

## OET Speaking Meeting the assessment criteria: *Intelligibility*



- ✓ Practice speaking clearly
- ✓ Focus on sounds that are difficult for you
- ✓ Copy intonation and rhythm
- ✓ Record, review and repeat

### What do the descriptors mean?

Band	Intelligibility
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation is easily understood and prosodic features (stress, intonation, rhythm) are used effectively.</li> <li>• L1 accent has no effect on intelligibility.</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily understood.</li> <li>• Communication is not impeded by a few pronunciation or prosodic errors and/or noticeable L1 accent.</li> <li>• Minimal strain for the listener.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily understood most of the time.</li> <li>• Pronunciation or prosodic errors and/or L1 accent at times cause strain for the listener.</li> </ul>

- ✓ Pronunciation is easily understood
- ✓ Stress, rhythm and intonation are used effectively
- ✓ Native accent has no negative effect on the listener

source: <https://prod-wp-content.occupationalenglishtest.org/resources/uploads/2018/08/22/102547/speaking-assessment-criteria-updated-2018.pdf>

### How to improve in this area

Pronounce words very clearly - especially vowel sounds, consonants and correct word stress

carefully

right

uncomfortable

dialysis

womb

sciatica

Pitch and project your voice well – no mumbling, slurring speech or fading out at the end of your sentences

Use stress and intonation to emphasise meaning

It's **REALLY** important that you remember to take the medication **AFTER** eating, is that alright?





## Clear pronunciation

Keep an organised vocabulary notebook of difficult medical terms with pronunciation in a system that works for you phonetically

Use online dictionaries with sound files to repeat and practise making the sounds.

Ask people to correct your pronunciation while at work or socially e.g. colleagues, patients, friends in healthcare..

Make a list of sounds that you find difficult to pronounce and then focus on these words in your practice time.

lice    rice

ship    sheep

## Voice projection and pitch

Practise recording yourself on your phone and play back to see if your voice is loud enough and clear

Listen to the range of pitch in sentences by watching online videos of consultations and copy the way the doctor or nurse speaks

Use voice recordings of yourself to check that you not mumbling your sentences or slurring your speech.



Copy   Record   Compare   Repeat

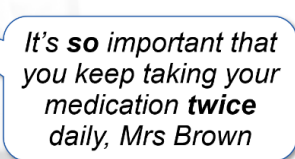
## Intonation and word stress

Practise using rising intonation at the end of your questions expecting Yes/No answers e.g. “ Would you be able to manage that?” “Is that ok?”

Practise your use of stress to draw attention to the important part of your advice to a patient

Listen to intonation by watching videos of medical consultations, noting how it varies to help understanding

Listen and note how medical professionals use a softer tone of voice when expressing empathy, and a firmer tone when stressing to a reluctant patient that they should do something





## Sentence rhythm and accent

Listen to the natural rhythm of native English speakers by watching medical video clips, podcasts and try to imitate the rhythm in your speech

Check that your accent is intelligible by asking an English teacher, colleague or friend to give you feedback.