

# Speaking & Listening Assessments

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# Biography

*Rafael Sabio, an assistant professor and university supervisor at Yonsei University in South Korea, holds an M.S. Ed. in TESOL from Shenandoah University. He has been teaching EFL in South Korea for more than 4 years. Rafael has published in several different mediums including academic journals, international magazines, and national newspapers. He is also the author of **Teaching English Made Easy! 10 Listening Lesson Plans for the English Language Classroom**. Along with 4 of his colleagues, Rafael presented at the 2008 TESOL conference in New York on online TESOL education, communities of practice within a graduate online TESOL program, and qualities that exemplify a high-quality online graduate TESOL program. Rafael has also made several presentations on using authentic materials in classrooms in KOTESOL meetings throughout South Korea. Recently, Rafael presented on using online videos in the EFL classroom at the KOTESOL International Conference in South Korea. His main interests lie in online TESOL education and creating practical lesson plans. During his free time, Rafael enjoys weight lifting and spending time with his wife.*

# Imitative Speaking Assessment

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## What is imitative speaking?

Imitative speaking entails an English language learner (ELL) simply repeating what is being said. The only core focus in this task is pronunciation.

## Why is it important?

It helps English language instructors to assess students' pronunciation capabilities.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for imitative speaking?

Word Repetition – “Repeat after me”

- every (pause) everybody (pause)
- Why (pause) why not (pause)
- wonder (pause) wonderful (pause)
- Can you understand? (pause)
- Good morning everyone! (pause)
- Do you remember? (pause)

## Scoring criteria

- 3 – excellent pronunciation and phonemic awareness
- 2 – acceptable pronunciation
- 1 – intelligible speech, partially correct pronunciation
- 0 – unacceptable, silent, or seriously flawed pronunciation

## Miscellaneous Assessments

Method 1 – Students answer questions based on one to two word responses already given in the sentence.

Ex. How much is a movie ticket: 5 dollars or 10 dollars?

(students' response: “5 dollars” or “10 dollars”)

Method 2 – A sentence is broken up into 3 to 4 phrases (noun phrases, verb phrases, etc.). The student must then piece the sentence together.

Ex. is that/How much/toy car

(students' response: How much is that toy car?)



# Intensive Speaking Assessment

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## What is Intensive Speaking?

Intensive speaking requires ELLs to respond in short sentence productions. Minimal knowledge of the L2 language is required; semantics does play a role in this form of speaking. Intensive Speaking is meant to test students' working knowledge in very specific areas of grammar, phrasal verbs, and other parts of the English language. Interaction with an interlocutor is minimally required.

## Why is it important?

It helps English language instructors assess students' knowledge in specific areas of English.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for intensive speaking?

### Directed Responses

This form of assessment requires minimal production and thought on the part of students.

Ex.

- Tell me he went to work. (Response: He went to work).
- Tell me you don't like playing the piano (Response: I don't like playing the piano)
- Tell him what time it is. (Response: It is \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock)

### Read-aloud stimulus

This form of assessment tests students' ability in being fluent when reading. Careful attention is given to stress and intonation.

Ex.

*There are many things I would like to have for my birthday. First, I would like to have my friends over. They are so much fun! Second, I would like to have a birthday cake. I wonder if my mother will get me one? Third, I would want my family to be at my birthday party. I love them all. These are the things I would like to have for my birthday.*

## Scoring Criteria

- 3 – student read almost fluent recognizing intonation, stress, and proper pronunciation.
- 2 – student had minimal problems in recognizing intonation, stress, and proper pronunciation.
- 1 – student had a lot of difficulty in recognizing intonation, stress, and proper pronunciation.

## Dialogue Completion

This form of assessment measures students' ability to follow a spoken conversation. Test takers hear the sentence and are then expected to play the role of the message receiver.

Ex.

Going to the Doctor's office

Mother: Son, what's wrong?

Son: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: That's too bad. How bad does your stomach hurt?

