

Conversation gambits for oral exams

1) Placeholders – devices when you are at a loss for words or need time

- *uh what's-her-name / what's-her-face/*
- *uh thingy / thingumajig / thingymabob/ whachamacallit /what-d'you-call-it*
- *uh hang on*
- *uh well*
- *uh it's on the tip of my tongue*
- *uh, wait a minute*
- *uh, just a second*
- *well, let me think*
- *how shall I put it?*
- *well, that's a good question*

2) Repair – devices for correcting yourself

- *I mean*
- *what I mean is*
- *let me put it this/another way*
- *what I'm saying is*
- *what I'm trying to say is*
- *let me rephrase what I've just said*

3) Repetition request – devices for getting the other person to repeat

- *repeat what the other person said with a question intonation*
- *she did what? / he went where? / they are going when?*
- *the what?*
- *what was that again?*
- *sorry, I didn't catch that / the last part*
- *sorry, I didn't get the bit about...*
- *would you mind repeating that?*
- *can you repeat that please?*
- *sorry, you've lost me*
- *sorry, I don't follow you*
- *sorry, what did you say?*
- *pardon?*
- *aye? (informal)*

4) Comprehension check – devices for checking whether the other person is following

- *you see?*
- *you know what I mean?*
- *you know*
- *are you still with me?*
- *is that clear?*

5) Backchannel – showing the other person that you are following their words

- *right*
- *I see*
- *yeah*
- *uhm*