



## Candidate Guide to GATE Speaking Exams B1-C2



- ❖ The Gatehouse Awards Test of English Speaking exam consists of an introduction and 2 tasks.
- ❖ You will take the exam with another candidate.
- ❖ The exam lasts approximately 10 minutes.
- ❖ The person running your exam is called the 'examiner'.
- ❖ You need to bring your ID to the exam.
- ❖ The examiner will record the whole exam.
- ❖ In the exam, if you don't hear something, you can always ask for it to be repeated. This will not affect your marks.

## Preparation for GATE speaking exam

You can practise the speaking exam with a friend by using the sample materials available at:

<https://gatehouseawards.org/qualifications/gatehouse-awards-test-of-english>

Scroll down the page until you see this section:

<p><b>GATE B1</b></p> <p>Candidates can understand points about family, work, school or leisure, deal with most travel situations, create simple texts on topics of personal interest, and briefly describe experiences, events, dreams, opinions and plans.</p> <p>↓ GATE B1 Speaking Examination Booklet Sample</p> <p>↓ GATE B1 Speaking Examination Visual Prompts Sample</p> <p><b>Sample Online Exams</b></p>	<p><b>GATE B2</b></p> <p>Candidates can understand the main ideas of a complex text such as a technical piece related to their field, interact spontaneously without too much strain and produce a detailed text on a wide range of subjects.</p> <p>↓ GATE B2 Speaking Examination Booklet Sample</p> <p>↓ GATE B2 Speaking Examination Visual Prompts Sample</p> <p><b>Sample Online Exams</b></p>
<p><b>GATE C1</b></p> <p>Candidates can understand a wide range of longer and more demanding texts or conversations, easily express a range of ideas, effectively use the language for social, academic or professional situations and create well-structured and detailed texts on complex topics.</p>	<p><b>GATE C2</b></p> <p>Candidates can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. They can express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations, in both speech and writing.</p>

Click on the relevant level Speaking Examination Booklet Sample to download a copy.

## **Introduction**

During the introduction, the examiner will ask you one general question, for example 'Tell me something about yourself'. You can talk for about 30 seconds.

This part of the exam is not assessed, so no marks will be given for your answer here. The introduction offers you the opportunity to warm up and get used to the voice of the other candidate and the examiner.

## **Part 1**

In this part, you will be given a picture and a question about it, which you will need to answer. You should talk for about 2 minutes. Then the other candidate will also be given a picture and a question to talk about for 2 minutes. You don't need to interact with the other candidate in this part, but the examiner might ask you additional questions during your turn.

This part is assessed, so it will count towards your final mark.

Example at B1:

“You will need to describe your picture. Try to give as much detail as you can. You will need to describe the picture for about two minutes.”



## Top Tips for the B1 Speaking Part 1

At B1 level, the focus of this task is on describing the picture and giving as much detail about the picture as possible.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- the guests at the party – their ages, appearance, clothes
- feeling and emotions – how do you think the guests and the birthday girl are feeling? Do all of them seem to feel the same? Are some of them happy but others not?
- location – The picture was taken outdoors in a garden. You can talk about what the weather is like, the decorations, plants, and furniture you can see.
- activity – what are the guests doing? Is everyone doing the same?
- background – what else can you see in the background of the picture?

Example at B2:

Please tell me about a situation from your life that is similar to your picture. The similarity to the picture could be the location, the activity, or the people.



### Top Tips for the B2 Speaking Part 1

At B2 level, the focus of this task is not on describing the picture, but on being able to talk about past experiences from your own life. You can start by giving a brief description of the picture, but make sure you move on to the main focus of this task.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- how you have celebrated your own birthday in the past
- a birthday party you attended
- a family celebration you participated in (it doesn't have to be a birthday celebration!)
- a different type of outdoor event you took part in. For example, a music festival, a picnic.
- an event involving both children and adults you took part in

Example at C1:

Think about the story behind your picture – what do you think might have happened just before it was taken, and what might happen next? I will ask you to tell a story about your picture.



### Top Tip for the C1 Speaking Part 1

At C1 level, the focus of this task is not on describing the picture, but on talking about what you think might have happened around the time the picture was taken: both the time before the picture was taken, and the time after.