Son: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: Really? Oh my! We need to take you to the doctor's office!

Son: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: No, it won't hurt. Just get dressed and let's go. You'll be just fine.

Son: \_\_\_\_\_

## Picture-Cued Assessment

This form of assessment entails an interviewer asking students what is in the picture or what is happening in the picture. Interviewees are then required to give a one sentence response using the picture as a visual aid.

Ex.



What is happening in the picture?

(Response: They are falling.)



What are these?

(Response: Those are colored pencils.)



# Responsive Speaking Assessment

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## What is Responsive Speaking?

Responsive speaking entails students actively participating in short discourse sessions. The beginning of responsive speaking always starts with a prompt in order to simulate real-world situations.

## Why is it important?

It helps English language instructors assess students' ability to engage in discussion with one or more interlocutors. More creativity on the students' part is required.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for responsive speaking?

### Question & Answer

This form of assessment requires one person, an interlocutor, to ask the student questions. Students' answers can be 1 sentence responses, or, can entail a more detailed answer depending upon the question asked.

Ex.

- How are you doing? (Response: I'm fine is not acceptable. Something with more substance is needed).
- What is your favorite day of the week and why? (Response: My favorite...Friday because it is the start of the weekend).
- What are the steps kids take in playing soccer? (Response: First....Second....Finally...)

### Eliciting Questions from Instructors

This type of assessment entails a student asking the teacher questions. Essentially, the student assumes control over the conversation.

Ex.

Student: Teacher, why do you like to teach?

Teacher: (Responds)

Student: Really teacher? Why do you like teaching more than driving?

Teacher: (Responds)

Student: Teacher, that is wonderful. I think teaching is the best career!

## **Giving instructions and directions and comparing objects using comparatives and superlatives**

This type of assessment requires students to be able to give directions given a particular situation. Topics should be relevant and of immediate interest to students.

Ex.

Students hear their instructor say:

- What are the rules of soccer?
- Compare a lion and a tiger. Which one is stronger and why?
- Tell me the height of your family members starting with the smallest person.

Students respond accordingly.

## **Paraphrasing**

This type of assessment requires students to listen to a 4 to 6 sentence paragraph. Upon finishing the paragraph, instructors prompt students to give a 1 to 2 sentence summary of what they just heard.

Ex.

Students hear:

*I love to eat all kinds of meat. One kind of meat I like to eat is beef. Beef is healthy and makes our muscles strong. I also like to eat chicken. Chicken is more delicious than beef and can be cooked many different ways. Finally, I like to eat ham. I think ham is the most delicious when you make a sandwich with it and cheese together. These are the kinds of meat I like.*

Instructor prompts students to paraphrase the above paragraph.

*Response: S/He likes to eat beef, chicken, and ham for different reasons, all of which are stated in detail in the paragraph.*



# Interactive Speaking Assessment

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## What is Interactive Speaking?

Interactive speaking is extremely similar to responsive speaking, however varying in that an interactive speaking session is much more involved, may include multiple interlocutors, and is commonly found in the English speaking world.

## Why is it important?

Interactive speaking assessments are important because they allow instructors to evaluate students' ability in producing fluid, detailed, and in-depth discussions with one or more interlocutors.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for interactive speaking?

### Interview

Interviews provide students with chances to use what they have learned in an authentic situation; they give students the chance to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Ex.

#### Small talk

- (The weather is hot today, don't you think?) e.g. Tag Question
- (Was it difficult finding this place?)

#### Level Check

- Wh-questions
- Telling a brief story (e.g. where you are from, your education, etc.)
- Give a presentation about their favorite \_\_\_\_\_

#### Closing

- Feelings about the interview

### Role Play

Role playing provides students with a chance to have fun with the English language. Moreover, it provides students with mock situations that mimic real-world situations.

Ex.

Student – Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_. Is \_\_\_\_\_ home?

Mother – Yes, wait one minute.

