**THE ORAL EXAM CHALLENGE**

*Learning Objective: To practice for O Level Oral Examinations*

Using peer mentoring, students will get to specialise for sections that they are weak in, as well as go through the entire O Level Examination trial with a teacher. This challenge may take 1 to 2 lessons.

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A. Instructions

1. Cut the Seating Arrangement Sections out and divide students into 2 groups: Mentors and examinees. The mentors should be students you trust to do well in Oral Examinations. (Sometimes, being mentors help them see clearly what is being needed, and overcome certain fears to gain confidence.)

2. Put the cut Seating Arrangement Sections on the desks so that students know which stations they are headed to. Give your student mentors materials that reflect the challenge in the sections. Make sure there are 2 copies – one for the examinee, the other for the examiner.

3. Every student is to use the trial score sheet at the end of this handout. This is so that they can get updated scores and comments that reflect their progress. Mentors are to give feedback after each session. They can call up the same examinee more than once if he/she is deemed weak.

4. There will also be a station for the teacher, who would go through the entire Oral Examination procedure for students he/she wishes to test. This will be a full 10 minute preparation, followed by the trial test.

5. The Help Station is for students who are awaiting their turn. There should be 1-2 Mentors to aid them in this area, whether by going through the Oral sections, or giving them tips to assure them. Students who may want a challenge can be given notes/exercises by the teachers to accomplish, e.g. Vocabulary and grammar exercises to help them recall EL 101. There may even be a Podcast for them to listen to help them in reading or conversation.
B. Seating Arrangement Sections

READING (1)
1. You have 5 minutes to prepare the passage.
2. You have to use proper pronunciation, tones and stresses.

READING (2)
1. You have 5 minutes to prepare the passage.
2. You have to use proper pronunciation and stresses.

PICTURE DISCUSSION (1)
1. You have 5 minutes to prepare the picture.
2. You have to use proper organisation when you describe the picture.

PICTURE DISCUSSION (2)
1. You have 5 minutes to prepare the picture.
2. You have to use proper organisation.
3. You have to use vocabulary from the list in the description of the picture.

CONVERSATION (1)
1. You have 3 minutes to converse with the examiner.
2. You will be tested on personal questions.

CONVERSATION (2)
1. You have 3 minutes to converse with the examiner.
2. You will be tested on social questions.

HELPSTATION
1. Get help to apply your VGSP here.
2. Get help with various parts of the Oral Exam before you resit with the examiner.
C. Seating Arrangement Diagram

Teacher's Note: Here was my seating arrangement:

- **Help Station**
- **Reading 1**
- **Reading 2**
- **Picture 1**
- **Picture 2**
- **Conversation 1**
- **Conversation 2**
- **Teacher**

- Teacher/Examiner
- Examinee
- Students awaiting their turn
It was getting on toward six o’clock so I thought I’d buy myself a beer and go out and sit in a deck chair by the swimming pool and have a little evening sun.

I went to the bar and got the beer and carried it outside and wandered down the garden toward the pool.

It was a fine garden with lawns and beds of azaleas and tall coconut palms, and the wind was blowing strongly through the tops of the palm trees making the leaves hiss and crackle as though they were on fire. I could see the clusters of big brown nuts handing down underneath the leaves.

There were plenty of deck chairs around the swimming pool and there were white tables and huge brightly colored umbrellas and sunburned men and women sitting around in bathing suits. In the pool itself there were three or four girls and about a dozen boys, all splashing about and making a lot of noise and throwing a large rubber ball at one another.

I stood watching them. The girls were English girls from the hotel. The boys I didn’t know about, but they sounded American and I thought they were probably naval cadets who’d come ashore from the U.S. naval training vessel which had arrived in the harbor that morning.

I went over and sat down under a yellow umbrella where there were four empty seats, and I poured my beer and settled back comfortably with a cigarette.

It was very pleasant sitting there in the sunshine with beer and a cigarette. It was pleasant to sit and watch the bathers splashing about in the green water.
D. Materials for Reading 2

The Girls in Their Summer Dresses
by Irwin Shaw

Fifth Avenue was shining in the sun when they left the Brevoort and started walking toward Washington Square. The sun was warm, even though it was November, and everything looked like Sunday morning—the buses, and the well-dressed people walking slowly in couples and the quiet buildings with the windows closed.

