

## Prepare for exam success: B1 Preliminary for Schools self-access learning

### Speaking

#### Summary

- Practise describing pictures of rooms in the home – useful for Speaking Part 2 in the B1 Preliminary for Schools exam.
- Create your own practice tasks to help build you confidence in speaking.
- Review common mistakes.
- Reflect on your progress and create an action plan for further study.

#### Getting started

##### **Top tip! Find a study partner**

Make your speaking practice more real by working with a friend who is also learning English.

- If you are studying at home, you can do this on a video chat or conferencing platform e.g. Zoom, Skype, FaceTime or WeChat.
- Take turns in the roles of Student A and Student B.
- Share pictures and create your own practice tasks.
- Share your recordings from this lesson plan with each other.

Review vocabulary for things in the home by playing a ‘guess the word’ game.

##### How to play

1. Arrange a time to meet and talk to your partner online.
2. Before you meet your partner, choose a room in the home e.g. the kitchen.



3. In your notebook write a list of 10 things (not food) you usually find in this room. Don't show your partner the list. Example: a cooker, a knife, a fork, a spoon, a plate, a fridge, a sink, a table, a saucepan, a chair.

4. Set a timer for 2 minutes. Your partner has to try and guess as many of the words on your list as they can.

5. Now choose another room in the home. This time your partner will write a list of words for you to guess.

**Working alone?** Make a list of all the rooms in your home. Try to list 5 things you can find in each room. Ask a family member to guess which words you have on your list. When they guess correctly, tell them the word in English.

### Exam Tip! Describing pictures

In the B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking paper Part 2, the examiner gives you a picture and asks you to describe it for one minute.

You should describe the people, places and activities in the photographs in detail. Imagine you are describing the photograph to someone who can't see it. The people in the picture might be at home, at work or outside, so it can be useful to look for pictures to practise describing people in different situations.

### Practice 1

In this lesson you are going to practise describing rooms in the home. First, find out how well you can do this now.

1. Find pictures to practise with: Go to an image website such as Google images or Unsplash.com.
2. Type a room in the search field to view different pictures.

Q living room

3. Choose a picture with a lot of detail; this makes it easier to find something to say.
4. Try to use different adjectives to describe your picture e.g. The room is very *modern*.
5. Use your phone to record yourself describing the picture. Try to speak for one minute.

### Reflect 1

Think about how well you described the picture. Look at statements a) to d) in the table below. Give yourself a score from 1 to 5 (5 = I did this very well and 1 = I didn't do this)

	1	2	3	4	5
a) I spoke for a minute or more.					
b) I knew the words in English for the things in the picture.					
c) I used a variety of adjectives to describe the picture.					
d) I spoke confidently without pausing.					

<sup>1</sup> Photo by **Dinh Ng.** on **Unsplash**

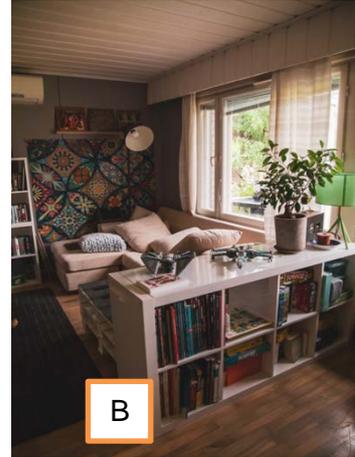
### Focus on useful language

You are going to read descriptions of pictures A and B.

Task 1: Before you read, look at the pictures <sup>2</sup> and make a list in your notebook of the vocabulary you think you will find in the descriptions.



A



B

Task 2: Match pictures A and B to the descriptions. How many of the words you wrote in Task 1 are in the text?

1. This looks like someone's living room. The curtains are open and there's light coming in from a big window. The room looks quite tidy. It has a comfortable sofa with lots of cushions and there are two bookshelves, one at the back of the room next to the sofa and a wider one at the front of the room. The one at the front of the picture has a lot of books and games on the shelves. On top of this bookshelf, there's a small plant, a green lamp and two model spaceships from Star Wars. There's a large, colourful picture behind the sofa. The floor is made of wood but there's a rug and it looks very cosy.

2. This living room has a mix of old and new styles but it looks very fashionable. The furniture is quite traditional. The sofa and tables look like antiques but there are modern pictures. The walls are made of brick and the floor is grey. Maybe it's made of concrete. There's a plant in the corner of the room and a beautiful lamp on the table between the plant and the sofa. I think the woman in the picture is working from home because she's typing something on a laptop. She's wearing jeans and a long white cardigan.

#### Tip! Use a dictionary to find out more than the meaning of new words.

Listen and repeat the pronunciation.

Note the syllables and stress:  
  
 furniture

**furniture**

noun [U]

US UK /fɜːnɪtʃə/

Write down the part of speech. The dictionary tells you if a noun is uncountable or if the plural is irregular. 'Furniture' is an uncountable noun [U]. This means it isn't correct to say 'a furniture' or 'furnitures.'