Student2 – Hi \_\_\_\_\_. Why are you here today?

Student – I want to know if you want to play outside with me?

Student2 – okay, let me ask my mom.

Mother – Yes \_\_\_\_\_, you can go outside and play.

Student2 – Thank you mom!

Student – okay, let's go!

## Games

Games are usually the easiest way to get students engaged in learning English. One type of interactive game assessment is information gap grids.

### Information Gap Grids

In this game, students interview each other, in English, to determine the answers to various questions.

Ex.

Going around the room and looking for answers.

Student Interviewer – Where is the ball?

Student Interviewee1 – The ball is outside.

Student Interviewer – What is your favorite color?

Student Interviewee2 – My favorite color is blue.

### Presenting the information to the instructor

Student Interviewer – I asked \_\_\_\_\_ where the ball was. He said it was outside. I asked \_\_\_\_\_ what her favorite color was. She said it was \_\_\_\_\_.



# Extensive Speaking Assessment

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## What is Extensive Speaking?

Extensive speaking is the most difficult form of speaking; it involves presentations being made, speeches being given, basically, long monologues. Input from the listeners is rarely given.

## Why is it important?

Extensive speaking is extremely important; students are left by themselves to produce clear and intelligible speech. There usually is some type of audience present; there is no dialogue between presenter and audience members. Only the person presenting speaks during this time.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for extensive speaking?

### Oral Presentations

Oral presentations give students a chance to use what they have learned in English class by culminating everything into one strong and concise presentation.

Ex.

The student prepares a presentation on why it is important to be on time to school. The student starts by introducing themselves to the class. He then segues into his content. Finally the student ends the presentation by asking the audience if they have any questions.

Example miniature presentation:

*Good afternoon everyone. My name is Ralph Sabio and I am presenting on why it is important to be on time to school. Being tardy is one reason I think it is important to be on time to school. Often times, teachers take off points if students are late to class. Therefore, students should not be late if they want a high grade in class.*

*Another reason why you should be on time to school is because you want to have some time to speak to your friends. During class, it is difficult to speak to your friends as there is a lot of information that you have to learn in order to graduate. Coming to school on time or early gives you the chance to socialize with your friends.*

*Finally, you should be on time to school because that is what your teacher wants you to do. Teachers like to start class on time and when they do, they do not like to be interrupted by students coming in late. These are the reasons why being on time to school is important.*

*Are there any questions? (Student then answers the questions. If not questions...) Thank you.*

## Picture-Cued Story-Telling

The purpose of picture-cued story telling is to provide students with examples of how chronology is used in discussions. Also, it is used to illustrate situations.

Ex.

Once upon a time, there was a  that didn't like . So

one day, the bear decided to move to another . She took her

 and moved to the new mountain. The End.

## Retelling a story

In this form of extensive speaking assessment, students re-tell a story they heard. The story can be modified from its original form.

Ex.

### *Original Story*

*Thank you Jane. This weekend, there were many people trying to get out of Seoul for Chusok. The traffic was terrible and it took everyone an extra 3 hours to get to where they were going...*

### *Modified Story*

*Daniel, thank you. Hello everyone! This weekend was crazy. It was Chusok and everyone was trying to quickly leave Seoul. Unfortunately, there were too many people and it took a really long time for them to get out. As a matter of fact...*



# Intensive Listening Assessment

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## What is Intensive Listening?

Intensive listening entails students listening for the components (phonemes, words, intonation, discourse markers, etc.) of a large stretch of language.

## Why is it important?

Intensive listening helps students understand the nuances of the English language. Further, it develops their ability to infer.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for intensive listening?

### Recognizing Phonological and Morphological Elements

This form of listening assessment assesses students' ability to correctly identify different phonemes and morphemes commonly found in the English language.

Ex.

#### Phonemic Pair, consonants

- Students hear: (He's from South Korea. She's from South Korea.)
- Students hear: (We are from the U.S.A. We're from the USA.)
- Students hear: (Come here. Come there.)
- Students hear: (He is walking. He is working.)

