

SPEAKING TOPICS FOR B1

The following is the official list of topics assigned to all classes, and participants of the B1 course are expected to get themselves prepared. For each topic, if possible, please:

+ make a list of ideas (brainstorming)

+ practice speaking and record your speech then send it via email to the teacher at uynlq@hcmup.edu.vn (a document text should also accompany this, just in case you do this in the writing-speaking order)

Topic 1: Talk about advantages and disadvantages of distance education

Topic 2: What is the most useful machine in the twentieth century? Why do you think it is the most useful?

Topic 3: What is the means of transportation you like most? Why?

Topic 4: Think about your own experience of an exciting day. Talk about it

Topic 5: What do you think an astronaut's life is like? What do people need to do or know to become astronauts?

Topic 6: What do you think is the most amazing natural wonder in the world? Why?

Topic 7: Are you over working at your work? If so, what time management tips can help?

Topic 8: Is it difficult for you to say sorry? Can you remember the last thing you apologized for?

Topic 9: Your friend wants to go camping in the mountains by himself for a week. He's never gone camping before. What advice would you give him?

Topic 10: What do you think would be like to walk across your country? Why?

Example Procedure

PART 1 (5 POINTS)

The candidate introduces himself and talks about simple topics like hobbies, interests, friends, studies, and families. Use the following questions as a guide in case the examiner does not ask you first.

FAMILY

- How many people are there in your family? Talk about them.
- Do you get on well with your family members?
- Is there anyone in your family that you have not met for a long time?
- What do you usually do together as family?
- These days many people say that family members are not as close as they used to be. What do you think?
- Do you think your family members, your parents for example, influence on your character or behavior?

STUDY/WORK

- Are you working or studying?
- Do you enjoy your job?
- What do you like most about your job? Anything that you don't like?
- What is the most stressful part of your job?

HOMETOWN/VILLAGE

- Tell me where you come from.
- Do you like your hometown? Is there anything that you don't like about it?
- How often do you visit your hometown?
- How has your hometown changed over the years?

HOBBIES

- What do you usually do to relax in your free time?
- Is there any hobby that you are particularly obsessed with? Tell me about it.
- Spending too much time on smart phones has become a popular activity among teenagers. Do you think this is a positive or negative development?
- Would you prefer outdoor or indoor activities?

PART 2 (15 POINTS)

Draw the lot and you will have a number which specifies which topic you have to talk about. You are allowed to spend some time making notes for your talk.

Example (topic 4)

Talk about an exciting day that you had.

You should say:

- when and where it was
- who you were with (if any)
- what you did

and also say why it was exciting.

PART 3 (5 POINTS)

In this part, the examiner will ask you some questions. The questions should be revolving around what you say but at a higher level, requiring you to give your opinions and show off your in-depth understanding of the topic.

Example (topic 4)

- How has this event impacted your life?
- Can important life events change people's views on the world?
- Why are so many people scared of changes?

Note:

- Organize your speech by **linkers**
 - ✓ Well I would like to start by looking at ...
 - ✓ The other thing I would like to say is that
 - ✓ Finally, I believe it is
- Use **functions** to state your opinion
 - ✓ I think/ believe
 - ✓ In my opinion/ From my point of view,
- Ask the teacher to **repeat the question** (don't be nervous)
 - ✓ I'm not sure I heard that correctly. Can you just repeat the question, please?
 - ✓ Can you say that again, please?
 - ✓ I can't seem to understand this question. Can you put it in another way, please?
- Use **fillers** to give you more time
 - ✓ Well, I'm not quite sure about this, but if you ask me, I guess I would say
 - ✓ That's an interesting question. Let's see. It may not be true to many people, but for me, it would sound ...

SPEAKING SUPPLEMENTS

TOPIC 3 CYCLING IN THE CITY

Read the passage and match the following headings to the correct paragraph

List of headings

- i. Cyclists at Risk
- ii. Necessity for Action
- iii. Educating Drivers and Employers
- iv. Reasons for Cycling
- v. Planning to Reduce Traffic Congestion
- vi. Problems of Traffic Congestion
- vii. Examples of Effective Cycle-friendly Developments
- viii. Safe Cycling Network

A How much time do you spend stuck in traffic, breathing in diesel fumes as you commute to work or to college every day? Traffic congestion in big cities is one of the key issues facing city planners these days. It has only continued to get worse, despite the attempts to solve these problems. Expensive solutions such as new flyovers, bus-only lanes, and park-and-ride options are all under consideration in many big cities. But these are all car-friendly solutions. What about the humble bicycle?

