

PTE Academic

Prepare for the two new
question types

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Speaking

Summarize Group Discussion
(Updated test only)

Respond to a Situation
(Updated test only)

Summarize Group Discussion (For the Updated Test)

Instructions

- You will listen to a group discussion between 3 people.
- You should take notes while listening.
- The topic will be academic.
- Once the listening is over, you will have 2 minutes to speak and summarize the discussion.

Practice prompt

You will hear three people having a discussion. When you hear the beep, summarize the whole discussion. You will have 10 seconds to prepare and 2 minutes to give your response.

Summarize Group Discussion transcript

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Here is the transcript of a Summarize Group Discussion audio. You will not see this when listening. You will hear the audio once.

Transcript

Speaker 1: There are a lot of challenges for us at university. It's not just doing well in the courses; we have to be able to balance the academic work with a personal life and also find time to join some extracurricular activities. I mean I don't want my years at university to be only studying and writing papers.

Speaker 2: I know. There's just so much to do. I have to get to the lectures, do all the readings and assignments, complete several projects and get ready for exams. I hardly have time to breathe.

Speaker 3: You know, it's true. My biggest challenge since I started university is managing my time. I can't seem to get myself organized and I always feel stressed and exhausted and the worst thing is that I just seem to get organized and the term ends and I have to get used to a whole new schedule.

Speaker 1: I agree. That is really difficult. Each course has its own schedule, deadlines and requirements. It's so difficult to create a consistent routine so I can allocate my time effectively and everything seems to take longer than I thought.

Speaker 2: The worst part is that I often procrastinate and put off tasks until the last minute. I think to myself, oh I have lots of time for that. I have a whole week before it's due. Then all of a sudden, the due date is in two days and I'm rushed and don't do a very good job.

S1 = Speaker 1, S2 = Speaker 2, S3 = Speaker 3

Please continue transcript on following page.

Summarize Group Discussion transcript

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Here is the transcript of a Summarize Group Discussion audio. You will not see this when listening. You will hear the audio once.

Transcript (cont.)

Speaker 3: That's happened to me so many times. The deadlines are weeks or months away and I have trouble with long-term planning. It's hard to plan so far ahead but you have to or you end up rushed. The problem is that you have to learn to multi-task and I was never very good at that. I like to finish one project and start on another. But that's impossible when all the projects and essays are due at the same time at the end of the term. You really have to be able to multi-task at university. You have to be able to jump from one topic to another and one type of assignment to another.

Speaker 1: Then, just when you think everything's under control, the computer crashes!

Speaker 2: If I could manage my time better, I probably wouldn't be so stressed and exhausted. I've never had to discipline myself like this before. In high school, the teachers told you what to do and when to do it. If you just did what they said, you were fine. But in university, it's up to you to prioritize what tasks are the most important and should be done first. It seems I spend too much time on less important tasks because I like them or they are easier. Then I don't have time for the more important ones.

Speaker 3: I guess not managing your time effectively means that you end up working more than you really need to and you feel so tired and sort of burnt out. I think the university offers a seminar on time management. Maybe we should all go.

S1 = Speaker 1, S2 = Speaker 2, S3 = Speaker 3

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Take effective notes. Write the topic, main ideas, S1, S2 and S3 and what they say (supporting details).
- ✓ Start with a short summary of the listening.
- ✓ Introduce main ideas from the conversation and add supporting details.
- ✓ Mention which speaker said which point.
- ✓ Use linking words to connect topics.
- ✓ Say in your response where speakers agree or disagree or hold the same or different opinions.

Don't

- ✗ Don't just list in order who said what. Remember this is a summary.
- ✗ Add information that is incorrect (every few weeks, she has a whole new schedule when it says the term ends and she needs to get used to a whole new schedule).
- ✗ Get speakers confused and say speaker 2 said something when it was speaker 1.
- ✗ Don't try to mention every single point. Summarize the main points.
- ✗ Speak for too little time. You need to summarize the entire audio.
- ✗ Jump between ideas without any flow or connection.
- ✗ Introduce each topic in a mechanical way (topic 1 is, topic 2 is, topic 3 . . .).

Effective notes – example 1

Separate your notes into topic (T), main ideas (MI), who said what and the supporting details. This will help you organize your response.

To the right is an example. S1 means Speaker 1, S2 means Speaker 2 and S3 means Speaker 3.

