

Webinar on Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Oral Communication

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Can the student be told the dates when Classroom-Based Assessment 1 (CBA 1) will be happening in the school?

Yes. “While oral communication will form part of everyday learning and teaching across all three years of junior cycle, the preparation for and completion by students of their Oral Communication Classroom-Based Assessment is carried out during a defined time period of up to three weeks within class contact time” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 9).

2. Can students begin the process and choose the topic before the three weeks?

During a defined time period of up to three weeks within class contact time, “students may collaborate with classmates in choosing a format, and then planning, preparing and participating in the Classroom-Based Assessment as part of a pair or group in which each member has a meaningful part to play” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 9).

“Although this phase of the task is monitored by the teacher, the preparation is the student’s own, carried out individually or in active, meaningful interaction and collaboration as part of a pair or group. Students select a topic, stimulus or role-play scenario at the beginning of the three-week preparation period; one which they have not previously practised or prepared” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 9).

3. To what extent can teachers help their students with their CBA 1?

The preparation for this assessment will be monitored and supported by the teacher.

Teacher “support may include

- clarifying the requirements of the task
- using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students
- providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments
- providing supports for students with special educational needs” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 4).

“Although this phase of the task is monitored by the teacher, the preparation is the student’s own. Following the Oral Communication students complete a written Student Reflection Note. This will include an account of the part the student played and the materials or sources they accessed during their preparation and a short personal reflection on their Oral Communication”. Effective feedback during and after the CBA on “the strengths of the student’s work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 9 and p. 17).

4. Do students have to do CBA 1 on a completely brand-new topic?
Students are encouraged not to choose something that has been previously rehearsed or practised. However, students may wish to return to a topic that was of interest and further develop this for the CBA moment.

5. If a student does the CBA 1 in a group of three, is the time still four minutes or does it go up to twelve minutes - four minutes each?
“As a guideline, the Oral Communication should last about three to four minutes, including the teachers’ unscripted questions, prompts and/or contributions, and time for students to pause, think, self-correct pronunciation, ask for a question to be reformulated etc. In the case of a pair or group task, the Oral Communication should last enough time for each student to make a meaningful contribution” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 12).

6. What can the stimulus material be?
A stimulus material can be visual(s), a written text, an aural text, props and any other artefact that the student deems relevant (Assessment Guidelines, p. 12).

7. Can teachers instruct students to work individually or in pairs or groups? Or is it designed to be that students can decide for themselves?
The students will have the “freedom to choose a format” from the options outlined (individual, pair, group) “and a topic/role-play scenario/stimulus of interest to” them. “With the agreement of [their] teacher, [they] may collaborate with classmates in the following ways:
 - choosing a format, planning, preparing and interacting
 - participating in the communication as part of a group in which each member has a part to play” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 13).

8. Are students allowed to have written text to support them?
Students can use stimulus material to support them, which can be “visual(s), a written text, an aural text, props and so on”. It is worth noting that the Features of Quality assess spoken production, spoken interaction and language awareness (Assessment Guidelines, p. 12).

9. Are the descriptors the same for CBA 1 and CBA 2. Are the descriptors the same for all subjects or specific to Modern Foreign Languages?
The descriptors are the same: Yet to Meet Expectations, In line with Expectations, Above Expectations, Exceptional. However, the Features of Quality are different for CBA 1 and CBA 2. (Assessment Guidelines, p. 15 for CBA 1 and p. 25 for CBA 2).

10. Does the assessment happen in the moment?
Yes, teachers assess their students in the moment based on the Features of Quality. Teachers may find it helpful to note some observations while assessing the oral communication.

11. What advice can we give to students who may be anxious performing in front of their peers?

CBA 1 is a Classroom-Based Assessment. The process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process. While oral communication will form part of everyday learning and teaching across all three years of junior cycle, this does not imply a “performance” at the top of the classroom. Through engaging with learning outcomes, students will have previously engaged in oral communication tasks in different formats, for example, at their tables in pairs, in groups and in front of the class.

Teacher “support may include

- clarifying the requirements of the task
- using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students
- providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments
- providing supports for students with special educational needs” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 4).

“Schools facilitate inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student’s performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. The accommodations e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student’s learning throughout the year” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 4).

12. What about reasonable accommodations for students?

“Schools facilitate inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student’s performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. The accommodations e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student’s learning throughout the year” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 4).

Prior to Circular 79_2018, schools used Summer or Christmas tests in second/third year to assess for RACE accommodations. Since the circular now instructs schools to replace these tests with CBAs, schools have wondered what they should use in future. Having consulted with the State Examinations Commission the following response was issued: The RACE guidelines specify that samples used to determine eligibility must be conducted in the school under examination conditions and do not refer specifically to Christmas or summer tests. Samples from any in-house tests conducted under examination conditions may be used.

13. Is the Student Reflection Note included in assessing the student?

Completion of the Student Reflection Note is “the student’s declaration of the part that he or she has played in the assessment” and it does not form part of the assessment. The Student Reflection Note is filled in after the student’s CBA 1 and it is “submitted to the teacher”. It may prove a useful support for both the teacher and the student when planning the next steps in the MFL classroom (Assessment Guidelines, p. 9).

14. How many follow-up questions should be given?

“Teachers will interact with students during their Oral Communication to ensure that both spoken production and spoken interaction skills are demonstrated and to help gauge students’ comprehension and capacity to respond to simple, unscripted questions, at a level appropriate to this age and stage of language learning” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 8).

15. Could we ask the same question to two students working in pairs?

It may be better to ask different questions, based on what each student has said. The unscripted questions help the teacher “gauge students’ comprehension and capacity to respond to simple, unscripted questions, at a level appropriate to this age and stage of language learning” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 8).

16. What recording devices are people using to record? Do you have to record every student in your class, or can you select a sample of students?

Samples of Oral Communication by students will be recorded for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. An example at each of the four descriptor levels, where feasible, will be needed for this purpose. “Any audio or audio-visual recording device, such as a tablet, mobile phone, laptop or video camera, available in the school can be used for this purpose. The recording should take place with cognisance of child protection guidelines and in line with the school’s Acceptable Use Policy. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in the Appendix and are available online” [here](#) (Assessment Guidelines, p. 16).

17. Are MFL SLAR meetings language-specific?

The Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting is “language-specific”. “It is recommended that a date for a language-specific Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting is established at the outset to assist in the planning, implementation and reviewing of the Classroom-Based Assessment” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 10).

18. What happens for the SLAR meeting when there is only one member in the French Department?

“In a school with one teacher of the modern foreign language in question, it is recommended that the teacher discuss the assessment arrangements with their school facilitator/management with a view to contacting and coordinating with teachers of that modern foreign language from other, preferably nearby schools” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 10).

19. How long after the SLAR can the school keep the recordings?

Recordings are made for the purpose of the SLAR and to support teachers in reaching a common understanding. Any retention of student work would need to take cognisance of the school’s GDPR and Child Protection policies.

20. Can I conduct a SLAR with a teacher of the same language despite that teacher not currently teaching a second-year group, i.e. only one teacher presenting sample recordings?

“Where schools have a teacher of a modern foreign language who is not currently teaching the student cohort completing their classroom-based assessment (e.g. second years), this teacher may participate in a subject learning and assessment review meeting with a colleague/colleagues. This teacher will not have examples of student work from this student cohort to bring to the meeting” (Assessment Guidelines, p. 10).

Further information can be found in the MFL Assessment Guidelines [here](#).