

Focusing on Stage 2

Stage 2: Explaining and Recommending

Duration: 5-7 minutes

Stage 2 is the start of the decision-making activity that represents the main part of the ECPE speaking test. Examiner 1 begins by explaining the task, outlining an imaginary scenario in which the test takers, acting in a certain capacity (e.g. as heads of department, representatives of the school council, etc.), have been given the task of ultimately arriving at a decision together. Examiner 1 gives the test takers their 'information sheets'. On each information sheet are details about two options for consideration, with seven bullet points for each. Test takers are given about two minutes to read through their two options before they explain them, in their own words, to their partner(s). Test takers then listen to each other carefully because they will have to recommend one of their partner's options. They are allowed 2-3 minutes to explain their options.

TASK A

You are going to listen to part of an interview with an ECPE speaking examiner, Sarah. In this part of the interview, Sarah discusses Stage 2 of the ECPE speaking test. Before you listen, discuss statements 1 - 15 with a partner and, for each statement, circle either T (True) or F (False). As you listen to the interview, check your answers.

1. At the beginning of Stage 2, each test taker has four options to describe. T / F
2. At the beginning of Stage 2, the examiner gives the test takers some information sheets before explaining what they need to do. T / F
3. At the end of Stage 2, one option from each test taker will be rejected. T / F
4. Each test taker has the same information sheet. T / F
5. There are 7 bullet points for each option. T / F
6. All the bullet points outline advantages of each option. T / F
7. Test takers have one minute to read through their information sheets. T / F
8. The test takers should express the details on their information sheets in their own words. T / F
9. Test takers can write on their information sheets. T / F
10. It is forbidden to look at your information sheet while explaining the bullet points. T / F
11. Test takers are not allowed to ask their partner(s) any questions during this stage. T / F
12. Each test taker will explain the bullet points on both options on his or her information sheet, and the other test taker(s) respond(s) by recommending one of each pair of options. T / F
13. In Stage 2, test takers must express their own views about the options. T / F
14. In Stage 2, your partner will recommend one of your options, but the final decision is yours to make. T / F
15. Stage 2 is designed to test speaking and listening skills. T / F

Tip

You are not expected to memorize the information, and may take notes on the note taking paper you are given. However, you are not allowed to look at each other's papers during this stage of the test, so listen carefully and ask your partner to repeat or explain something if you are not sure.

TASK B

Study the information sheet below. With a partner, briefly discuss which option you would choose and why.

Test Taker 1

Choosing an after-school class for final-year high school students

Cookery Course

The following list provides some relevant information about the after-school class:

- students to be taught how to make healthy dishes
- course duration: ten weeks
- ideal preparation for moving away from home
- gives tips on how to minimize expenditure on food
- part of the course focuses on how to reduce unnecessary food waste
- Mrs. Brown, a well-liked teacher, has offered to teach the course
- limited kitchen facilities, so only ten students to a class

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Self-defense Course

The following list provides some relevant information about the after-school class:

- course duration: five weeks
- students can learn basic techniques from karate, judo, and jiu-jitsu
- special focus on how to defend oneself against unarmed attackers on the street
- mixed-ability class, in which experienced students help novices
- school already has a large gym with soft floor mats
- instructor is experienced in teaching large groups
- people say that the instructor is very strict and sometimes impatient

TASK C

You are going to listen to an excerpt from an ECPE speaking test, in which Test Taker 1 explains the bullet points for the first option on his information sheet - the Cookery Course. As you listen, number the bullet points on the information sheet above, to show the order in which Test Taker 1 describes them. The first one has been done for you, as an example.

TASK D

Now you will hear the second excerpt from the same test, in which Test Taker 1 explains the bullet points for his second option - the Self-defense Course. As before, number the bullet points on the information sheet above, to show the order in which Test Taker 1 talks about them. After he has finished speaking, you will hear Test Taker 2 recommend one of the options. Complete what Test Taker 2 says, below.

Test Taker 2: "Hm ... Well, if I _____ you, I'd go for the _____ option you told me about: the _____ Course."

TASK E

Below is part of Test Taker 2's information sheet from the same ECPE speaking test. Compare the information on the sheet with the transcript underneath, which shows what Test Taker 2 says when explaining her options. Label each underlined part of the transcript with the number of the corresponding bullet point. The first one has been done for you, as an example.

Test Taker 2

Choosing an after-school class for final-year high school students

General Fitness Course

The following list provides some relevant information about the after-school class:

- students to learn ways to maintain fitness through yoga and modern activities (1)
- course duration: eight weeks (2)
- yoga activities help to improve flexibility, circulation and bone strength (3)
- open to anyone who passes the general health examination (4)
- session is repeated twice weekly (5)
- no equipment required apart from loose clothing (6)
- there is said to have been an accident in one of the classes last year (7)

Transcript

"So, first there's a course in general fitness. This goes on for two months [2] and the same class takes place twice a week. [] I see here that students on this course will learn techniques to help them stay in shape. [] These techniques are from yoga and, as it says here, "modern activities" – which I guess means things like pilates and that kind of thing. About the yoga activities, it says here that they benefit health in a number of ways: enhancing body movement, making your heart healthy, and toughening up your bones. [] Now, provided they get the go-ahead from a health professional, anyone can take part, [] and the only thing they need in the way of equipment is clothing that's not too tight. [] There is one cause for concern, however, and that is that there are rumors that last year, someone suffered an injury in one of these classes. [] Anyway, let's move on to the second option. So that's a course in..."

