

The University of the State of New York  
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Albany, New York 12234

**Regents Comprehensive  
Examinations in Modern Languages**

**Teacher's Manual for  
Administering and Scoring  
Part 1: Speaking**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Regents comprehensive examination in each modern language is designed to measure students' attainment of learning outcomes at Checkpoint B of the State syllabus *Modern Languages for Communication*. The examination includes 24 credits for oral communication performance in Part 1 and 76 credits for a written test of listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing skills.

Part 1 of the examination consists of a formal speaking test to be administered at the school's convenience during the speaking test period, *which begins ten weeks prior to the written test and ends five calendar days prior to the written test*. The 60 tasks in the speaking test for each January and June examination are to be selected by the school from the *Sourcebook of Speaking Tasks for Part 1* provided by the State Education Department. Specific information about the selection of the speaking tasks is provided below.

It is expected that students with certain disabilities use specialized/adaptive equipment and instruction/demonstration techniques during second language instruction. When taking the Regents examinations in modern languages, such students should be provided the same specialized/adaptive equipment and instruction/demonstration techniques, as well as the alternative testing techniques indicated in their Individualized Education Program. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that alternative testing techniques are provided to students with disabilities as recommended by the Committee on Special Education. In addition, when determining who should be tested, administrators must consider those students with disabilities who attend programs operated by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), as well as any other programs located outside the school.

The students' scores for Part 1 must be completed in ink and must be reported to the building principal *no later than five calendar days prior to the date of the written test*. A sample reporting sheet is provided on page 10.

## THE SPEAKING TEST

### Description

The speaking test consists of communication tasks to be performed by students with their teacher. Each task prescribes a simulated conversation in which the student always plays the role of himself/herself and the teacher assumes the specific role indicated in each task. The tasks may involve one or more of the four communication functions specified in the State syllabus: socializing, providing and obtaining information, expressing personal feelings or opinions, and getting others to adopt a course of action.

Each student performs a total of two tasks, randomly selected from the 60 speaking tasks comprising Part 1, as chosen by the school from the sourcebook. Each task consists of a brief statement in English to indicate the purpose and setting of the communication, the role of the teacher, and the person who is to initiate the conversation. Each task is designed so that it can be completed in six interactions between the student and the teacher. For the purpose of this manual, the student's part in each of these interactions is called an *utterance*.

### Selection of the Part 1 Speaking Tasks

The State Education Department provides a collection of speaking tasks in the publication *Sourcebook of Speaking Tasks for Part 1*. The 60 speaking tasks that constitute Part 1 of a Regents comprehensive examination in a modern language are to be selected by the school from this sourcebook. Since the sourcebook will *not* be revised on an annual basis, it will serve as the source of the Part 1 speaking tests for current and future administrations of modern language examinations. **The sourcebook contains secure examination material and must be kept under lock and key when not in use.**

Speaking tasks for Part 1 of the January and June administrations of modern language examinations should be selected as early in the school year as possible. For each successive administration of the speaking test, a new set of 60 tasks must be selected. Each succeeding set of 60 speaking tasks should not have been used in the preceding administration of the speaking test. The selection of the speaking test tasks for the current school year must be made before students have the opportunity to practice with the remainder of the speaking tasks in the sourcebook. The principal should take all necessary precautions to ensure that the Part 1 speaking test tasks to be administered in January and in June of the current school year are kept secure.

The following procedures are recommended for selection of the Part 1 speaking test:

- Select the 60 speaking tasks from the sourcebook, taking care not to select any tasks that were used for the most recent administration of the examination.
- Make a photocopy of each page of the sourcebook containing any of the 60 tasks selected.
- Remove the 60 speaking tasks from the photocopied pages and mount them on index cards, one task per card.
- At the test administration, the student picks a card, hands it to the teacher, and the teacher reads the task aloud to the student.

**OR**

- Select the 60 speaking tasks from the sourcebook, taking care not to select any tasks that were used for the most recent administration of the examination.
- Renumber the selected tasks from 1 to 60. Also number small pieces of paper from 1 to 60 and place the numbered slips in a box.
- At the test administration, the student picks a numbered slip from the box and hands the slip to the teacher. The teacher locates the task in the sourcebook that corresponds to the number and reads the task aloud to the student.

For any given school year, the tasks not selected for Part 1 of a January or June examination may be used for instructional purposes. However, caution must be exercised to ensure that the complete set of printed speaking tasks in the sourcebook is kept secure at all times.

