the DVD, explain the following to the class:
  - In the Speaking test, each child does four different activities with one examiner.
  - The examiner will ask the child their first name, last name and age. You may want to elicit the questions and get students to practice asking these to each other.
  - You have just practiced the first part. In Part 1, the examiner makes statements about his/her picture and you have to say if your picture is the same or different. In the test you will be able to see both pictures. You will need to find six differences.
  - The whole test lasts for about 8 minutes.
An adult who speaks your language, and who you will probably know, will explain the test before you start and will take you to the examiner.

The examiner will support and encourage you.

You may want to give these explanations in the children's native language, and allow time for children to ask any questions they may have. Children can be nervous about the idea of a speaking test, and it's important to reassure them as much as possible.

**Suggested follow-up activities**

- Playing *spot-the-difference* games in pairs will be very useful practice for the students.
- Use pictures from the course book. You can make statements about them and the students have to respond by saying if the statements are right or wrong and how the actual picture is different from your description.
A2 Gold Speaking Part 1 – Answer Key

Answers to Sample Task

Test taker's copy
There is a cake on the round table.
The woman by the door is holding scissors.
There are four lights on the ceiling.
The man in the green jacket is holding a bowl of fruit.
The weatherman is wearing a red-striped shirt.
The cameraman has blonde hair.
The weatherman is pointing to the sun.
There clock says half past 5 (5:30).
The woman in the office is talking on the phone.
There is an empty box behind the cameraman.
There is a toy train next to the small brown box.

Examiner's copy
There are magazines on the round table.
There woman by the door is holding a brush.
There are three lights on the ceiling.
The man in the green jacket is holding a tray with two glasses of orange juice on it.
The weatherman is wearing a blue-striped shirt.
The cameraman has brown hair.
The weatherman is pointing to a cloud.
The clock says 5 o’clock. (5:00)
The woman in the office is looking at the computer screen/working on the computer.
There is a box full of books behind the cameraman.
There isn’t anything next to the small brown box.
A2 Gold Speaking Part 1 – Sample Task

Original can be found in the A2 Gold Speaking Sample Paper, which can be downloaded from:
https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/

Additional information about the A2 Gold Speaking test

There are four aspects that are assessed in the A2 Gold Speaking test:

- **Reception** – listening and interaction
- **Production** – how quickly they respond and how much they say
- **Production** – grammar and vocabulary
- **Production** – pronunciation.

Each criterion carries a maximum mark of 3.

*In the test, each student is taken into the examination room by an usher. The usher is someone who speaks the student’s first language and who is possibly known to the student, e.g. a teacher. The usher explains the test format in the student’s mother tongue, before taking the student into the examination room and introducing him/her to the examiner.*

**A2 Gold** is aimed at children who have considerable experience of speaking English and also can be assumed to be reasonably familiar with test situations. A major aim of the Speaking test at this level is for the children to **understand** and **attempt to produce more fully, extended utterances**, using a range of language. Test-takers may be asked questions such as *What do you do after dinner?* or *Tell me about the clothes you are wearing now.*

**A2 Gold** builds on the competence shown at Silver level by introducing Grammar and Vocabulary as a separate assessment criterion. It should be emphasized that, while test takers are given credit for accuracy, communicative competence is considered an important skill and children who produce slightly inaccurate but clear language can still gain high points for this criterion.
Lesson plans

A2 Gold Speaking Part 2 – Teacher’s Notes

Description

This activity gives students practice in an oral information exchange activity. They use a sample task from the test and practice question formation.

**Time required:** 30 minutes.

**Materials required:**

- Sample Papers can be downloaded from the website: [https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/](https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/)

**Aims:**

- to introduce students to Part 2 of the A2 Gold Speaking paper
- to give students practice in participating in an oral information exchange activity.

**Procedure**

1. **Introduce the activity – forming and asking questions**

   - Pin up a picture of two people on the board. This could be a picture/pictures taken from a magazine.
   - Tell the class that these are two friends of yours.
   - Write the following on the board:
     - Who?
     - What/names?
     - English/(local nationality)?
     - Cinema?
     - What film/see?
     - funny/exciting?
     - What time/start?
In Part 2 of the Speaking test, children need to ask and answer *Wh-* questions, *Yes/No* questions and questions with two options (*or*).

For example:

- What are the children studying?
- Has Harry’s teacher got a car?
- Is the lesson interesting or boring?

- Tell the students they have to find out about your friends by asking questions. The words on the board will help them form the questions.
- Allow them a few minutes to work in pairs and decide what the questions are. If possible, encourage them to do this without writing the questions down as they will not be able to write their questions in the test and they need to develop confidence in this.
- As you elicit the questions, tell them the answers. Make sure that students are clear about how to make the questions and focus on question formation where necessary.
- Who are they? They are my friends.
- What are their names? Sam and Charlie.
- Are they English or (local nationality)? They’re English.
- Are they going to the movies? Yes, they are.
- What film are they going to see? e.g., Aliens and Monsters.
- Is it funny or exciting? It’s funny.
- What time does it start? At half past six.

