

DESCRIPTORS FOR THE ORAL: DISCOURSE AND CONVERSATION

	Pronunciation	Grammatical Accuracy	Vocabulary	Content and Structure	Conversation (additional criteria)
I 70 – 85	Near-native pronunciation and intonation.	Virtually no basic grammatical errors; able to handle complex questions, and to switch register as appropriate.	Wide-ranging, precise and appropriate in all contexts.	Sophisticated and challenging approach to topic, and excellent background knowledge where appropriate; clearly structured and illustrated.	Engages fluently and fully in conversation.
II.i 60 – 69	Good; just one or two sounds may be phonetically incorrect.	Few basic errors; secure handling of structures in all but the most complex contexts.	Adequate for most purposes.	Competent discussion of the topic; good background knowledge. Some originality of approach; clear, well structured argument.	Engages well and quite fluently in conversation.
II.ii 50 – 59	Several sounds may be phonetically incorrect.	Some basic errors; structures adequate but limited.	More limited vocabulary, or a tendency to resort to paraphrase or invented words.	Basic ideas, and a limited survey of the subject.	Engages to some degree in conversation, without much fluency.
III 40 - 49	Phonetically highly inaccurate.	Some grammatical knowledge, but frequent basic errors.	Some communication achieved, but hampered by lack of vocabulary.	An underlying argument is discernible, but poor structure, with much irrelevance, padding, or inappropriate illustration.	Struggles to engage in conversation.
PASS 30 -39	Interference from mother tongue impedes understanding.	Limited awareness of basic grammatical functions.	Inadequate for tackling the question.	Ideas presented lack co-ordination or relevance.	Minimal engagement in conversation.
FAIL less than or equal to 29	Difficult to understand even for a well-meaning listener.	Seriously inadequate knowledge of grammar.	Difficulty in communicating even the simplest ideas.	Failure to make a valid response to the subject.	No engagement in conversation.