



How long should my answer be?

Aim: When you have completed these exercises you will know how to give a good answer in Phase One of the speaking tests.

Problems: In Phase One of the speaking test many candidates lose valuable marks because they don't answer the questions in enough detail and others memorise answers before they go into the test. The following exercises will help you to give more detailed answers and so help to improve your score.

Activity 1

Look at the following example Phase One question and put the 5 answers in order from 1 = best to 5 = worst.

Question: "Can you tell me about your hometown?"

Possible answers:

- a) "I come from Thailand."
- b) "I come from Nakom Pathom, which is a small town about one hour's drive from Bangkok. It is quite well-known because it has a temple with a very large chedi, so we get a lot of tourists visiting. Other than that, it's quite a quiet place. It also has a university."
- c) "Yes, I come from Nakom Pathom."
- d) "I live in Nakom Pathom. It is a very nice place with many things to do. You can do everything there anytime with anybody. I like to go shopping with my mother. I love my mother very much and all of my family are very kind – we always eat together on Sundays."
- e) "You go to the Pinklao Bridge and then straight on to the southern bus terminal. After that you carry on along the Nakon Chaisi road and turn right after Mahidol University. Then you continue for about twenty minutes, turn right and your there."

Order the answers here:

- a) ____
- b) ____
- c) ____
- d) ____
- e) ____



Why do you think the answers should be in this order? You can note down your ideas.

You can check your ideas with our suggested [Answer Key](#).

So... how long should each answer be?

Activity 2

Complete the following gap fill exercise using the words & phrases in the box below to get a general idea of what is expected in Phase One:

In Phase One you will be asked questions on (1) _____ topics. It is not (2) _____ to predict what the topics are about, but they are normally concerned with (3) _____ and (4) _____ things.

Phase One lasts between (5) _____ and (6) _____; each topic has about (7) _____ questions, so that means an average of around (8) _____ for each answer.

However, don't (9) _____ your answers, if the examiner lets you continue, then (10) _____ because he or she doesn't have to ask (11) _____ question. If your answers are (12) _____ the examiner may let you talk for quite a long time without asking (13) _____ question.

Use these words:

another three familiar four time keep talking five minutes relevant

twenty seconds every possible four everyday

Tips:

1. Don't try to memorise answers to topics because the examiner will know this is what you are doing when you speak. It is much better to just try to communicate as best as you can with the examiner.
2. You are marked on how naturally you speak English, not how quickly or how long. Try to communicate with the examiner as you would with other people and don't just try to "fill" the time with words.

You can check your answers with our [Answer Key](#).

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