



**ENGLISH SPEAKING BOARD (INTERNATIONAL) LTD.**

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS  
FOR ADULT LEARNERS: HIGHER CERTIFICATE**

formerly Oral Resources for Adult Learners

**SYLLABUS**

**TOTAL INDIVIDUAL TIME: 30 MINUTES**

**Section 1: Personal Exploration**

**(10-12 minutes + questions)**

Share with the group your insights about a key enthusiasm. This may be a skill, area of study or research, an account of travels or of personal discovery. The scope is wide to allow for individual choice.

Use visual aids as appropriate to illustrate your material.

Set your theme clearly in context to show the springs of interest, develop it graphically and comment on issues arising from it, including mention of any way in which you feel it has contributed to your outlook on life.

**Section 2: Research and Reading**

**(4 + 2 minutes)**

- a) Outline the sources and methods of research you would use to find information on a topic of your choice. This may link with your background preparation for Section 1 or could deal with a completely different context. Comment clearly in more detail on the relevance and quality of at least one of the key books/reference sources selected.
- b) Read aloud to the group a prepared extract (about 200-250 words) which gives some flavour of your research. This may be from a relevant book or article discussed in a); or, if you prefer, it may be a piece of original writing you have created, thanks in part at least to your research. The reading should be intelligently and sensitively interpreted for your audience.

**Section 3: Options**

**(approx 5 minutes)**

Select **one** of the following (it may relate to the theme chosen for Section 1 if you wish):

**a) Persuasive Argument**

Choose some aspect of a subject on which you feel strongly, and state cogently and succinctly the views you hold and why.

Invite response from the listeners, then sum up the findings clearly and without bias.

**Or**

**b) Passing on Knowledge**

Outline how you would use one of the following methods to pass on skills/knowledge on a subject close to your heart:

- a course of lectures or practical sessions, a workshop or seminar.

Give basic information but with the imagination and enthusiasm to evoke response from your listeners. A handout may be used to summarise the practical details of place, dates, times.

For either option you may ask your listeners to respond as themselves or you may wish them to take an alternative role to match your perceived audience: e.g. volunteers, club members, U3A, parents, parishioners, etc.

**Section 4: Listening and Response**

At various points during your session you may be asked to deal with questions from your listeners. At this level you should be able to justify and evaluate your decisions.

As a member of the group, you in turn will be expected to be an active, constructive and supportive participant during the sessions of other candidates.

## GUIDELINES FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS FOR ADULT LEARNERS: HIGHER CERTIFICATE

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking & Listening for Adult Learners: Higher Certificate, as for levels 1-3, is designed for all learners who have something they wish to share and receive with a listening, responding group – with the added breadth, depth and stimulus that comes from ‘standing back’, focusing ideas and shaping them to share with others. It is suitable for oral communication either in a vocational/professional context or in a social/personal context.

Candidates come from diverse backgrounds. Those for whom this syllabus is devised:

- a) those returning to learning who are updating skills and wish to build confidence
- b) members of clubs and societies who are called upon to speak in public
- c) business or retired people who wish to communicate something of the flavour of their professional skills to others
- d) those who wish to extend horizons beyond their immediate job, to explore interests and talents in depth
- e) all those who wish to sharpen their enjoyment of discriminatory thought and conversational skills

The mastery of any subject, skill or talent is vitalised by effective oral exchange; and in one way or another this syllabus series is all about coming face to face with oneself in relating to others.

All assessments take place within a supportive, participating group.

### General Guidance

Candidates may wish to take a separate subject for each of the first three sections or they may choose to follow a theme which can run through all three. Section 1 carries double weighting.

Confidence comes from enthusiasm for the subject, thoughtful and thorough preparation and a willingness to share receptively.