### **Administration and Rating**

The speaking test is to be administered individually to each student at the school's convenience at any time during the speaking test period, either in the presence of other students or with only the teacher. The two tasks need not be administered to each student at one sitting; they may be administered one task at a time during the entire speaking test period. **The Part 1 speaking tasks must be kept secure from the time they are initially selected at the beginning of the school year to the end of the speaking test period.**

The student is to pick two tasks **at random** from the 60 speaking tasks previously selected to constitute Part 1. Depending on the administration method used by the teacher or school, the student will either:

- Pick an index card from the unnumbered group of 60 cards, hand it to the teacher, and the teacher will read the task aloud to the student.

**OR**

- Pick a numbered slip of paper from a box of 60 numbered slips and hand it to the teacher. The teacher will locate the task in the sourcebook that corresponds to the number and will read the task aloud to the student.

Once a task has been selected by the student, it cannot be substituted for another or done over if the first performance is unsatisfactory.\* Care should be taken that no student selects the same task twice.

In administering the test, the teacher has two major responsibilities: (1) to act as the student's conversation partner, and (2) to rate the student's performance.

**As the conversation partner**, the teacher applies real-life communication devices in the target language to keep the student on task and to ensure the continuity of the conversation. Communication devices such as "Sorry, I didn't understand that," "Would you say that again, please," or "No, what I meant was..." could be used in the target language for that purpose. An additional responsibility of the teacher as the conversation partner is to help bring the conversation to a natural conclusion.

As the conversation partner, the teacher influences the student's performance by the nature of the eliciting attempts. In order to qualify for full credit, the student's utterances must be consistent with the breadth of content expected at Checkpoint B in the syllabus. Utterances that are comprehensible and appropriate but insufficient in content receive less than full credit. Very focused eliciting attempts may place students in situations where such responses are unavoidable. Questions that focus narrowly on "who," "when," "where," and "at what time," for example, tend to elicit very limited responses which, although perfectly natural, do not provide students the opportunity to demonstrate all they can do.

Whenever possible, eliciting attempts should be open-ended statements rather than questions. Whenever questions are unavoidable, they should be as open-ended as possible. Ideally, the teacher should say as little as is necessary to elicit maximum responses by students.

**As conversation partner and rater**, the teacher may make two attempts at eliciting any of the six student utterances. If the student has not produced a comprehensible and appropriate utterance after the teacher's first two eliciting attempts at the very beginning of the conversation, the student receives no credit for the entire task. However, during the conversation, if a student has not produced a comprehensible and appropriate utterance after the teacher's second eliciting attempt, the student receives no credit for that utterance, and the teacher should then shift to another aspect of the task.

To facilitate rating while acting as the conversation partner, the teacher should use a score sheet to keep track of the student's utterances, to record the number of eliciting attempts for each, and to record the number of credits awarded for each utterance. A sample score sheet is provided on page 11.

Certain teacher-student interactions, although natural in the course of a conversation, do not provide evidence of the student's ability to produce language. They should be disregarded for rating purposes. Examples of such interactions are:

- "yes/no" responses
- restatements of all or essential parts of what the teacher has said
- proper names used in isolation
- socializing devices ("Hello," "How are you," etc.) used in isolation [Note: socializing devices at the beginning of a conversation may serve the "initiating" purpose, but do not qualify for credit as an utterance.]

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\* At times, the task a student selects may not be appropriate for that student, usually due to a student's particular disability or religious beliefs. In such cases, that student should be allowed to substitute another task. In order for the student with the disability to be eligible to substitute a task, that student must have been identified by the school district's Committee on Special Education as having a disability, and the need for the substitution must be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). A student is eligible to substitute tasks due to religious beliefs if it can be demonstrated that the student has been excused from participating in similar conversational situations during the school year.

As the rater, the teacher gives a maximum of *12 credits* for each task according to the following criteria:

- Award 2 credits for each of the student's six utterances that is comprehensible, appropriate, and consistent with the following proficiency statement at Checkpoint B of the syllabus:

“Can initiate and sustain a conversation, but limited vocabulary range necessitates hesitation and circumlocution. Can use the more common verb tense forms, but still makes many errors in formation and selection. Can use word order accurately in simple sentences, but still makes errors in more complex patterns. Can sustain coherent structures in short and familiar communicative situations. Can employ selectively basic cohesive features such as pronouns and verb inflections. Extended communication is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Can articulate comprehensibly but has difficulty in producing certain sounds in certain positions or combinations. Speech is usually labored. Has to repeat to be understood by the general public.”

As used above, the term “comprehensibility” means that the utterance would make sense to native speakers who know no English, and the term “appropriateness” means that the utterance contributes to the completion of the task.

- Award 1 credit for each of the student's six utterances that is comprehensible and appropriate, but below the level indicated in the proficiency statement at Checkpoint B.
- Award 0 credit for utterances that are incomprehensible or inappropriate following the teacher's second eliciting attempt.

