# C1 Speaking Toolkit

Express complex ideas precisely

## Your speaking focus

Develop complex arguments, express degrees of certainty and adapt your language to the audience. Connect your contribution to other speakers and make distinctions clear without relying on unnecessarily complicated wording.

## Build a convincing contribution

Identify the central issue. Distinguish facts from assumptions, support your position and address a relevant counterargument. Explain the conditions under which your conclusion would change.

## Frame the issue

The central question is whether ... / We need to distinguish between ... and ... / The issue extends beyond ... / What is at stake here is ...

## Qualify a claim

There is a tendency to ... / This may hold true in some contexts, but ... / I would be cautious about assuming that ... / To the best of my knowledge, ...

## Concede and respond

Granted, ...; however, ... / While I take your point about ..., ... / That is a valid concern, although ... / The stronger argument, in my view, is ...

## Make implications clear

This raises the question of ... / A likely consequence would be ... / The broader implication is ... / This would depend on whether ...

## Example in context

We need to distinguish between giving learners access to a tool and teaching them to use it effectively. Access matters, but without guidance it may do little to improve learning.

## Register and precision

Use a direct phrase when it communicates your meaning well. In a meeting, "Could we clarify the main objective?" may be more effective than a long formal introduction. C1 involves flexibility and control, not a fixed list of advanced words.

# Vocabulary for precise discussion

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## Choose words for the meaning you need

Practise useful combinations and explain them in everyday language. The selections below are learning suggestions, not an official C1 word list. Many can also be useful at other levels.

## Evidence and reasoning

a plausible explanation; an underlying assumption; draw a distinction; substantiate a claim; conflicting evidence.
Example: Before accepting the proposal, we need to examine the underlying assumption that demand will continue to rise.
Plain meaning: What are we taking for granted?

## Policy and public decisions

allocate resources; address inequality; unintended consequences; a viable alternative; public accountability.
Example: A policy may achieve its immediate aim while producing unintended consequences.
Plain meaning: What else might happen because of it?

## Work and organisations

delegate responsibility; conflicting priorities; retain staff; professional judgement; a sustainable workload.
Example: Managers should address conflicting priorities before asking staff to take on more work.
Plain meaning: Which tasks should come first?

## Technology and ethics

informed consent; data privacy; human oversight; potential bias; a transparent process.
Example: Human oversight matters when an automated decision could affect someone's access to a service.
Plain meaning: Who checks the decision?

## Culture and social change

a sense of identity; cultural expectations; challenge a stereotype; social cohesion; a shift in attitudes.
Example: Shared activities may strengthen social cohesion without requiring everyone to have the same background.
Plain meaning: How can people feel part of the same community?

## Precision practice

Choose a claim such as "Technology improves education." Define the kind of technology, the learners and the intended improvement. Then give one condition, one example and one limitation.

# Lead a thoughtful discussion

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## Enter and connect

Could I pick up on your point about ...? / Building on that, ... / There is another aspect we haven't considered. / May I add a different perspective?

## Probe an argument

What evidence would support that conclusion? / Under what circumstances would that be true? / Are we assuming that ...? / How would you reconcile that with ...?

## Challenge diplomatically

I share your concern, though I'm not sure the proposed solution addresses it. / Could that approach disadvantage ...? / I wonder whether that conclusion is justified.

## Clarify a distinction

By ..., I mean ... rather than ... / Let me qualify that. / I should distinguish between ... / That was too broad a claim; a more accurate way to put it is ...

## Summarise and move forward

There seems to be agreement on ..., but we differ on ... / Could we identify the conditions we would need? / A workable compromise might be ...

## A meeting in context

A: We could use an automated system to make the initial selection.
B: Could I pick up on that? What would applicants know about the criteria?
A: We would publish them and allow candidates to ask for a review.
B: That addresses transparency, though we would still need to examine potential bias.
A: Agreed. A trial with human review might be a workable first step.
B: Yes, provided we define what would count as a successful trial.

## Discussion task

An organisation wants to use AI to shortlist applicants. Discuss efficiency, fairness and accountability. Agree on safeguards and identify one question that still needs evidence. Respond to each other instead of delivering separate speeches.

# Model responses with nuance

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## A qualified argument

Question: Should universities focus mainly on preparing students for employment?
Employability is an important aim, particularly when students invest substantial time and money in a degree. However, defining a university education primarily in terms of immediate job requirements would be too narrow. Specific technical skills may become outdated, whereas the ability to evaluate evidence and learn independently can remain valuable across different careers. There is also a public benefit in supporting research and informed debate. I would therefore favour courses that connect practical experience with broader intellectual development. The balance would vary by subject, but students should understand both what they are learning and why it matters beyond their first job.

## An audience-sensitive proposal

Situation: Explain a proposed change to colleagues.
The aim of the new schedule is to protect uninterrupted work time while keeping collaboration possible. I recognise that a single arrangement will not suit every role, so I suggest a short trial rather than an immediate permanent change. During the trial, we could gather feedback on response times, workload and team contact. If colleagues who deal directly with clients find the arrangement impractical, we would need to adjust it. That would give us a stronger basis for a decision than simply assuming the same benefits for everyone.

## Useful sentence patterns

Were we to adopt this approach, we would need clear safeguards.
Had the team consulted users earlier, it might have avoided the problem.
What concerns me is the absence of a clear review process.
The proposal is useful insofar as it addresses the immediate shortage.
It is not so much the principle as its implementation that needs attention.

## Notice and adapt

Identify the claim, concession and condition in each model. Give your own response to a different question. Vary sentence length and stress key distinctions. Occasional simple wording can make a complex argument much clearer.

# Extended practice and reflection

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## Questions for sustained discussion

1. When should efficiency give way to fairness?
2. How should institutions respond when evidence is uncertain?
3. Does preserving a tradition require keeping it unchanged?
4. Who should be responsible for the effects of automated decisions?
5. How can organisations balance consistency with individual needs?
6. What makes an expert trustworthy outside their own field?

## Speaking tasks

A short briefing: Recommend one way to improve access to adult education. Address cost, participation and how success could be evaluated.
A negotiation: A community has funding for one project. Compare a youth centre, accessible transport and digital training. Seek agreement without ignoring minority needs.
A synthesis: Ask two partners for different views on flexible working. Summarise where they agree, where they differ and what remains unresolved.

## Practice cycle

Plan with five keywords, then speak for two minutes. Invite a challenge. Respond without reading a script. Repeat for a different audience, such as colleagues and local residents. These timings are practice suggestions, not exam rules.

## Self-check

Was my claim precise? Did I distinguish evidence from assumption? Did I qualify uncertainty appropriately? Did I develop and connect ideas? Did I respond to others and adapt my register? Was my pronunciation clear enough to follow comfortably?

## For learners and teachers

Open tasks allow different defensible responses. C1 is the intended practice level, not a certification or an outcome guaranteed by memorising expressions.

## About this resource

All examples, vocabulary selections and tasks were written for BEREKET ELT Archive. Free to download, print and share for educational use. Level guidance is informed by the Council of Europe CEFR; this is an independent practice resource.

## Level reference

Council of Europe: CEFR Global Scale and Qualitative Aspects of Spoken Language Use (Tables 1 and 3). Official links below. Accessed 27 October 2026.

CEFR level descriptions (Council of Europe)
Qualitative aspects of spoken language use (Table 3)