In other words, you are expected to tell an imaginary story about the picture. You can start by giving a brief description, but make sure you move on to the main focus of this task.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- the effort that must have gone into preparing this party
- how the birthday girl must have felt during the days leading to it
- how the parents might have felt about the weather forecast for the day. Would they need to make an alternative plan in case of bad weather?
- the activities that might follow after the girl has received all the presents
- how the girl might feel when she opens the presents
- the work involved in cleaning up a party of that size

You can still refer to your own experiences and give your personal opinions during this task, as long as your main focus remains on the story around the picture.

Example at C2:

Think about parties and celebrations. What makes for a successful celebration?



### Top Tip for the C2 Speaking Part 1

At C2 level, the focus of this task is not on describing the picture, but on answering a specific question which is related to the picture. In the sample exam, the question for candidate A is about what makes for a successful celebration. If you are candidate B, your question will be different and have a different focus to candidate A, so be sure to listen to it carefully.

Some elements of the picture might give you ideas about what to talk about, for example the guests or the location. But do not attempt to describe the picture at this level. You can briefly refer to it, but your focus should be on answering the question.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the celebration Sample task:

- the importance of the location of the party, and how it might be different depending on the type of party. You could consider the importance of selecting a location that is easily accessible to all the guests or the suitability of the venue for the season/weather.
- the importance of the guest list. Consider the size of the party, how the guests are selected and whether they know each other, whether you should invite someone just because you'd be expected to do so etc.
- the entertainment. How important is it? What are the most common types of entertainment at parties? How should they be different depending on the type of party?

## General Dos and Don'ts for Part 1 (at all levels)

### DO:

- Listen closely to the question.
- Address the question fully.
- Extend your answer and include as much detail as possible.
- Give personal examples where possible.
- Try to speak for the set time (2 minutes).

### DON'T:

- Try to answer a different question.
- Write anything down when you respond.
- Interrupt the other candidate while they are speaking.
- Be afraid to get creative – examiners like to hear interesting or unusual responses.

### TOP TIP for Part 1

*Good answers are longer, with lots of information, and they answer the question clearly and appropriately.*



## **Part 2**

In this part, you will be given a question along with a set of pictures to help you with some of the ideas. You need to talk about the question with the other candidate and decide whether you agree or disagree with each other and why. Remember, the question doesn't have a right or wrong answer, we just want to hear you talk and exchange ideas and opinions.

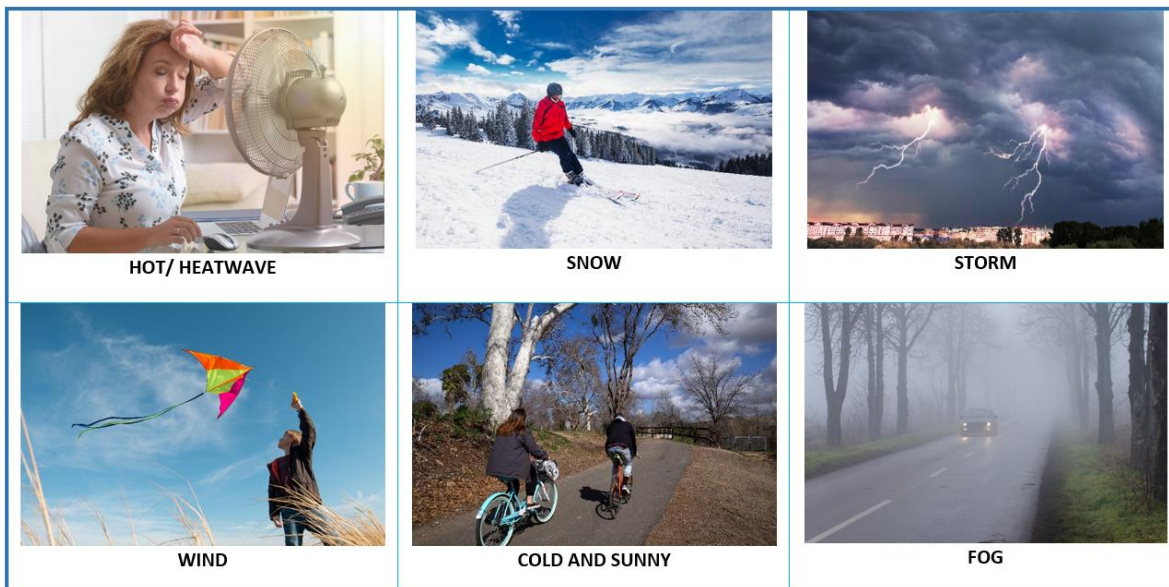
The length of your conversation depends on the level you are taking.

