

Speaking – Kim Connolly(Bishop Druitt College, Lismore)

Joke:

What do the French call an abundance of sisters in a family – a soeur plus

What do the French call a dog that runs for public office? Politi –chien

- It is only 5 minutes so in that amount of time, you want to use a number of tense changes. The three that are the most important are the passé composé for être and aller – j’ai regardé, je suis allée, the present and the future proche je vais aller, but if you can use the imparfait, the conditionnel – j’aimerais or je voudrais, the future simple – j’irai and throw in an “il faut que j’aïlle” or il faut que je fasse - the subjunctive you’ll get better marks. Also, try to use some reflexive verbs such as “chaque jour, à sept heures du matin, je me brosse les dents”. Use some good negatives such as “je ne suis jamais chez moi, le soir avant vingt heures”. Use direct objects such as “je le vois” and indirect objects like “je lui ai dit qu’il était trop tard”. If you can replace a word with en or y, as in “j’y suis allée”
- The examiner will ask open ended questions so that you can expand on things.
- Have something prepared. Take the examiner to what you want to speak about eg. Oui, j’ai un petit frère mais il m’enerve parce qu’il prends toujours mes chapeaux. Je les collectionne.
- The examiner will try to ask you a question relating to you what you’ve just said so if you are not telling the truth in an answer, be prepared to continue the lie with detail.
- The questions will go for easier to more difficult
- They try not to cover too many topics but if you are unable to speak about one topic, the examiner will move on to another topic
- Don’t have attitude – it doesn’t gain you any marks! The examiner is trying to make you look good – they aren’t showing off themselves, they’re trying to help you gain marks.
- The examiner will repeat a question first to make sure that you haven’t just not heard the question and then they’ll rephrase it. Then they’ll move on to another question.
- If there is a question that upsets you, breath deeply and move on.
- Don’t mention your school’s name or your teacher’s name.
- The examiner will not allow you to spend a long time on a long memorised track. They will interrupt you and ask questions that are more in depth about your topic. Don’t give lists.
- Don’t use hand gestures, it is a tape, they can’t see you!
- Don’t ask the examiner questions. If you do, they will answer in the shortest possible way and get you talking again because they don’t want to have their answer use up your time.
- Give opinions. If you answer a question with “je vais à la piscine, cinq fois par semaine” be sure to add an opinion such as “c’est fantastique” or “c’est fatigant”. Use as many adverbs as possible such as “j’ai vraiment faim” or even better “j’ai si faim!”

- Be interesting. We've been hearing a lot of the same thing, if you can add anything in like, "quel horreur" or "c'était épouvantable"
- Use superlatives like "ma soeur a le plus beau petit ami ..."
- Don't speak too quietly because you don't know an answer. You may have had it right but they can't mark it if they can't hear it. Don't speak too slowly or too quickly.
- If you have to answer in the negative, continue with connecting phrase – "je n'aime pas faire mes devoirs en anglais mais j'adore faire mes devoirs en français" also note how I used 2 different words for the way I felt about it – aimer and adorer – try not to repeat yourselves.
- Listen to French music or pod-casts before your exam to get your brain into French.
- Have some films, book names or musical groups in your mind so that if they ask you about your favourite group or what film you've seen lately, you can name one. I've had students who were well able to say who they'd like as a band but couldn't think of band names and it held them up.
- Don't expect feedback from the examiner – we're not allowed to comment on your performance.

Listening

- Write, write, write in the Candidate's notes because you can go back with a dictionary after the Listening part of over to check certain words that you didn't understand. Write the words in whatever language is quickest for you to write.
- Do not ever use a dictionary during the Listening section, you won't have time
- The markers are not allowed to use the Candidates notes to gain marks so make sure you write the important things in the answer section as well. They can look to clarify your answer in the Candidates notes.
- Sometimes words that all run together, are easier to understand when you see them written down.
- Make sure your answers have enough detail. Just because the question is worth 2 points doesn't mean they only want two details. The markers will decide what answer will gain you the full two points.
- Be sure to read and answer the question asked. When they ask for things such as "language and content" – talk about those things. Was the language short like "bof" or formal – "comment allez-vous, Monsieur" or l'argot (slang) "fana de techno". The tendency is just to translate what you've understood but they want you to come to your own conclusions.
- Never use the word "etc." you will not gain any marks from it.
- Use quotes but explain the quotes. The marker needs to know that you understood what the quote meant.
- Never leave any questions blank. We can possibly get a mark out of an answer but we can't get a mark out of nothing.
- Be careful not to add in details that you're not sure of. It's a fine line.
- You need to be able to multi-task

Concentrate

Missed

Bang

Good

Test

Did

Hear

write