Michael held Frances’ arm tightly as they walked downtown in the sunlight. They walked lightly, almost smiling, because they had slept late and had a good breakfast and it was Sunday. Michael unbuttoned his coat and let it flap around him in the mild wind. They walked, without saying anything, among the young and pleasant-looking people who somehow seem to make up most of the population of that section of New York City.

"Look out," Frances said, as they crossed Eighth Street. "You'll break your neck."

Michael laughed and Frances laughed with him.

"She's not so pretty, anyway," Frances said. "Anyway, not pretty enough to take a chance breaking your neck looking at her."

Michael laughed again. He laughed louder this time, but not as solidly. "She wasn't a bad-looking girl. She had a nice complexion. Country-girl complexion. How did you know I was looking at her?" Frances cocked her head to one side and smiled at her husband under the tip-tilted brim of her hat. "Mike, darling..." she said.

Michael laughed, just a little laugh this time. "Okay," he said. "The evidence is in. Excuse me. It was the complexion. It's not the sort of complexion you see much in New York. Excuse me."

Frances patted his arm lightly and pulled him along a little faster toward Washington Square.
"To cook by your fire and to sleep under your roof for the night," I had announced on entering old Ebbits's cabin; and he had looked at me blear-eyed and vacuous, while Zilla had favored me with a sour face and a contemptuous grunt. Zilla was his wife, and no more bitter-tongued, implacable old squaw dwelt on the Yukon. Nor would I have stopped there had my dogs been less tired or had the rest of the village been inhabited. But this cabin alone had I found occupied, and in this cabin, perforce, I took my shelter.

Old Ebbits now and again pulled his tangled wits together, and hints and sparkles of intelligence came and went in his eyes. Several times during the preparation of my supper he even essayed hospitable inquiries about my health, the condition and number of my dogs, and the distance I had travelled that day. And each time Zilla had looked sourer than ever and grunted more contemptuously.

Yet I confess that there was no particular call for cheerfulness on their part. There they crouched by the fire, the pair of them, at the end of their days, old and withered and helpless, racked by rheumatism, bitten by hunger, and tantalized by the frying-odors of my abundance of meat. They rocked back and forth in a slow and hopeless way, and regularly, once every five minutes, Ebbits emitted a low groan. It was not so much a groan of pain, as of pain-weariness. He was oppressed by the weight and the torment of this thing called life, and still more was he oppressed by the fear of death. His was that eternal tragedy of the aged, with whom the joy of life has departed and the instinct for death has not come.

When my moose-meat spluttered rowdily in the frying-pan, I noticed old Ebbits's nostrils twitch and distend as he caught the food-scent. He ceased rocking for a space and forgot to groan, while a look of intelligence seemed to come into his face.
The last twenty-four hours have witnessed a carnival of brutality. From cabin to forecastle it seems to have broken out like a contagion. I scarcely know where to begin. Wolf Larsen was really the cause of it. The relations among the men, strained and made tense by feuds, quarrels and grudges, were in a state of unstable equilibrium, and evil passions flared up in flame like prairie-grass.

Thomas Mugridge is a sneak, a spy, an informer. He has been attempting to curry favour and reinstate himself in the good graces of the captain by carrying tales of the men forward. He it was, I know, that carried some of Johnson's hasty talk to Wolf Larsen. Johnson, it seems, bought a suit of oilskins from the slop-chest and found them to be of greatly inferior quality. Nor was he slow in advertising the fact. The slop-chest is a sort of miniature dry-goods store which is carried by all sealing schooners and which is stocked with articles peculiar to the needs of the sailors. Whatever a sailor purchases is taken from his subsequent earnings on the sealing grounds; for, as it is with the hunters so it is with the boat-pullers and steerers - in the place of wages they receive a "lay", a rate of so much per skin for every skin captured in their particular boat.

But of Johnson's grumbling at the slop-chest I knew nothing, so that what I witnessed came with a shock of sudden surprise. I had just finished sweeping the cabin, and had been inveigled by Wolf Larsen into a discussion of Hamlet, his favourite Shakespearian character, when Johansen descended the companion stairs followed by Johnson. The latter's cap came off after the custom of the sea, and he stood respectfully in the centre of the cabin, swaying heavily and uneasily to the roll of the schooner and facing the captain.