Explain that in Part 2 of the Speaking test they will have to do an activity with the examiner where they share information about people, objects or places.

They will listen to the examiner asking questions and answer those questions using the information on the card they are given.

Then the children ask the examiner questions, using cues like those above from the card they have. The examiner will answer their questions.

2. Sample Task

- Hand out a copy of the Sample Task to students in pairs so they can see an example of what you mean.
- One student has the test taker’s copy (top) and the other the examiner’s copy (bottom). Make sure they understand that the information on the two cards is different.
- Ask the students to look carefully at their pictures and the information they have. Ask the students to look at the prompts for the questions they should ask.
- Orally elicit the full questions for each of the five prompts.
- Model the activity with a strong student.
- You take the role of the examiner and ask the student to be the test taker.
You begin by asking questions.

Ask the student to ask you one or two questions.

- Now ask the students to work in pairs, asking and answering questions about the classes. Point out that they don’t have to write down the answers.
- Feedback on any good points or areas for improvement that you notice.

Suggested follow-up activities

1. You could incorporate some work on intonation in the different types of questions into Steps 1 & 2 above. Then, at the end of the activity, ask some of the pairs of students to do the activity in front of the whole class. The rest of the class should listen for whether their intonation is correct.

   (For more information on intonation, please see the Teacher Support Page at the end of this document.)

2. There are many information blank activities available to practice this task. Do them regularly so students get used to the format and to asking and answering questions.

   (For example, on http://bogglesworldesl.com/information_blank.htm there are some information blank activities which can be adapted for use with your learners.)

3. Ask students to make questionnaires, e.g. about which sports their classmates enjoy playing or about food they like eating, etc. Ask them to go around the class asking their questions and collecting their answers.

4. Regularly write up prompts, on the board, from which students can build questions or statements (as in Step 1 of the lesson plan).
Key to Sample Task

What is Sarah’s favorite restaurant called? / What’s the name of Sarah’s favorite restaurant?

What does she like eating?

Whereabouts is the restaurant? /

What time does it open?

Is it cheap or expensive?
A2 Gold Speaking Part 2 – Sample Task

Original can be found in the A2 Gold Speaking Sample Paper, which can be downloaded from:
https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/

Sarah’s favorite restaurant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Robert’s favorite restaurant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>The Black Cat</th>
<th>pasta</th>
<th>North Street</th>
<th>12 o’clock</th>
<th>Cheap / expensive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

GOLD SPEAKING: Information Exchange
Additional information about the A2 Gold Speaking test

There are four aspects that are assessed in the A2 Gold Speaking test:

- **Reception** – listening and interaction
- **Production** – how quickly they respond and how much they say
- **Production** – grammar and vocabulary
- **Production** – pronunciation.

Each criterion carries a maximum mark of 3.

**In the test, each student is taken into the examination room by an usher. The usher is someone who speaks the student’s first language and who is possibly known to the student, e.g. a teacher. The usher explains the test format in the student’s mother tongue, before taking the student into the examination room and introducing him/her to the examiner.**

**A2 Gold** is aimed at children who have considerable experience of speaking English and also can be assumed to be reasonably familiar with test situations. A major aim of the Speaking test at this level is for the children to understand and attempt to produce more fully, extended utterances, using a range of language. Test takers may be asked questions such as *What do you do after dinner?* or *Tell me about the clothes you are wearing now.*

**A2 Gold** builds on the competence shown at Silver level by introducing Grammar and Vocabulary as a separate assessment criterion. It should be emphasized that, while test takers are given credit for accuracy, communicative competence is considered an important skill and children who produce slightly inaccurate but clear language can still gain high points for this criterion.

**Additional information about intonation**

*Intonation* focuses on **how** we say things, rather than **what** we say. There is some very useful information about intonation on the following website:

http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/intonation

The teaching of intonation patterns linked to questions would be a useful extension of this particular lesson, as suggested in the **follow-up activities** section on page 3.

When questions begin with a **Wh**- question word, they have a **falling** intonation. However, when they are **Yes/No** questions, the intonation **rises**.

For some audio examples, visit the following website:

http://usefulenglish.ru/phonetics/listening-for-intonation-in-questions-and-answers
Lesson plans

A2 Gold Speaking Part 3 – Teacher’s Notes

Description
This activity gives students practice in telling stories from picture prompts.

Time required:
- 20 minutes.

Materials required:
- Sample Tests can be downloaded from the website
  https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/

Aims:
- to introduce students to Part 3 of the A2 Gold Speaking test
- to give students practice in storytelling from picture prompts.

Before the class
- Copy the Sample Task from the A2 Gold Sample Tests so you have one copy for each group of three or four students.
- Cut each copy up into individual pictures and remove or black out the numbers, so students can’t see which order the pictures should go in.