#### Phonemic Pair, vowels

- Students hear: (Is he living? Is he leaving?)
- Students hear: (Is he staring? Is he steering?)
- Students hear: (sitting. Setting.)

#### Morphological Pair, -ed ending

- Students hear: (I love you very much; I loved you very much)
- Students hear: (We miss you; We missed you)
- Students hear: (We walk to school; We walked to school)

#### One word stimulus

- Students hear: (read, lead)
- Students hear: (bad, mad)
- Students hear: (pass, past)

## **Paraphrase Recognition**

This type of assessment focuses on students' ability to paraphrase the short sentences they hear.

Ex.

- Students hear: He can't play baseball because his head hurts and he has a running nose.
- Students paraphrase: He can't play because he is sick.
- Students hear: Baseball is fun because you get to run. Basketball is fun because you can shoot the ball. Soccer is fun because you can run around.
- Students paraphrase: He likes sports.

## **What is Responsive Listening?**

Responsive listening entails students listening to a relatively short conversation in order to produce a same short response.

### **Why is it important?**

Responsive listening allows students to function in a normal everyday English environment. Moreover, it provides students with tools that will get them through functional tasks such as asking for directions, finding out how much something is, etc.

### **What are some forms of assessments I can use for responsive listening?**

#### **Appropriate Response to a question**

This type of assessment focuses on the students' ability to understand what is being said by responding to a question that has been asked.

Ex.

- Students hear: (Can you help me, please?)
- Students respond or choose from 4 choices, the correct one must be verbally given: (yes, I can.)
- Students hear: (What time is it?)
- Students respond: (It is time for me to go home.)

#### **Open-ended Response**

This type of assessment requires students to answer by using vocabulary stored in their lexicon.

Ex.

- Students hear: (How is the weather?) (Students respond: It's cloudy.)



# Selective Listening Assessment

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## What is Selective Listening?

Selective listening requires students to listen to a short monologue from which certain information is taken (e.g. how to do something, what to do on a test, etc.). This information is usually embedded within the monologue.

## Why is it important?

Selective listening provides students with the ability to filter out irrelevant information and retain that which is most important.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for selective listening?

### Listening Cloze

This form of listening assessment assesses students' ability to identify key vocabulary from within a brief monologue.

Ex.

Students hear a dialogue and input the missing key words:

Minsu: What time is it, mom?

Minsu's mom: It is \_\_\_\_\_.

Minsu: What \_\_\_\_\_ is it?

Minsu's mom: It's eight.

Minsu's mom: Oh, no. It's \_\_\_\_\_.

Minsu: Nine. \_\_\_\_\_?

Minsu: Oh \_\_\_\_\_! I am late!

### Information Transfer

This type of assessment forces students to listen carefully to details while writing them down into a chart; it creates an authentic environment from which students can learn English practically.

Ex.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8am	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up
9am					
10am					



# Extensive Listening Assessment

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## What is Extensive Listening?

Extensive listening helps students obtain a global understanding of what is being said. Examples of extensive listening include lengthy lectures and long conversations that require listeners to derive meanings from the messages being conveyed.

## Why is it important?

Extensive listening is a component of an advanced listeners' language repertoire. Without the skills found in extensive listening, students cannot participate in lengthy native English conversations as there will be too many nuances, new vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions that the ELL will not understand.

## What are some forms of assessments I can use for extensive listening?

### Dictation

This form of listening assessment assesses students' ability to identify phonemic differences within a normal conversation.

Ex.

Students are writing while the instructor reads a passage.

First read at normal speed (students only listen) *I can skate. I can ski. Can you swim? Yes, I can. Help! Help! Wait! I'm coming.*

Second read with designated pauses (students write): (*I can/skate. I can/ski. Can you swim? Yes./I can. Help! Help! Wait! I'm coming.*)

Third read at normal speed (students check their work): *I can skate. I can ski. Can you swim? Yes, I can. Help! Help! Wait! I'm coming.*

### Dialogue & multiple-choice comprehension questions

This form of assessment tests students' ability to gather the information they just listened to and apply it in answering questions.

