

Collaborative Task: School & University

At a glance

Level: ISE II

Focus: Collaborative task

Aims: To understand the requirements of the Collaborative task, to practise asking questions and commenting on the examiner's responses, to practise speculating about a situation and to practise highlighting advantages and disadvantages

Objectives: To make students aware of what is expected during the Collaborative task and for students to role-play the Collaborative task twice as both the examiner and the candidate

Topic: School/university

Language functions: Giving advice and highlighting advantages and disadvantages, expressing possibility and uncertainty, eliciting further information and expansion of ideas and opinions, expressing agreement and disagreement and speculating

Grammar: Second and third conditionals, simple passive, modals and phrases used to express possibility and uncertainty, discourse connectors, linking expressions and cohesive devices

Lexis: Leaving school, leaving home and school curriculum

Materials needed: Whiteboard and paper and pens, copies of Prompt A for half the class and copies of Prompt B for the other half

Timing: 90 minutes

Procedure

Preparation

Copy Prompt A for half the class and Prompt B for the other half.

In class

1. Tell students they are going to practise the Collaborative task for the ISE II Speaking & Listening exam. Tell them they will begin by discussing the school-leaving age. Elicit the school-leaving age in your country. Ask students to discuss in pairs, for two minutes,

whether they think it is the right age. Ask a few students to share their opinions with the class.

2. Remind the students that in the Collaborative task of the ISE II Speaking & Listening exam, the examiner will provide a prompt and the candidate must ask questions to find out more information and comment on the examiner's responses.

3. Dictate the following prompt to the students:

In England, you have to stay in some form of education or training until you turn 18. I wonder if this is the right age.

4. Tell students that they should begin the Collaborative task by asking a question. Ask each student to write a question they could ask the examiner following this prompt. Once they have done this, ask each student to compare what they have written with a partner. Elicit some examples from the class and write them on the board. Some appropriate questions are:

- *Do you think this is too old or too young?*
- *Why aren't you sure if it is the right age?*
- *What do you think is the right age?*

5. Dictate the examiner's response for students to write down:

I think that some people are ready to leave school when they are younger. For example, my niece is 16 and she wants to leave school to start working in the family business.

6. In pairs, give students 15 minutes to list the possible advantages and disadvantages of this decision.
7. Draw two columns on the board; one for advantages and one for disadvantages.

Advantages	Disadvantages

Ask each pair to give you one suggestion for each column, and write them on the board. Some example ideas are:

Advantages:

She will get real work experience

She will gain practical skills

She will start to earn money

Disadvantages

She won't have any qualifications

Her knowledge will be specific to one area

If she is working in the family business, she might miss out on the social life that school/ university offers

8. Tell the students that they are going to perform the Collaborative task in pairs. One is the examiner and the other is the candidate. Remind them that the candidate should try to find out the examiner's opinions, **not just state their own**. Give students four minutes to perform the task. Then, change the partners so that each examiner has a new candidate. Ask the students to swap roles and then repeat the task.
9. Give feedback on students' performance. Comment on things they did well, as well as what they could improve. Focus on patterns of interaction rather than grammatical accuracy.
10. Split the class in half. Give out prompt A to half of the class, and prompt B to the other half (see below for prompts and example answers). Give students 15 minutes to write down the answers to the questions relating to their prompt in pairs.
11. The students with prompt A find a partner with prompt B. A is the examiner, B is the candidate. Student A reads out their prompt, but does not show student B their notes. Give them four minutes to role-play the task.
12. Repeat, with student B as the examiner using their own prompt.
13. Give feedback on students' performance. Comment on things they did well, as well as what they could improve. Again, focus on patterns of interaction rather than grammatical accuracy. If students were struggling for ideas, go over the example answers below and ask students to perform the tasks again with a new partner.

Extension activity

Students that complete stage 5 or 10 more quickly can be encouraged to think about other questions that the candidate might ask and responses that the examiner might give related to the prompt. You can ask the students to share these with the class at the end of the lesson.

Further support activity

Students that struggle with role-playing the tasks can be asked to script them first.

After class

For homework, students can choose one of the three tasks and write a script for the "ideal" collaborative task.

Prompt A

In some countries, Survival Skills are a mandatory part of the curriculum. I'm not sure if this is a good use of students' time.

What might Survival Skills include?

What are the advantages?

What are the disadvantages?

Prompt B

My cousin has just started university, and has been offered a free course on how to live independently. I think he should take it, but he isn't interested.

What might the course cover?

Why should he take it?

Why might he not be interested?

Example Answers

Prompt A: In some countries, Survival Skills are a mandatory part of the curriculum. I'm not sure if this is a good use of students' time.

What might Survival Skills include?

Techniques someone might use in a dangerous situation, for example:

- *Finding food and water*
- *Keeping warm*
- *Creating shelter*
- *Signalling for help*
- *Treating illness and injury*

What are the advantages?

- *Increased confidence to face everyday situations*
- *Ability to save own or others' lives*
- *Opportunity for less academic students to do well*

What are the disadvantages?

- *Skills may be quickly forgotten*
- *A waste of time if skills are never put into practice*
- *May encourage young people to put themselves into dangerous situations*

Prompt B: My cousin has just started university, and has been offered a free course on how to live independently. I think he should take it, but he isn't interested.

What might the course cover?

- *Housework such as cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing*
- *Personal hygiene*
- *Routine and time-management*
- *Managing finances*
- *How to deal with home-sickness*

Why should he take it?

- *Many people do not know how to look after themselves when they leave home*
- *Students might become ill if they don't look after themselves properly*
- *He will do better in his studies if he is happy and healthy*

Why might he not be interested?

- *It might distract him from his actual studies*
- *He might want more time for socialising*
- *He might be embarrassed to admit he does not have basic skills*