- ❖ GATE B1 - you and the other candidate will need to speak together for about 3 minutes.
  
- ❖ GATE B2 - you and the other candidate will need to speak together for about 4 minutes.
  
- ❖ GATE C1 and GATE C2 - you and the other candidate will need to speak together for about 5 minutes.

Part 2 is assessed, so it will count towards your final mark.

Example at B1:

“Please talk together about what kind of weather you enjoy and what kind you don’t, and why.”



## Top Tips for the B1 Speaking Part 2

At level B1, your conversation should be focused around your personal opinions or preferences on the topic given to you by the examiner. You can use the pictures to help you with different ideas.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- Expressing your likes. E.g., ‘I enjoy all kinds of weather, but my favourite weather is in the summer, when it is warm and sunny.’
- asking about the other candidate’s likes. Ask your partner e.g. ‘What kind of weather do you enjoy?’, ‘Do you prefer snow or sunny weather?’
- expressing your dislikes. E.g., ‘I don’t like it when it’s windy, but I also like to fly kites, so sometimes it’s nice to have a windy day’ etc.
- asking about the other candidate’s likes. You could ask ‘Is there any type of weather you dislike?’, ‘Are you scared of storms?’.
- your experiences with different kinds of weather. Are they the same as your partner’s? What is different? You could say: ‘Where I live, we don’t get snow very often. I’d like to have more snow so I can learn how to ski.’, etc.

Example at B2:

“Weather can be dangerous in different ways. Talk together about the different ways in which the weather can be dangerous.”



## Top Tips for the B2 Speaking Part 2

At level B2, you are asked to discuss a particular aspect of the topic in more depth by referring to your own experiences and world events. You can refer to the pictures when you talk to the other candidate, but the main focus should be on the specific question asked by the examiner.

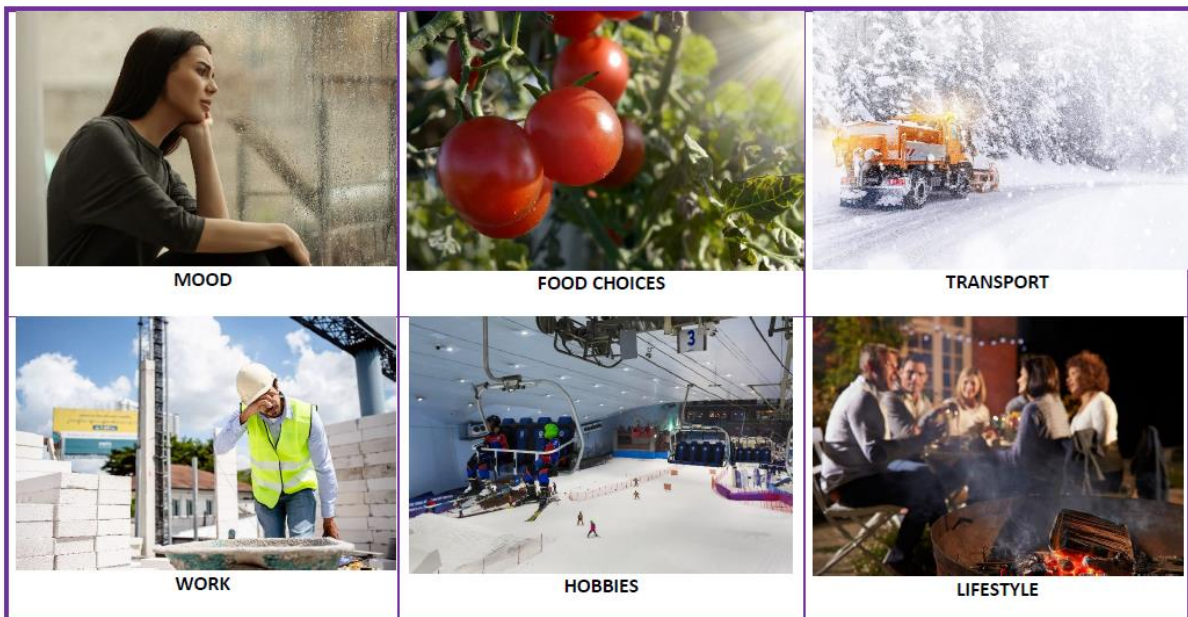
Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- personal experiences – have you or someone you know experienced dangerous weather? What was it? How was it dangerous?
- world events – can you remember any recent news stories that could be relevant? What happened during those events? How did they affect other people?
- personal feelings – is there any particular type of weather that you are afraid of? Why do you feel like this? For example, you could talk about driving in snowy conditions.
- Are certain types of weather more dangerous for some people than others? For example, are people of different ages affected by heatwaves to the same extent?

