Welcome to Cambridge English: Let’s Speak!
Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! is a project for English teachers at secondary schools who are ready for a new challenge. Speaking skills are a vital element of language learning and development, but traditionally, in many classrooms, they have been in the background. Taking part in Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! is a chance to deepen your understanding of communicative speaking skills, to gain fresh ideas to develop these skills in your students, and to be introduced to a constructive framework for assessing students’ performance.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)
The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) has played an increasingly significant role for language learning and teaching since it became established in the 1990s. Its development was – and still is - led by the Council of Europe. The CEFR does more than simply describe learner levels. It provides a framework which underpins a communicative approach to language learning, now a central requirement of modern language teaching programmes. The approach is based on the concept of communicative proficiency - the increasing ability of a learner to communicate and collaborate effectively in the target language. The CEFR, with its wealth of descriptive statements, offers a vision of a learner’s increasing ability to function in a real-world language environment\(^1\). You are probably already familiar with the names of the CEFR levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. But we can only use these labels with confidence if we know what lies behind them, if we have an awareness of what speakers at these levels can do.

The Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! teacher seminars
As a participant in Cambridge English: Let’s Speak!, you will attend two face-to-face seminars, in autumn 2016 and early 2017. The seminars will be, on the one hand, an aid to understanding Speaking skill in relation to the CEFR. They will help you to start thinking in the framework’s “can-do” terms, in particular at level A2/B1, and to understand the goals these levels set for your students. But, importantly, the seminars will also be a practical resource. They will give you plenty of ideas for hands-on activities to use in your everyday teaching. Last but not least, they will be a great opportunity for valuable exchange with other classroom professionals in your region.

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\(^1\) As the name indicates, the CEFR was designed to provide a framework for European languages. But because it is language-neutral, it can actually be used for any language and is in fact widely applied outside Europe (e.g. for Arabic, Chinese and Japanese).
The materials used in Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! are based on the requirements of the *Cambridge English: Key for Schools* and *Cambridge English: Preliminary for Schools* examinations². In the seminars, you will be introduced to the formats and assessment criteria which guide the speaking tests in these exams, designed to reflect competence at levels A2 and B1 respectively. You will also explore activities to develop students’ spoken interaction at these levels and how to use the “can-do” approach when assessing students’ performance and giving feedback.

Between the seminars resources will also be available online. So there will be plenty of opportunity to keep in touch, try things out in your classrooms, reflect on what you have experienced - and watch video samples with guidance to deepen your awareness of speaking at A2/B1.

**The Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! exchange visit**

One important aim of the Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! project is to help you become more confident at incorporating speaking activities into your teaching, but also to help your students themselves gain confidence in speaking – with you, with each other, with the outside world. To support this aim, towards the end of the project, there will be an opportunity for teachers to take part in a Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! exchange visit to try out their new skills. For the students, this will be a motivating opportunity to try out exam-style speaking tasks with a guest and to receive feedback. And for you, the visit means a great chance to try out some of your new skills on a wider stage!

So let’s get started!

On the next page you will find some material to work through before you attend your first Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! seminar.

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² Cambridge English Language Assessment has been a key contributor to CEFR development, through joint research projects, funding the development of parts of the project, publishing the outcomes, and providing a concrete reflection of the CEFR levels for English in its exams.
Preparing for the first Cambridge English: Let's Speak! seminar

Before the first seminar, all participants are asked to:

1. Reflect

Complete Reflection 1. (This should take around 10 minutes. The reflection grid with questions is supplied as a Word document.)

2. Study

   a. Gain a general overview of the CEFR levels by reading a summary version, expressed in “I can” terms. (This should take around 10 minutes. The summary grid is supplied as a pdf document.)

   b. Watch two students speaking at A2 level (Sharissa and Jannis) and two students speaking at B1 level (Chiara and Victoria). These two short films can be found in the Speaking playlist on Cambridge English TV. They are each less than 15 minutes long.

      https://www.youtube.com/user/cambridgeenglishtv/playlists

As you watch, make a note of any questions you would like to bring to the seminar. (Please note: In each case, these students are good speakers and deal well with the questions and the tasks.)

By the way, if you would like to hear more about the CEFR, Cambridge English TV also features an interview with one of its “fathers”, John Trim:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL33753FF2F7614EC0

Your trainer team is looking forward to meeting you!
1. At present, how would you rate your knowledge of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), on a scale of 0-5?

   1 = very basic or below   1  2  3  4  5  5 = very high / expert

2. At present, how would you rate your knowledge of the principles and techniques for teaching Speaking skills in English?

   1 = basic   1  2  3  4  5  5 = very high / expert

*For questions 3 - 5 take a moment to think about the students who will be your focus in the Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! project.*

3. For classes at this level, what priorities do you usually set when planning a set of lessons?
   What will students spend most time doing in a typical set of lessons?

4. For classes at this level, how would you rate the importance of Speaking for your lesson planning at present?

   0 = not particularly important   1  2  3  4  5  5 = very important / a priority

5. What do you see as the main challenges / difficulties relating to the development of students’ Speaking skills and to Speaking practice in the classroom?

6. What, in particular, do you hope to gain from the Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! project?
The training course is free of charge. In order to register, please go to www.cambridgeenglish.org/cz/lets-speak and fill in the online form.

The registrations are open.

This training course, Cambridge English: Let’s Speak! focuses on the teaching and assessment of Speaking and introduces teachers to the communicative approach of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The course concentrates on teaching and assessing Speaking at A2 and B1 levels.

Project aims:

- Raise awareness of how important it is to develop Speaking as part of all-round language development.
- Explore with teachers how they could incorporate Speaking and thus enrich their teaching.
- Use Cambridge English examinations as a best-practice example of how Speaking can be tested in a motivating, learning-oriented way, with positive washback for the classroom.
- Introduce teachers to practical assessment criteria for Speaking (Cambridge English criteria) and how they support constructive feedback approaches.
- To deepen teachers’ understanding of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) levels

Project outline:

1. Teachers register at www.cambridgeenglish.org/cz/lets-speak and complete pre-seminar activities
2. First round of seminars (Seminar 1)
3. Teachers work with Speaking in their classrooms and complete video-based activities online; contact is maintained via a teacher forum
   Second round of seminars (Seminar 2)
4. Cambridge English: Speak exchange visits
5. Follow-up and closing event

Focus of seminars:

- Classroom activities for Speaking
- Criteria for describing and assessing Speaking
- How to provide constructive performance feedback to students
- How to carry out good and fair Speaking assessments
- Learning from others: opportunity for peer-peer feedback on teaching and assessing speaking through the Cambridge English: Let’s Speak Exchange programme