

How To Sound Natural on the Speaking Section of The CELPIP Exam

Remember: repetition is your best friend when it comes to building fluency and sounding natural when you speak.

- Practice speaking into a mic or your cell phone** while recording your practice answers. I can't stress this point enough: speaking into a mic and not to a person IS UNNATURAL for most people - so that part of the exam alone can be an obstacle that can trip you up if you don't become familiar with how it feels.

- Use your personal experience** as much as you can. You are an expert on you- you can speak with authority and conviction about what you've experienced which will help you sound more natural, so do it as often as the exam allows.

- Don't stress about your accent.** Focus on expressing your ideas with the best grammar you can, with varied vocabulary and interesting details.

How To Manage Anxiety. Lean into practicing as much as you can, for as long as you can before your test day. What I mean by that is that you give yourself sufficient time to prepare. (2 weeks before your exam IS NOT enough time! Think months!)

Having more time to practice will increase your self confidence. Not giving yourself that time does the opposite! It steals your confidence because you'll feel unprepared.

- Use free CELPIP practice exams** to help you understand what the real exam will be like. This will also help to reduce your anxiety.

Even after doing these things well you still might feel nervous or anxious - that's totally normal, and I don't know of anyone who didn't face those feelings on exam day. But for sure, practicing well and long enough is the best way I know to combat anxiety on your test day because it will help you feel and be prepared.

How to remember new words, connectors, and phrasal verbs.

Don't memorize! Use them!

- When you discover a new word or connecting word or phrasal verb that you think is interesting or important, write it down! That's the first step. When you write it down, you're telling yourself that this word/phrasal verb/connector is important. I want to pay attention to it.
- Discover what it means. Can you figure it out in the context of where you heard it? That should be your first bit of detective work. See if what is around the word/phrasal verb/connector can help you figure out the meaning.

- Create a sentence or two (write it down) using your new word, phrasal verb or connector but in your own words.
- Finally, make it your goal to use your new word as many times as you can in conversation. The more you use your new word, phrasal verb, connector the more it will become a part of your vocabulary - and the more natural it will sound when you use it.

Bonus! Always be listening to the English conversations happening around you. When you hear a phrasal verb being used, and you like how it sounds - steal it and begin using it yourself! (Make sure you understand what it means first!) The secret is not to try and memorize these things - learn what they mean, and then use them like crazy! (This approach means you will likely be using just one or two a week - but REALLY using them!) But the end result is way more effective than trying to memorize long boring lists because when you use your new words repeatedly, they have a higher chance of becoming a part of your vocabulary - which means you're less likely to forget them.