To the right are just some of the notes. More notes are needed on the entire audio.

My notes:

T: 3 students – time management problems at uni

MI: Balance academic work, personal and extra curricular

S1 - wants to experience more than just studying/writing

S2 -

S3 -

MI: Juggling college schedules and time

S1 - each course – own schedules, requirements – difficult to create a consistent routine

S2 - juggling reading, assignments and projects –

S3 - managing time – can't get organized – feels stressed

MI: Long-term planning

S1 -

S2 - procrastinates till the last minute. Due date creeps up on him.

S3 - Similar struggle – can't long-term plan. Must multi-task – . . .

Effective notes – example 2

Make notes on each speaker as you listen with the supporting details. In your summary, you will still need to introduce the topic, and then the main ideas with supporting details.

Topic: challenges managing time at uni

Speaker 1:

*concerns about load
no consistency - complain
length
computer crash*

Speaker 2:

*lectures, project, exam
no time!
procrastinate - deadline rush
also tired
discipline - different to high sch., comparison/autonomy
interest-driven*

Speaker 3

*mang. time
stress/exhaustion
restarting school
agrees
long-term planning, multi-tasking - challenging
seminar? Tomo?*

Summarize Group Discussion – Excellent sample answer

Answer A

“The three speakers were talking about the various challenges they face at university especially with respect to time management.

So, the first speaker talked about his concerns about his workload; he seemed very concerned and somewhat stressed. He mentioned that he had no consistency in what he does. Ah, and he had a particular concern about the length of the course and some of the workload. He also mentioned something interesting, which was around, ah, challenges with his computer crashing. That was kind of said, ah, in relation to, ah, his time management issues.

The second speaker also talked about the number of lectures and projects and exams that they have and said that they're not very good with time management as well, especially because of procrastination. And this speaker mentioned that they have lots of... or that they rush when there's a deadline because they tend to find themselves focusing on things that interest them rather than things that are important. This person also mentioned an issue with discipline and made a comparison with high school where teachers sort of tell you what to do, or provide your schedule, whereas at university you have greater autonomy over what you're supposed to do.

The third speaker agreed with much of what was said. Ah, and also had an issue with procrastination – the same as speaker two. The third speaker talked about time management issues and stress, and also, ah, exhaustion – being tired. The third speaker talked about, ah, long-term planning as key, and also multi-tasking as an important attribute, but said that this is sort of challenging to, ah, achieve. In the end, the third speaker mentioned something about a seminar on time management and suggested they attend that because it might help them out.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response is clear, accurate, and demonstrates full comprehension of the discussion by paraphrasing the main ideas in their own words. They expand on the details of each speaker's contribution with specificity, ensuring that the nuances of each perspective are captured effectively. The ideas are well connected and organized in a logical sequence, with connective devices used effectively and consistently to ensure the response flows well and is easy to follow.

Summarize Group Discussion – Good sample answer

Answer B

“The students in the conversation agree that their biggest challenge at university is managing their time. They feel overwhelmed by the many tasks they have to complete, and with each new term bringing a different schedule, it’s difficult to stay organized. One student mentions struggling to establish a consistent routine for tackling his assignments, adding that technical issues, like computer freezing make things even worse. He also talks about procrastinating. The second student points out that self-discipline is a challenge; in primary school, teachers told him what to do and when to do it, but now, he has to figure out how to prioritize tasks on his own. The third student shares that long-term planning is a major hurdle for her, and she finds it hard to juggle multiple tasks at once, a skill she feels she’s not very good at. By the end of the conversation, they all agree that attending the university’s time management seminar could help them improve their ability to manage their work more effectively.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response captures the main ideas of the discussion and some details of each speaker’s contributions. There are a few inaccurate ideas however, for example: this response says, ‘Primary School’ instead of ‘High School’ and ‘computer freezing’ when it should be ‘computer crashing’.

Summarize Group Discussion – Average sample answer

Answer C

“These students say that their biggest challenge at university is time management. They think there is so much to do and the schedule keeps changing each term so it’s hard to get organized. One student says he can’t find a routine to follow for doing the work and sometimes has computer problems too. Another student says she also has trouble with long term planning and she thinks another problem is that she has to multitask and she isn’t very good at that. The other student says that he can’t discipline himself to do the work and that he used to rely on his teachers to plan his work. Now he has to do it himself.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This response captures some ideas from the discussion but it does not capture them fully accurately. The response needs to differentiate between important points and details.

