For the official speaking test, you will have a face-to-face discussion with an interviewer. As a warm up, the interviewer will first ask you some general questions about your studies, your background, and your interests. Then you will read about a topic. After you’ve read about the topic, you will be asked questions about the topic. The whole interview will last about 15 or 20 minutes.

Below you will find an example of a speaking test task. Take a few minutes to read about the topic and to look at the graph. Then, practice answering the questions.
EXPOSING CHILDREN TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE

CONTEXT: Because second-hand smoke exposure is known to cause disease in non-smokers, smoking has been banned in workplaces and public spaces throughout North America. However, hundreds of thousands of Canadian children are exposed to second hand smoke in private homes. Some groups are calling for legislation that would limit parents’ rights to smoke in the presence of their children.

ONE VIEW:

• Children are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke because their organs are smaller and more immature.
• Second hand smoke contributes to higher rates of sudden infant death syndrome, slower lung development and greater risk of lower respiratory infections in children
• There are many laws protecting children from physical harm or abuse; a ban on smoking in a home where young children are present would be a logical extension of these protections.

ANOTHER VIEW:

• The government already regulates too much behavior; they have no right telling people what to do in the privacy of their own homes.
• It would be a great waste of taxpayers’ money to try to enforce a smoking ban in private homes. There are far more important laws to enforce.
• If smoking in the home is regulated, then other behaviors that are not good for children, such as eating junk food, will also need to be regulated.
Questions about the reading and graph

1. What is the main issue discussed in the reading?
2. Why do some people think smoking should be restricted in the home?
3. What are the arguments against restricting smoking?
4. Describe the graph and explain how it relates to the issue.

Follow-up questions about the topic

1. What is your personal opinion about the topic?
2. Do you think there are other areas of children’s protection and safety that should be regulated, for example, junk food?
3. Almost 9% of the health care budget is spent on illness caused by smoking. Should smokers have to pay for their own smoking-related health problems?
4. Do you think that people respond better to incentives or to punishment to change their behaviour? (free nicotine patches versus ‘sin taxes’ on things like tobacco and alcohol)
5. We know smoking is bad for our health, so why won’t the government simply ban the product?
6. Describe how you or someone you know succeeded or failed at overcoming a bad habit. (e.g., smoking, eating, nail biting)