Procedure
1. Introduce the activity
   - Divide the class into groups of three or four.
   - Hand out the cut-up pictures to each group.
   - Explain that the pictures tell a story.
   - Ask students to arrange the pictures in order so that they tell a story.

2. Storytelling practice
   - Ask students to work as a group and practice telling the story.
   - They can ask for your help if they have any questions about vocabulary, etc.
3. Feedback

- Invite each group to tell their story to the rest of the class.
- Ask the class which stories they liked best and why.
- Highlight interesting words used and well-structured sentences. In particular, look out for uses of the following:
  - There is/are
  - present tense of the verbs be and have (got)
  - modals can/can’t and should/shouldn’t
  - present continuous of action verbs (e.g. come, go, buy, carry, open, play, etc.)
  - feelings, e.g., interested, excited
  - Also possibly going to and the present perfect tense.

- Important things to remember

- Explain that in Part 3 of the test they will have a series of 5 pictures in the correct order and they have to tell the story they see, to the examiner.
- They should look carefully at the pictures first and try to think of a few words to describe what they see.
- The examiner will tell them the name of the story and will describe the first picture.
- They will then have to talk about the other 4 pictures.
- They don’t have to tell the story properly using storytelling skills. They should not worry if they don’t understand everything they see in the pictures, as long as they say something about them.
- Also if they don’t know what to say, the examiner will help them.

Suggested follow-up activities

1. You can ask students to bring in magazines and newspapers and cut out any interesting pictures. In small groups, they take 3 or 4 of these pictures and combine them to tell a story.

2. Storytelling circles: arrange the class in a large circle and begin a story with a short sentence, e.g., One day a young boy was walking to school ... the student to your right has to continue the story. The story keeps going until everyone has contributed. Students can help each other.

3. You can add to the storytelling circle by putting objects in a bag. As the story moves around, students have to pull something out of the bag (e.g., a ball, pen, coin) and should include this object in their sentence.
A2 Gold Speaking Part 3 – Sample Task

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https://michiganassessment.org/test-takers/tests/myle/myle-sample-tests/
A2 Gold Speaking Part 3 – Teacher Support Page

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Lesson plans

A2 Gold Speaking Part 4 – Teacher’s Notes

Description
This activity gives students practice in asking and answering personal questions. They are encouraged to give more than one-word answers.

Time required: 15–20 minutes.

Materials required:
• Student’s Worksheet (one copy for each student)
• a CD of background music (optional).

Aims:
• to introduce students to Part 4 of the A2 Gold Speaking paper
• to give students practice in answering personal questions.

Procedure
1. Student’s Worksheet – introduce the activity
   • Hand out a copy of the Student’s Worksheet to each student.
   • Ask students to work in pairs and add 4 more questions to the list.
   • The questions should be about personal information, family and friends, homes, school or free-time activities.
   • Explain that the students are going to play a game.
   • They will walk around the class and when the music stops / when the teacher claps their hands, they should find a partner and start asking each other their questions.
   • They should take it in turns to ask one question each until the teacher makes a signal, e.g. blow a whistle. Then the music starts again and they have to find a new partner.
   • Explain the additional rule to this game. When they are asked a question, they have to answer in more than 3 words. If they give a shorter answer, the student asking the question will rule them ‘out’ and they have to sit down.
   • Give an example of this so students understand what they have to do:
What’s your favorite school subject?

- If they answer History, they would be out as that is only one word.
- If they extend to I really like History or History is my favorite subject or I like Math, but History is my best, they stay in the game.

2. Play the game

- Once students are sure of what they have to do, start the CD / tell students they can start walking around, until you stop the CD or clap your hands.
- Allow up to 10 minutes for this part of the activity.

3. Important things to remember

- Explain that in the last part of the Speaking test the examiner will ask them questions like this, about themselves, their family and friends, their homes, their school and free-time activities.
- Simple answers are acceptable, but if they can answer in more than a few words to make their answers interesting, this will show the examiner how good their English is and help them to do better in the test.
- Remind students that this is the last part of the test and the examiner will end it by saying goodbye. They should say goodbye to the examiner as well before they leave the room.

Suggested follow-up activities

1. To make asking and answering personal questions more interesting for the students, ask them to imagine they are a famous person, e.g. a sports personality or a pop star, and answer in role when they are asked.

2. You can also ask students to work in groups of three. One student asks the questions, one answers and the third gives feedback on whether the person answering looked interested, made eye contact with the questioner, gave full answers, etc. They change roles so all the students get to ask, answer and give feedback.

3. If possible, invite other adult speakers of English into your class so your students gain confidence in speaking to other people they don’t know. This will be particularly useful shortly before the test.
A2 Gold Speaking Part 4 – Student’s Worksheet

1. Where do you live?
2. How do you get to school?
3. What sports do you like?
4. What’s your favorite school subject?
5. What did you do on your last vacation?
6. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
7. ..................................................................................
8. ..................................................................................
9. ...................................................................................
10. ...................................................................................
A2 Gold Speaking Part 4 – Teacher Support Page

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