Summarize Group Discussion – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer D

“The conversation spoke about studying and projects. Also mentioned was getting organized, stress and new schedule. Another interesting point was putting off tests and routines. As well as this, deadlines and long-term planning was mentioned. They mentioned multi-tasking, computer crashing, discipline and attending seminars. Thank you for listening to my summary of this interesting group discussion task.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This response is very short and it does not include the main information. The test taker is using sentence stems and just adding in key words. This response repeats isolated words from the discussion and much of the response is not relevant to the prompt.

Respond to a Situation (For the Updated Test)

Instructions

- ④ You will read and listen to a prompt giving you instructions for the situation.
- ④ You can take notes as you listen to the prompt but you have limited time to do this.
- ④ After the audio ends, you will need to respond to the situation in 40 seconds.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Speak like you are talking to the person or people – use the first person (I...) not the third person (e.g., he).
- ✓ Start with an opening depending on who you are talking to (e.g., Hi..., Excuse me...).
- ✓ Cover the main points of the prompt without missing out or changing any important information.
- ✓ Understand the formality and tone of the situation. If you are talking to a colleague, friend or your professor, are you being assertive or persuasive in what you are saying?
- ✓ Use contractions (e.g., they'll..., I'll...) because it's a spoken situation and you want to be fluent.
- ✓ Use polite language effectively depending on the context and the person/people you are talking to.

Don't

- ✗ Forget to mention all the key points from the prompt.
- ✗ Change the information (e.g., if the prompt says by the end of this week but you say Saturday, this is a content error).
- ✗ Just copy the words from the prompt.
- ✗ Use limited expressions and repetition to respond to the situation (e.g., I'd like ..., I'd like ..., I'd like ...).
- ✗ Pre-memorize an answer. This will not cover the main points from the situation and this will be scored very low.
- ✗ Summarize the situation – this is not a summarize task.
- ✗ Be too polite if you have a strong request (e.g., would you possibly ... vs I need ...). Choose the right language for the right context to complete the task.
- ✗ Give your opinion on whether the task is reasonable or not, or make suggestions on how the situation could be improved/resolved or changed.

Respond to a Situation – Excellent sample answer

Answer A

“Hi everyone! I’m happy to create the slides for this presentation we’re giving. To be successful though, I’ll need you to each send me all the information and content you’ve gathered for our group project before this coming weekend so I’ll have enough time to complete the slides. Please send the information to my email by end of day this Friday – does that work for everyone?”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is an excellent answer for the content. It covers the main information including: 1) you are willing to design the slides, 2) you need more information and 3) you need this information before this weekend. This means the primary communication goal has been fully met. The test taker has communicated with ease and the response is fully developed. The response is polite, in the first person and also has the correct tone (being persuasive and strong enough) to request the slides.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Average sample answer

Answer B

“Hi everyone. So for this presentation, I can definitely create the slides as long you each provide me with the information that I can put into the slides. Can you make sure you send me the information by Saturday latest?”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This partially achieves the primary goal of the situation because there is one error with the response saying ‘by Saturday’ – when in fact the prompt says before the weekend. The response could also be more persuasive to achieve a higher mark – ‘Can you . . .’ is overly polite considering the importance of the request.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer C

“Hello, I am doing a group project for my class. I have been asked to prepare slides for the presentation and I am willing to do the slides but you need to give me all the information that you have before this weekend. Thank you.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response copies the prompt too heavily and the test taker has not changed the language to meet the primary communication goal of the context. The test taker has just changed the pronouns from the prompt (you for I) and copied the information from the prompt. This response would score very low for content.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer D

“The situation is about a person and that person is doing a group project for class. They are doing some slides and they want all the information from their teammates so they can do the slides. They want the information before the weekend.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The test taker does not understand the requirements of the task and is summarizing the situation. No primary communication goal is achieved because the test taker is not responding to the situation. This response would receive a very low score for content.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer E

“Thank you so much to explain the situation that I have in this response. In this task I will explain the situation at length and provide some polite language to respond to the situation. I want to start by saying that this response is about doing a group project for the class. I want to also say that it’s about slides for a presentation and it’s also about giving you all the information before the weekend. Overall the situation is very informative and interesting.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is a very poor answer for this question. This is a pre-memorised response with large chunks of language not specific to the prompt.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

There's so much more to learn



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