A2

objects such as chairs, tables, and beds that you put into a room or building:

• antique furniture

• *The only piece of furniture in their living room is a sofa.*

The example sentence gives useful information. Note: you can count furniture by using 'piece of' e.g. a piece of furniture, 3 pieces of furniture...

<sup>2</sup> Brooke Cagle, Nick Brookenheimer on Unsplash

<sup>3</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

### Top Tip! Recording vocabulary in your notebook

You can use new vocabulary from your speaking practice in the writing part of the exam too, so it is important to include enough information when you record new words in your notebook. Try making a table like this for each word that could be useful in your speaking or writing:

<b>furniture<sup>4</sup></b>	
<b>Meaning</b>	Definition: objects such as chairs, tables and beds that you put in a room or building
<b>Form</b>	 Stress: furniture. Noun – uncountable
<b>Use</b>	You can say 'an item or items of furniture' – furnitures is wrong! My sentences: In my bedroom there are three pieces of furniture: a bed, a wardrobe and a chest of drawers. We usually buy furniture in Ikea.

Task 3: Look up any new words in the descriptions in Task 2 in the **Cambridge Dictionary** online and record them in your notebook in a table like the one above.

- Include information about the meaning, form and use.
- Listen and repeat the pronunciation.
- Record your pronunciation and compare it with the dictionary pronunciation.
- Write a sentence for each word in your notebook. Practise saying the word in a sentence.

Task 4: These sentences contain common mistakes. Can you find and correct the mistakes? If you are not sure how to correct the sentences, look back at the texts in Task 2.

1. There has a plant in the corner of the room.
2. The floor is made by wood.
3. She types something on a laptop.
4. The sofas and tables are looking like antiques.
5. The furnitures are quite traditional.
6. On top of the bookshelf, there's small plant.

Check your answers in the Answer Key.



Take a short break if you need one.

<sup>4</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

### Practice 2

Task 1: Build your confidence step-by-step.

1. Choose one of the pictures from Focus on Useful Language: Task 1.
2. Don't look at the text again but take a minute to think about some of the vocabulary and grammar you read in the text that you could use to describe the picture.
3. Describe the picture for a minute. Use your phone to record yourself.
4. Listen to your recording and tick the vocabulary and grammar you used:
  - Adjectives to describe shape, size, colour and appearance
  - It's made of...
  - There's/There are...
  - It has...
  - It looks + adjective
  - If you chose Picture A, did you use Present Continuous to describe what the woman is doing/wearing?

Task 2: When you feel more confident, practise with a study partner who is also learning English. A good way to check that another person can understand your description is to play *Describe and Draw*.

#### How to play

1. Choose another photo to describe.
2. Arrange a time to meet and talk to your partner online.
3. Describe the picture to your partner in as much detail as you can but don't show it to them. Your partner should try to draw the picture from your description.
4. Finally, compare your partner's drawing with the photo.

### Reflect 2

Look back at the notes you made in Reflect 1. Complete the table again. How have your answers changed?

	1	2	3	4	5
a) I spoke for a minute or more.					
b) I knew the words in English for the things in the picture.					
c) I used a variety of adjectives to describe the picture.					
d) I spoke confidently without pausing.					

### Action Plan

Look at your answers from the Reflect section and the ideas in the Ideas for Further Study box below to help you to make an Action Plan.

1. Copy this table in your notebook.

I need to work on...	I will...	By [date]
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Building vocabulary</p>	<p>Start word lists for these common topics: my home, my neighbourhood, my school. Use <b>Cambridge Dictionary +Plus</b> to create and save my word lists.</p>	<p>By the end of this week.</p>

2. Now look at the list of study ideas below and **choose at least 2** that would help you improve your speaking skills and vocabulary. Add them to your Action Plan.

#### Ideas for Further Study

- Do this **exercise** for further practice in describing what you see.
- Download the B1 Preliminary for Schools Exam Lift App **here** to find useful games to build vocabulary and improve your pronunciation.
- Download a B1 Preliminary for Schools sample paper **here** and record yourself doing a Speaking task. If you are working with a study partner, you can take turns to be the examiner.
- Watch a video of two students doing the B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test **here**. Pause the recording when they have to describe their pictures. For picture 1, stop the video at 2.25. For picture 2, stop the video at 3.46 Try to describe the pictures yourself first before you listen to their answers.
- Write the descriptions for the pictures you found in your notebook. After you have written your description, close your notebook. Try describing the picture aloud.

### Answer key

Focus on Useful Language

Task 2: 1 B, 2 A

Task 4:

1. There has a plant in the corner of the room.

*Correction: There **is** (or There's) a plant in the corner of the room.*

2. The floor is made by wood.

*Correction: The floor is made **of** wood.*

3. She types something on a laptop.

*Correction: She **is (or She's) typing** something on a laptop. (Use present continuous to describe what people are doing in a picture)*

4. The sofas and tables are looking like antiques.

*Correction: The sofas and tables **look like** antiques. (Use present simple to describe how objects look)*

5. The furnitures are quite traditional.

*Correction: The furniture **is** quite traditional. (Remember 'furniture' is an uncountable noun)*

6. On top of the bookshelf, there's small plant.

*Correction: On top of the bookshelf there's **a** small plant.*