Ex.

(Students hear) *Okay students, it is time to go outside. Please put on your mittens or gloves and your sweaters. You do not want to be cold as we will be outside for some time. Does anyone have any questions? Alright, let's go!*

1. What is the weather like outside?
  - a. hot
  - b. rainy
  - c. cold
  - d. cloudy
  
2. Which of these items were not mentioned in the story?
  - a. mittens
  - b. boots
  - c. gloves
  - d. sweaters

### **Authentic Listening Tasks**

This type of extensive listening assessment requires students to be able to take notes while listening to a lecture.

Ex.

(Students hear a lecture on the importance of wearing warm clothes during the winter time.)  
*It is very important to wear warm clothing and articles such as sweaters, mittens, and gloves. These things prevent people from getting too cold when spending a lot of time outside.*

(Students write:) Wearing warm things are important. They help you keep warm.



# When do I use what?



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## Question: When do I use a multiple choice format?

Answer: Teachers should use a multiple choice format when discrete-testing, in other words, when testing a specific English point.

Ex.

What is the girls name?

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| A. movie theater | C. running home |
| B. restaurant    | D. Sarah        |

---

## Question: When do I use a fill-in-the-blank format?

Answer: Fill-in-the-blank formats force students to understand the vocabulary or grammar point that is being tested. This style of test is widely used by instructors wanting to test vocabulary.

Ex.

Okay, now \_\_\_\_\_ your turn.

- |         |            |
|---------|------------|
| A. its  | c. running |
| B. it's | d. run     |

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## Question: When do I use matching assessments?

Answer: Although the simplest form of assessment, it is one of the least useful. Matching exams demonstrate students' ability to memorize concepts rather than measuring students' ability to retain information in their long term memory.

Ex.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 1. listen  | a. someone that helps you when you are sick |
| 2. repeat  | b. to hear someone speak                    |
| 3. weather | c. to say again                             |
| 4. picture | d. a brief moment in time, frozen on paper  |
| 5. doctor  | e. raining, sunny, freezing                 |
- 

**Question: When do I use fill-in-the-paragraph assessments?**

Answer: This form of assessment is much like the fill-in-the-blank assessment in that it measure students' ability to understand what has been taught. However, this form of assessment can be taken further to include the understanding of multiple concepts rather than single concepts.

Ex.

*Hello everyone. Please \_\_\_\_\_ your books to page 7. Now, listen carefully and \_\_\_\_\_ what I say. Please point \_\_\_\_\_ the apple. Now, point \_\_\_\_\_ the orange. Great, now, please point to \_\_\_\_\_ pear. Very good.*

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**Question: When do I use picture assessments?**

Answer: Picture assessments are wonderful for lower level English language learners because they are fun and they provide a means by which vocabulary acquisition can be determined.

Ex.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Question: When do I use a hybrid format?**

Answer: Hybrid formats should be utilized when assessing several different aspects of the English language. A mixture of the aforementioned assessments and formats will yield a more detailed picture of students' abilities.

Ex. (Mix from above)



## Closing

This booklet of assessments is just the tip of the ice-berg. Many of you have used several, if not all, of the aforementioned assessments in your classes, you may have not known the technical terms. The taxonomy of assessments in this booklet is not meant to isolate each as the only possibility for determining whether or not your lesson objectives were meant. Rather, it is to introduce you to the various forms of assessments and hopefully bring light to the fact that many overlap each other while some can be combined. Ultimately, the best assessment to use will be determined by the instructor's objectives of the course. It has been a pleasure to have presented various assessments to you. I thank you for your patience, attentiveness, and willingness to help your students learn English.

Sincerely,

Rafael Sabio M.S. Ed.