

CELPIP speaking: a plan for each of the 8 tasks

A plan, not a script: use the steps to organize your ideas, then say or write them in your own words.

Seconds per step add up to the task's speaking time.

Task 1 · Giving Advice · prepare 30 s, speak 90 s

1. Name the situation (10 s)

"So you're trying to choose between two job offers."

2. Advice 1, with a reason (30 s)

"The first thing I'd do is compare the commute, because an hour a day adds up fast."

3. Advice 2, with an example (30 s)

"Another idea is to ask both teams what a normal week looks like. My cousin did that, and it changed her mind."

4. Wrap up and encourage (20 s)

"If you check those two things, I'm sure you'll pick the right one."

Natural: "So you're trying to choose between two offers. Honestly, I'd start with the commute."

Avoid: "Hello my dear friend, I am very happy to give you some valuable advice today."

Phrases: If I were you, I'd... · Have you thought about...? · It might be worth... · The main reason is... ·

Whatever you decide, ...

Task 2 · Talking about a Personal Experience · prepare 30 s, speak 60 s

1. When and where (10 s)

"A couple of years ago, in my first week at a new job..."

2. What happened (25 s)

"So what happened was, I missed the last bus home, and my phone was almost dead."

3. What you did and how you felt (15 s)

"At first I panicked, but then a stranger offered to call me a cab."

4. What you learned (10 s)

"Looking back, it taught me to always plan my route home."

Natural: "A couple of years ago, in my first week at a new job, I missed the last bus home."

Avoid: "I would like to share with you a very memorable experience of my life."

Phrases: A couple of years ago... · It turned out that... · At that point... · Looking back, ... · Ever since then, ...

Task 3 · Describing a Scene · prepare 30 s, speak 60 s

1. The big picture (10 s)

“This looks like a busy farmers’ market on a sunny Saturday.”

2. The foreground (20 s)

“Right in front, a man is weighing apples while a girl holds the bag open.”

3. The background and the people (20 s)

“Behind them, people are lining up at a coffee truck.”

4. One small detail (10 s)

“One thing that stands out is a dog sleeping under a table.”

Natural: “This looks like a busy farmers’ market on a sunny Saturday morning.”

Avoid: “In this picture I can see many things which I am going to describe now.”

Phrases: In the foreground... · Over on the left... · It looks like... · Someone seems to be... · What stands out is...

Task 4 · Making Predictions · prepare 30 s, speak 60 s

1. The main action now (10 s)

“Right now, the man with the stack of boxes is about to drop one.”

2. Prediction 1, with a clue (20 s)

“I think the apples will roll everywhere, because the top box is already tipping.”

3. Prediction 2, linked to the first (20 s)

“After that, the girl nearby will probably run to help pick them up.”

4. How it ends (10 s)

“By the end, the seller might give her a free apple.”

Natural: “It looks like the man with the boxes is about to drop the top one.”

Avoid: “Now I will tell you about what will happen next in the future.”

Phrases: It looks like... is about to... · Judging by... · Chances are... · I’d expect... · In the next few minutes...

Task 5 · Comparing and Persuading · prepare 60 s, speak 60 s

1. Your choice in one line (10 s)

“I’d really go for the apartment near the river.”

2. Point 1, compared (20 s)

“Unlike the downtown one, it has a second bedroom for when my parents visit.”

3. Point 2, compared (20 s)

“And compared with downtown, the rent is lower, even with parking.”

4. Ask for agreement (10 s)

“So I think it’s the smarter choice. What do you say?”

Natural: "I'd really go for the apartment near the river, and here's why."

Avoid: "Both options are good but I will choose option A because it is the best option."

Phrases: Compared with... · On top of that... · The big advantage is... · Even if..., ... · I really think we should...

Task 6 · Dealing with a Difficult Situation · prepare 60 s, speak 60 s

1. Show you understand (10 s)

"Hi Sam, I know you've had a lot on your plate lately."

2. Explain the problem (15 s)

"The thing is, the report was late again, and the client noticed."

3. Offer a solution (25 s)

"What if we split the work into smaller deadlines and check in on Wednesdays?"

4. Keep the relationship (10 s)

"I really like working with you, so I want this to work for both of us."

Natural: "Hi Sam, I know you've had a lot on your plate lately, but can we talk about Friday?"

Avoid: "Dear colleague, I want to discuss with you a very serious problem."

Phrases: I hope you don't mind me saying... · The thing is... · Would you be open to...? · Maybe we could... · I'd hate for this to...

Task 7 · Expressing Opinions · prepare 30 s, speak 90 s

1. Your opinion, clearly (10 s)

"I think cities should make public transit free."

2. Reason 1, with an example (30 s)

"The main reason is cost. A monthly pass is a big expense for students and newcomers."

3. Reason 2, with an example (30 s)

"On top of that, fewer cars would mean less traffic downtown, especially at rush hour."

4. The other side, then close (20 s)

"Some people say taxes would go up, but on balance the benefits are bigger."

Natural: "I think cities should make public transit free, mainly because of cost."

Avoid: "This is a very interesting and important topic, and there are many different opinions about it."

Phrases: In my view... · The main reason is... · Take..., for example · Admittedly, ... · So on balance...

Task 8 · Describing an Unusual Situation · prepare 30 s, speak 60 s

1. What it is, overall (10 s)

“It’s a bicycle, but definitely not a normal one.”

2. Shape and size (20 s)

“It’s about as long as a small car, with three seats in a row.”

3. The unusual parts (20 s)

“The strange thing is the folding table in the middle, with cup holders.”

4. What it’s for (10 s)

“I guess it’s meant for families who want to picnic anywhere.”

Natural: “It’s a bicycle, but definitely not a normal one: it has a table in the middle.”

Avoid: “I am going to describe an unusual object which is very interesting.”

Phrases: It’s about the size of... · It’s shaped like... · On the side, there’s... · The odd thing is... · It reminds me of...