### Assessment

The listening group may comprise other candidates (and maybe invited guests) with different backgrounds and areas of interest and expertise; so it is important that speakers can adjust their response to the context and their listeners. ESB looks for a minimum of 6 within each group (speaker plus 5 audience/participants). Candidates require authority, sensitivity and perceptive listening skills. Although the material for the first three sections will be prepared in advance, there should be spontaneity in clear, direct and vital delivery to the group. Questions and group discussion give the opportunity for further natural response and constructive exchange of views.

Candidates should be able to put forward and support their views as appropriate, but also recognise others' views and reasoning which may lead them to modify or re-assess their own response.

### Certification

All candidates will receive a full written report; and successful entrants will receive a certificate defining the level of achievement. A level of pass is given for each section. The overall award is the aggregate for the four sections. The presentation in Section 1 carries double weighting (i.e. 40% of the total award). Each of the other sections carries equal weighting of 20%.

ESB's Speaking & Listening Skills for Adult Learners: Higher Certificate is awarded at one of three grades: Pass (50+), Merit (75+) or Distinction (90%).

*Candidates with management responsibility who wish to link their ESB assessment more specifically to their job may wish to consider the **Professional Communication 4** as an alternative syllabus. See the Vocational & Professional series Part 2. A level 5 is also available.*

*The handbook Guidelines for Organisers gives guidance on preparation for the assessment day and its process.*

**The English Speaking Board was established in 1953 to promote and encourage excellence in all aspects of oral education.**

The Board provides a full range of graded assessments for education, business and the community. Assessments are held at any time of the year and on the 'home ground' of the candidates.

For further information on syllabuses, courses, publications and membership, please contact:

**The English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. 26a Princes Street Southport PR8 1EQ**  
**Telephone: 01704 501730 Fax: 01704 539637**  
**e-mail: [admin@esbuk.org](mailto:admin@esbuk.org) website: [www.esbuk.org](http://www.esbuk.org)**

## ESB: SPEAKING & LISTENING SKILLS FOR ADULT LEARNERS: HIGHER CERTIFICATE

<b>ESB</b>	<b>SLAL 4</b>	<b>Grading Criteria</b>
------------	---------------	-------------------------

Section	Pass	Merit <i>As for Pass, plus</i>	Distinction <i>As for Merit, plus</i>
<b>Personal Exploration</b>  40%	Communicate rationale with accuracy and reference to personal experience  Trace development of topic clearly, noting issues arising  Give some sense of authority, professional and personal  Select and use demonstration material appropriately  Involve listeners by interest and delivery	Combine information with evaluative comment in clearly signposted logical sequence  Integrate relevant visual aids / demonstration material skilfully  Use appropriate language and style to engage listeners	Engage listeners by cogently blended information and views, communicating understanding and empathy with professional and personal authority
<b>Research &amp; Reading</b>  20%	Identify sources and methods of research accurately  Describe one key source relevantly  Read chosen passage with understanding and awareness of audience.  Give further relevant information in feedback and discussion	Comment fully on quality of sources, and ensure chosen exemplar provides evidence for key characteristics of the source material  Shape passage with both technical and imaginative skills to engage listeners	Perceptively describe and synthesise sources and methods of research  Draw relevantly on critical thinking in feedback and discussion
<b>Options</b> <i>(bracketed alternative refers to option b)</i>  20%	Select subject (or method) appropriate for purpose  State views (or method) clearly  Present theme clearly to evoke response.  Handle questions positively.	Speak cogently and persuasively to engage listeners  Handle response constructively and appropriately.	Signpost and develop key points for listeners, stimulating effective response and building on feedback with relevance and sensitivity
<b>Listening &amp; Response</b>  20%	Answer questions accurately on own sections  Make appropriate queries and comments on others' input.  Show sincere effort to handle differing views.  Show good awareness of and support for the group.	Ask pertinent questions of others; show good ability to handle concepts as well as facts with confidence and authority  Show a balanced approach, to include debating a range of views and self-evaluation	Memorable ability to communicate includes monitoring and adapting strategies and input perceptively, resulting in consistently high standard of content, style and use of language for purpose and audience