

B2 English

THE BUILDING BLOCKS GUIDE

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The Building Blocks Guide
Your speaking exam foundation

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1: INTRODUCTION

The **Building Blocks Guide** should be used as a **reference** to support your speaking exam preparation.

This guide helps save time and money by focusing your exam preparation on developing **sentences and phrases** which directly demonstrate the **exam assessment criteria** –i.e. sentences which are **exam-ready**.

Take care of your brain - use the same structures and language points for your writing and mediation exam tasks!

This guide gives you:

1. **Example monologues and dialogues** from past EOI exams in different regions. *No mediation tasks are included, as they vary too much between regions.*
2. A practical bank of **exam-ready sentences** that actively demonstrate **key grammatical structures**.
3. A practical bank of **exam-ready sentences** that actively demonstrate **key language functions** to:
 - a) Give Advice
 - b) Make Recommendations & Suggestions
 - c) Speculate and Express Certainty Possibility and Probability
 - d) Express Prohibition, Obligation and Necessity
 - e) Express General Truths
 - f) Describe Trends & Changes
4. Advice on how to improve **richness and range**:
 - a. **Expressing general opinions and statements** - a list of exam-ready sentences
 - b. **Expressing personal thoughts and opinions**- a list of exam-ready sentences
 - c. **Evaluating opinions and balancing ideas** - a list of exam-ready sentences
 - d. **Summarising points and ideas** - a list of exam-ready sentences
 - e. **Using varied vocabulary, expressions and idioms** – a targeted reference list
5. Advice on how to ensure **coherence & organisation**:
 - a) Using **connectors and linking phrases** to:
 - Add, contrast and refer to points
 - Express reasons and causes
 - Indicate results or consequences
 - Explain purpose
 - Order information and summarise
 - b) Using effective **organisational phrases and adverbial linkers** to:
 - Emphasise key points
 - Ensure logical progression
 - Express attitude and viewpoint



NOMBRE		MATERIAL		PROVICIÓN DE TEXTOS ORALES	
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10

EOI ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The monologues

Remember: rules for **monologue content** and **time limits** for planning and delivery **vary by region**. Know the specifics for your exam and practise under those conditions.

TYPES OF HOLIDAYS

You are going to talk about different kinds of holidays. Express your ideas and use arguments to justify your opinion. Use the questions given to guide you, **but you do not need to answer them directly:**

1. Compare and contrast different kinds of holidays. Why do holiday-makers prefer one type of holiday over another?
2. What kind of holiday do you prefer? Why?
3. Talk about a memorable holiday. Why was it special?

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

You are going to talk about different kinds of crime. Express your ideas and use arguments to justify your opinion. Use the questions given to guide you, **but you do not need to answer them directly:**

1. Describe some types of crimes that you consider very serious as opposed to other crimes that are less serious.
2. What do you think would be the appropriate punishment for different types of crimes depending on their severity?
3. What are the most common crimes in the area where you live?

READING

You are going to talk about reading. Express your ideas and use arguments to justify your opinion. Use the questions given to guide you, **but you do not need to answer them directly:**

1. Are paper books ever going to disappear?
2. Do you think young people are interested in reading? What genres do they enjoy and/or hate?
3. How could reading be promoted at townhalls, local libraries and schools?

2: GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

MINIMUM GRAMMATICAL RANGE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents: Simple Continuous Verb Patterns: ing, inf, B-inf Gerund as the subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passives: Basic Adverb + Reporting Verb Modal + Passive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasts: Simple Continuous Perfect Used to Verb Patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inversions: (High B2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Futures: Prediction Facts Perfects Verb Patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perfect participle clauses (High B2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditionals: C0 C1 C2 C3 Mixed Set Phrases: Even if 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: Direct Indirect Tag Negative Rhetorical

	MINIMUM GRAMMATICAL RANGE
Present Tenses <i>Simple</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social networks have many benefits. <i>In fact</i>, many people consider them to be <i>the best way</i> to meet new people, find work and follow <i>the latest trends</i>. 2. <i>Special diets</i> are in fashion nowadays, <i>but</i> it is not unusual to wonder whether they are <i>truly beneficial</i> for our health. 3. <i>Generally speaking</i>, nowadays, more people are involved in environmental activism. 4. <i>It is common knowledge</i> that <i>most young people</i> spend their free time on social networking sites. 5. Friendships have a huge impact on our <i>happiness</i> and our <i>mental health</i>. 6. It's a sad fact of <i>modern life</i> that people are more interested in digital <i>gadgets</i> and social media than they are in <i>environmental</i> issues. 7. It's a well-known fact that global warming is one of the most serious world problems. 8. It's a well-known fact that <i>crime rates</i> tend to increase in areas with <i>high unemployment</i>. 9. <i>Nowadays</i>, fewer people read printed books than e-books. 10. <i>Nowadays</i>, fewer people visit libraries than in the past. 11. Recycling, using energy-efficient appliances and reducing waste <i>are by far the easiest measures</i> that the general public could adopt to slow down environmental damage. 12. Most people would agree that online shopping <i>is more popular than</i> traditional shopping nowadays. 13. Most people would agree that spending time with friends is important <i>for maintaining good mental health</i>.
<i>Present Continuous</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. <i>Thankfully</i>, the Spanish government is taking the issue of <i>sustainable energy</i> much more seriously now than in the past. 15. <i>A great number of people</i> are giving up sugar <i>as a way to</i> get healthier. 16. Doing regular exercise, eating balanced meals, and getting enough sleep are by far the easiest measures that people can take to improve their health.
<i>Gerund as the subject</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Listening to <i>classical</i> music helps children to focus on their homework. 18. Having friends improves our mental health and happiness. 19. Going on <i>cultural holidays</i> <i>is the best way to chill out</i> and learn new things at the same time.

6: ENSURE COHERENCE & ORGANISATION

CONNECTORS FORMAL & INFORMAL

You must use connectors in your exam. They help develop points, organise ideas, and add structure and coherence, making it easier for the listener to follow and stay engaged. **Using a variety of connectors** correctly in exams will give you more points.

1. **F** = generally considered to be formal
2. **B INF** = the bare infinitive, or the infinitive without TO
3. **ING** = the gerund

ADDING INFORMATION	CONTRASTING INFORMATION	GIVING A REASON	RESULT / CONSEQUENCE	ORDERING / SUMMARISING	PURPOSE
And	But	Because	So	Firstly, secondly,	In order to + B INF
Also	While	Since	Therefore	Finally	So as to + B INF
As well as	Although	As	As a result	All in all, I think	For the purpose of ING / Noun F
Besides	However	This is why	Consequently F	In a nutshell,	ING / Noun F
What is more	On the one hand,... However, on the other hand,...	Due to + Noun F	As a consequence F	To sum up	With the intention of ING / Noun F
Apart from that	In contrast F	Due to the fact that F	Hence F	In short/brief	So that
Another thing	Even though F	Owing to F	Thus F	To summarise F	
In addition	Whereas F	For this reason F	On account of this F	In summary F	REFERRING
Furthermore F	Despite the fact that		X has led to	To conclude F	With regard to
Moreover F	Despite + ING / Noun F			In conclusion F	Regarding
Additionally F	In spite of + ING / Noun F			In the end	Concerning
	In theory... but in practice...			Taking everything into consideration	Speaking about
	Nevertheless F				As for
	On the contrary F				
	In comparison F				
	In contrast F				