TASK F

Read the second option on Test Taker 2's information sheet. Then, listen to Test Taker 2 and number the bullet points on her sheet in the order in which she mentions them.

Computing Course

The following list provides some relevant information about the after-school class:

- students will learn the basics of computer programming _____
- course duration: five weeks _____
- no previous knowledge required in order to study course _____
- course to include section on internet security and avoiding online crime _____
- students will also become familiar with basic laptop and tablet repairs _____
- each lesson consists mostly of hands-on practice _____
- students must have laptop and tablet with latest operating systems _____

TASK G

Look back at Tasks E and F. What do you notice about the order in which the test taker talked about her points? How did she group her points so that they followed each other in a logical order?

TASK H

1. Work with a partner. One of you works from Test Taker 1's information sheet, and the other from Test Taker 2's information sheet, on the previous pages. Choose a bullet point from your sheet and write down ways you can express the same information using different words. Try to write at least three different paraphrases of the same bullet point. Then, do the same for another bullet point.

2. Choose a bullet point, at random, from your option. Do not tell your partner which bullet point you have chosen. Paraphrase the bullet point so that your partner can identify the one you have chosen. Then, swap roles.

TASK I

Below are some statements you could use to recommend one of the options summarized by Test Taker 2. Fill in the gaps with the words from the box.

• seems • for • I'd • sound • pick • all • advise • inclined • opt

1. I reckon you should _____ for the second course: the computing class.
2. If it were up to me, _____ select the second course, the one in computing.
3. It _____ to me that the course in computing – the second option – is the one you should select.
4. I recommend you go _____ the second option: the course in computing.
5. The second option – the course in computing – seems best to me, so I'd _____ you to select that one.
6. I like the _____ of the second option best, so I'd definitely suggest going for the computing course.
7. I think the computing course sounds really great, so I'm _____ for selecting Option 2.
8. I'm _____ to think Option 2 would be better, so I recommend you _____ the computer course.

Time to Practice

Following are information sheets for three test takers. (In some cases, three test takers may take the ECPE speaking test together, rather than the usual two. It is therefore a good idea for you to practice the decision-making task in groups of three as well.) In this decision-making task, you and your partner(s) must choose the best way to invest a donation to a private English language school. Work with your partner(s). Do not look at each other's information sheets. Explain your options to each other and make recommendations.

Test Taker 1

Choosing a way to invest donation to private English language school

Install interactive whiteboards in all classrooms

The following list provides some relevant information about donating to a language school:

- allows students to play interactive games in class
- excellent sound system for listening activities
- teacher can show online videos in class
- notes written on board can be put on file and archived
- content of course books can be displayed for all to see
- notes can be written on touchscreen board with finger
- some teachers are not familiar with the new technology

Organize fifteen-day trip to London

The following list provides some relevant information about donating to a language school:

- students can experience Europe's largest English-speaking capital
- accommodation in good hotel in Paddington
- organized museum visits and tours
- trip includes visit to local school to meet pupils
- London is cosmopolitan city, with English-speakers from all over the world
- chance to forge links with local schools for further cooperation (e.g. video calls)
- trip not open to junior students under 12 years of age



Test Taker 2

Choosing a way to invest donation to private English language school

Hire young, native-speaker teacher for speaking classes

The following list provides some relevant information about donating to a language school:

- young person (18 – 22 years) to be hired through agency in the US
- six-month contract
- teacher will conduct speaking classes with small groups
- making the acquaintance of a native speaker is good way to motivate students
- students can compare their way of life with that of a young person from another country
- speaking sessions will give students a break from exam preparation
- person hired may not have teaching experience

Purchase online streaming service

The following list provides some relevant information about donating to a language school:

- students can stream movies in their own time
- range of different material (movies, television series, documentaries, etc.)
- all English language versions, with choice of subtitles
- will give students a break from studying course books
- listening to dialogue in English helps improve understanding and pronunciation
- opportunity for classwork based on popular movies and series
- need to do research on best streaming services



Test Taker 3

Choosing a way to invest donation to private English language school

Dictionary and Vocabulary Builder app for students in higher-level classes

The following list provides some relevant information about donating to a language school:

- discount for bulk purchase
- monolingual definitions are concise yet detailed
- activities provide practice for using vocabulary in context
- contains 'Study Tips' section
- extensive lists of synonyms and antonyms
- will help students perform better in examinations
- not all students have a smart phone

Subscriptions to 'English Now!' interactive website

The following list provides some relevant information about donating to a language school:

- one-year subscription for all students
- caters for all levels of ability and ages
- automatic correction of exercises
- 'Listen and Repeat' feature for pronunciation practice
- story videos for younger learners, documentaries for older ones
- animations help students visualize how grammar structures are formed
- donation will only cover enough subscriptions for one year