"Shut the doors and draw the slide," Wolf Larsen said to me.
E. Materials for Picture Discussion 1

(You can use materials from any O level oral picture discussion. Mentors can use the questions set by the O Level Examinations for this section.)

Picture Discussion 1

Examiner’s Prompts:

Examiners should initiate the discussion through 2 main prompts - 1 and 2 below – but may feel free to use the additional prompts to encourage the candidate to respond.

1. Describe, in as much detail as you can, what you see in the picture.
   
   Additional prompts:
   
   ● Choose one of the people in the picture and describe him/her including what he/she is doing.
   ● Say something about where the picture was taken.

2. What is going on in the picture? What is the woman doing?

   Additional prompts:
   
   ● Look at the board in front of the woman. What do you think that is for?
   ● The young man on the right is seated with the elbow on the table. Tell me what he is thinking.
E. Materials for Picture Discussion 2

(You can use materials from any O level oral picture discussion. Mentors can use the questions set by the O Level Examinations for this section.)

Picture Discussion 2:

Use the following words in the discussion. (Teacher's Note: You can create your own list)

1. perfunctory 6. mimicry
2. vivacious 7. externalise
3. vibrant 8. wretched
4. nebulous 9. pleasurable
5. temporal 10. temerit

Examiner's Prompts:

Examiners should initiate the discussion through 2 main prompts - 1 and 2 below – but may feel free to use the additional prompts to encourage the candidate to respond.

1. Describe, in as much detail as you can, what you see in the picture.
   
   Additional prompts:
   
   ● Choose one of the people in the picture and describe him/her including what he/she is doing.
   ● Say something about where the picture was taken.

2. What is going on in the picture? What do you think the man and woman seated opposite each other is thinking about?
   
   Additional prompts:
   
   ● Why do you think there are only a few people in the place?
   ● Who do you think the man on the far left in uniform is?
F. Materials for Conversation 1

Note to Mentor Examinee:

You should only ask one question for each examinee, followed by your own prompting questions.

- Just be interactive! Give prompting questions to aid your examinee.
- You should use up the 3 minutes with the examinee.
- At the end, give a mark, comments and solutions to help the examinee.

Personal Questions

Influence

1. Describe a person who had influenced you in a positive way while growing up.
2. Share a particular time when you played an important role in someone else's life.

Family

1. How would you weigh the importance between your family and friends?
2. Describe someone in your family who you look up to.
3. Are you close to your grandparents?

Technology

1. How would you describe the way your life revolves around technology?
2. Do you think your school is out of touch with technology?
3. If you often live your life with technology, how would you spend a day without it?

Sports and Health

1. Does your school promote healthy living?
2. Share about your favourite sport and sportsperson.

Food

1. Describe your favourite meal in detail.
2. Describe a healthy diet and why you would choose it.

Arts

1. What is your favourite band and why?
2. What kind of music do you listen to? Describe its effect on you.
F. Materials for Conversation 2

Note to Examiner:
You should only ask one question for each examinee, followed by your own prompting questions.

- Just be interactive! Give prompting questions to aid your examinee.
- You should use up the 3 minutes with the examinee.
- At the end, give a mark, comments and solutions to help the examinee.

Social Questions

Environment

1. Teenagers are often oblivious to environmental concerns. Do you agree?
2. How do you feel towards environmental campaigns?
3. What do you think, is the balance between waste and recyclability? (very difficult)

Education

1. Some say education is a waste of time. What would your response be?
2. What is your taken on schools that take more of an interest in social work?
3. What do you make of the kind of education that will be in 10 years' time? (very difficult)

Arts/Leisure

1. Music has a huge impact on youths. What is your take on its influence?
2. What kind of leisure activities do youths of your generation enjoy that adults find difficult to understand? Why?
3. The kind of leisure activities that teenagers are involved in are usually costly and unproductive. Do you agree?

Appearance

1. Teenagers are too concerned with their appearances, at the expense of their esteem. Do you agree?
2. Beauty is skin deep. What are your views on beauty and appearance?
G. Oral Exam Challenge Score Sheet

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