- your input – can you do anything to help or prevent a situation? Could you suggest ways in which others could help? For example, you could talk about different ways to save water to help prevent droughts.
- advice – What advice could you give to someone in a particular situation? For example, it’s good to stay indoors during the hottest hours of the day during a heatwave and make sure you drink plenty of water.

Example at C1:

“Weather and climate can have both a negative and a positive impact on people, in many different ways. Talk together about the negative and positive impacts of the weather and climate on people.”



## Top Tips for the C1 Speaking Part 2

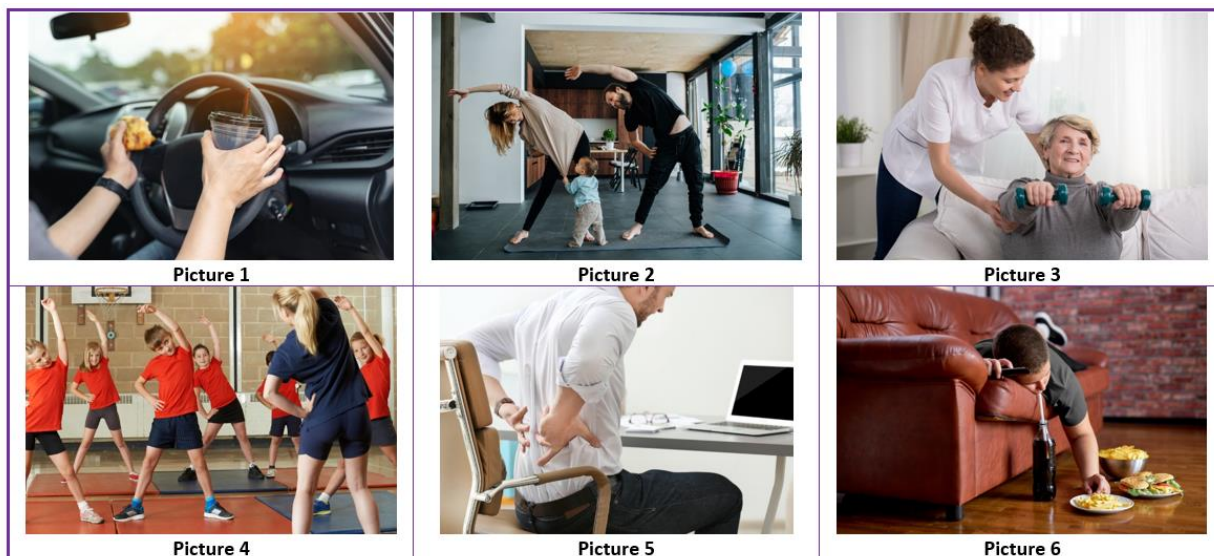
At C1 level, you will be asked to have a conversation about the relationship between certain ideas presented to you by the examiner. In this example, you need to consider different aspects of people’s lives, and how these can be influenced by weather and climate. You are expected to provide a balanced overview of all the issues.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- the impact on mood – e.g., dark rainy weather versus sunny cloudless weather, how do they affect our mood differently? How much of an impact does weather have on mood, not just for you but other people?
- the impact on diet – e.g., harsh climates produce less fresh produce than sunny, mild climates. How much is our diet affected by this? Does globalisation lessen this impact?
- the impact on transport – natural disasters, heavy rainfall or snowfall, can all stop traffic or have a negative effect on it. Can you think of a personal experience of this that you, or somebody you know, have had? How was it resolved?
- the impact on work schedules – how does weather impact certain jobs, e.g., in the construction industry, differently? Do people adapt their work patterns according to the weather or season?
- the impact on your choice of hobbies – are all the hobbies you enjoy available near you? Why/why not? Does weather sometimes impact your choice of free-time activity? Would you say the weather and climate around you dictate your choice of hobbies and activities?
- the impact on lifestyle and socialising - do people tend to spend more time outdoors or indoors depending on the climate around them? How do you think it affects their life satisfaction levels? Can it also impact their work-life balance?