## SAMPLE ADMINISTRATION OF A TASK

The student has randomly selected the following task:

25. [Teacher initiates] Teacher says: I am a student. You are an exchange student in my school. We have just heard that a school trip has been canceled. We are going to share our reactions to that decision. I will start the conversation.

### PRESENTATION OF TASK

*Teacher Says in English*

*Student Says in English*

I am a student. You are an exchange student in my school. We have just heard that a school trip has been canceled. We are going to share our reactions to that decision. I will start the conversation.\* – Do you understand the situation?

Yes, I think so.

All right. Remember that we'll be talking about a school trip that has been canceled. I'll give you a few seconds to think about what you may want to say in (target language) in this situation. (Short pause)

All right. Are you ready?

Yes, I am.

From now on, we'll use no more English.

### TASK BEGINS (ALL IN TARGET LANGUAGE)

<i>Teacher Says</i>	<i>Student Says</i>	<i>Rating</i>
(1) Did you hear about Saturday's school trip?	No, I did not go.	Comprehensible but inappropriate. Student has one more opportunity for this utterance. Teacher should make second eliciting attempt.
No, no! I mean the trip to the play this coming weekend.	What is about it?	<i>1 credit:</i> Comprehensible and appropriate, but below Checkpoint B.
(2) It's been canceled.	It has been canceled?	Restatement: Disregard. Teacher should make first eliciting attempt again.
That's right. We're not going.	Is too bad. I bought new clothing for it.	<i>2 credits:</i> Comprehensible and appropriate, consistent with Checkpoint B.

\* **NOTE:** The teacher reads the task aloud to the student **exactly as provided by the State Education Department.**

<i>Teacher Says</i>	<i>Student Says</i>	<i>Rating</i>
(3) Never mind about the clothes. What about the money we paid for the tickets!	What can we do?	<i>2 credits:</i> Comprehensible and appropriate, consistent with Checkpoint B.
(4) I think we should get a lot of kids to march to the office and demand our money!	No.	“Yes/no” response: Disregard. Teacher should make first eliciting attempt again.
Why not?	It not...ah...need... ah...necessary.	<i>1 credit:</i> Comprehensible and appropriate, but below Checkpoint B.
(5) You don't know them very well.	I think...ah, ah [unintelligible sounds]	Incomprehensible. Student has one more opportunity for this utterance. Teacher should make second eliciting attempt.
What did you say?	You know not.	<i>0 credit:</i> Second attempt is inappropriate. Teacher should make first eliciting attempt for utterance 6.
(6) I can't wait for them to give me my money back.	You mean too much money?	Comprehensible but inappropriate. Student has one more opportunity for this utterance. Teacher should make second eliciting attempt.
I need my money now!	If you needed money, I will lend it to you.	<i>2 credits:</i> Comprehensible and appropriate, consistent with Checkpoint B.

Good, thanks. I'll take you up on it.

**Task Ends**

**MODERN LANGUAGE REGENTS EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE SCORE SHEET  
PART 1: SPEAKING**

Student's Name: Jane Doe

Language: Sample Task - English

	<u>Utterance</u>		<u>First Attempt</u>	<u>Second Attempt</u>
First Task: No. <u>25</u>	1	( ) *	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
	2		<u>2</u>	
	3		<u>2</u>	
	4		<u>1</u>	
	5		<u>-</u>	<u>0</u>
	6		<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>8</b>

Second Task: No. _____	1	( ) *	_____	_____
	2		_____	_____
	3		_____	_____
	4		_____	_____
	5		_____	_____
	6		_____	_____
<b>TOTAL:</b>				

\* Use a checkmark to indicate student's initiation of the conversation, if required.



**MODERN LANGUAGE REGENTS EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE SCORE SHEET**

**PART 1: SPEAKING**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Language:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<u>Utterance</u>		<u>First Attempt</u>	<u>Second Attempt</u>
<b>First Task: No.</b> _____	<b>1</b>	( <u>    </u> )	_____	_____
	<b>2</b>	*	_____	_____
	<b>3</b>		_____	_____
	<b>4</b>		_____	_____
	<b>5</b>		_____	_____
	<b>6</b>		_____	_____
				<b>TOTAL:</b> <input type="text"/>

<b>Second Task: No.</b> _____	<b>1</b>	( <u>    </u> )	_____	_____
	<b>2</b>	*	_____	_____
	<b>3</b>		_____	_____
	<b>4</b>		_____	_____
	<b>5</b>		_____	_____
	<b>6</b>		_____	_____
				<b>TOTAL:</b> <input type="text"/>

*\* Use a checkmark to indicate student's initiation of the conversation, if required.*