Example at C2:

“I’d like you to imagine the pictures have been taken for a campaign to encourage people to be more physically active. Talk together about how each of the pictures might be used as part of the campaign. Then, choose one for the front cover of the campaign brochure.”



## Top Tips for the C2 Speaking Part 2

At C2 level, you will be asked to have a conversation about a practical scenario presented to you by the examiner. In this example, you need to consider how the six pictures could be used in a campaign to encourage people to be more physically active. Assess the suitability of each picture and talk together about what specific idea/message the picture could illustrate. You can argue that some of the pictures are not suitable, as long as you present reasons and arguments to support your opinion. At the end of the task, you will be expected to decide with the other candidate which of the pictures should be used on the front cover of the campaign brochure, and why.

Examples of what you could talk about based on the Sample task:

- picture 1 – you could consider this picture in the context of a modern, hectic life forcing people to travel everywhere by car in an attempt to save time, or even multitask by having their meals while driving, often selecting unhealthy fast-food options.
- picture 2 - you could argue that this picture represents the importance of finding the time to exercise, even when faced with multiple responsibilities and challenges of raising a young family. You could also mention that it illustrates the message that parents' healthy habits are likely to serve as a positive influence on their children.
- picture 3 – this image could be used to represent the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle from a very young age to avoid health issues in your old age. Alternatively, it could represent the idea that even old people who suffer from various health issues are able to complete some form of exercise, even if it requires the support of others.
- picture 4 – you could view this image as representing the importance of instilling good habits from an early age and the role that school education plays in this area. Alternatively, it could be used to highlight the importance of extracurricular activities for children which involve physical activity, as opposed to staying at home in front of the various screens (as represented by picture 6).
- picture 5 – this image could highlight the dangers of excessively sedentary lifestyles, which are common for many people, especially in certain professions.
- picture 6 – you could argue that this picture highlights the dangers of bad habits forming early in life, for example a non-active lifestyle and bad diet, and it is likely to engage a wide audience, including teenagers and parents.
- in terms of selecting the best image for the front page of the campaign brochure, consider which of the images highlights the campaign's main message most strongly, and explain why you think so.

## General Dos and Don'ts for Part 2 (all levels)

### DO:

- Refer to the pictures during the conversation, but also try to think of your own ideas.
- Interact with the other candidate and ask them questions.
- Share your ideas and opinions on the topic and ask about the other candidate's opinions too.
- Listen to the other candidate when they are speaking and then respond to what he or she has said.
- Ask the examiner to repeat the question if needed.

### DON'T:

- Simply describe the pictures – they are there to give you some ideas to discuss.
- Just present your own ideas without letting the other candidate speak or addressing them at any stage.
- Interact with the examiner instead of the other candidate – this should be a conversation between you and the other candidate, not the examiner.

### TOP TIP

**Talking to the other candidate is the most important thing in this task.** *The more questions you ask and the more opinions you share, the longer your interaction will be and the better your mark will be as well.*



## How will your performance be assessed?

**Task Achievement** – your examiner will make a separate decision on each of the two tasks. They will assess how closely you answered the question, and how much detail you provided.

**Grammar** – your examiner will assess your grammatical range and accuracy during the entire exam. Try to use many different grammatical structures when you talk. If you realise you have made a mistake, it is OK to go back and correct yourself.

**Vocabulary** – your examiner will decide if the vocabulary is wide enough based on the words you use during the exam. So it's important that you try to use a variety of different words, for example by using synonyms, phrasal verbs, or even idioms.

**Pronunciation and Fluency** – your examiner will listen to your fluency throughout the exam and how easily you are understood. They will also listen to your pronunciation in English and its accuracy. Try to express yourself as clearly as possible so that the other candidate and examiner are able to understand you well.