B Cycling is a key way of reducing traffic congestion and has other benefits as well. It saves fuel, is healthier for the cyclists (if they survive the trip unharmed), and reduces air pollution for all other commuters who walk or travel on other forms of transport. It provides a more cost-effective and efficient use of city space by reducing the need for enormous parking buildings and inner-city motorways. Another point is that cycling is a cheaper alternative than car ownership with its registration fees, fuel costs, and regular mechanical expenses. At present, many people drive over relatively short distances that could equally be travelled by bike. However, often the fear of cycling in heavy commuter traffic keeps such people off their bikes.

C Take a moment to think about those who risk the dangers of busy city roads on a bicycle. Cyclists are the most vulnerable people in heavy traffic. They move fast, they are balanced on two wheels, and they have no outer metal shell to protect them. If they are on their way to work, they may well be carrying work-related documents in a backpack

or pannier, which increases the balance problem. As cyclists are much smaller than vehicles, drivers frequently do not even notice them and accidents are common. Often, especially in hot weathers, cyclists only wear light clothing, which means the injuries they suffer are likely to be serious. Even helmets cannot always prevent fatal head injuries.

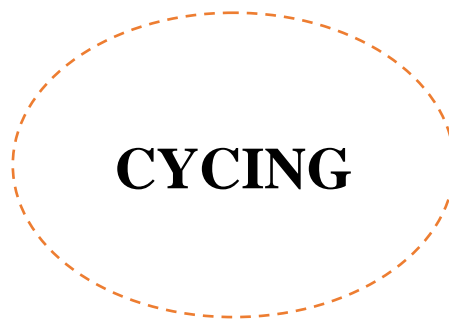
D What needs to happen for cyclists to feel comfortable cycling to work? The first major requirement is changing our ideas so that cycling becomes a sensible transport choice and cyclists are safe on the roads. Public education is an essential part of this to ensure that other road users are more considerate to cyclists and learn how to drive safely when bicycles are sharing the roads. Employers also need to be aware of cyclists' needs. These usually range from secure cycle racks to prevent theft to the provision of showers and lockers so people can change from cycling to business clothes once they arrive at work. Large companies might also find that providing "fleet cycles" to enable employees to go on errands during work hours is an efficient policy.

E The second major necessity is the development of a safe, convenient network of cycling pathways that link different parts of the city, but ideally are separate from the regular road system. These cycle paths should also allow for some separation of cyclists and pedestrians, as people walking can be badly injured or even killed if a cyclist collides with them. In areas where this is not possible, city streets should have clearly marked cycle lanes with restrictions to prevent drivers from using them.

F Some cities, for example, Copenhagen and Amsterdam, have made a particular effort to achieve this. They have developed areas that are either car-free (only pedestrians and cyclists) or "pedestrian priority," where pedestrians and cyclist have the right-of-way and cars are only permitted to move at slow speeds. Planners believe that the presence of cyclists at all hours of the day and evening keeps the city safer. Since 1995, there has been a city bike system in Copenhagen which allows anyone to borrow a bike from one of IIO bike stands around the city for a small deposit. Once the bike is returned to the same or another stand, this money is refunded. There has also been an active policy of establishing bike lanes, adding bike crossings to intersections, and reducing the number of car parks to discourage cars in the central city. Currently, about 34% of commuters in Copenhagen cycle to work.

G Cycling is clearly a healthy and effective alternative to the private car in our congested cities. The greater the proportion of cyclist to other vehicles, the safer cycling becomes. As some forward-thinking cities have demonstrated, there are many ways in which local city governments can actively encourage and subsidize cycling as a positive option for commuters. The most important of these requires some brave decisions to curb the dominance of the private car, and the gridlock experienced in all major cities shows that such action has become essential.

=> Based from the reading, simply make a mind map of the benefits of cycling:



SPEAKING SUPPLEMENTS

TOPIC 2 DISTANCE LEARNING

Related questions:

1. How do you understand the term “distance learning”?
2. In recent years, distance learning is becoming popular. Many schools have started to introduce their online learning courses. What do you think about it? Is it a positive development?
3. In your opinion, who may prefer distance learning?
4. What are the disadvantages of distance learning?
5. Do you think that someday schools will disappear and students will only study in an online environment?

Translate the following sentences into English:

+ Điều mà giáo dục từ xa có thể mang lại cho người học là có lợi, không thể phủ nhận điều đó. Người học có thể tiếp cận với tài liệu học bất kỳ lúc nào và ở đâu, giúp việc học dễ dàng hơn. Bên cạnh đó, không cần phải đi đến trường học cũng có nghĩa là tiết kiệm được chi phí đi lại và ăn ở, giảm bớt gánh nặng về tài chính cho người học. **(no doubt, ... SV, which + V, ... Besides, ... mean + V-ing_)**

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+ Vai trò giáo viên ở trường học là không thể thay đổi được. Họ không những chia sẻ kiến thức mà còn có thể đánh giá, truyền cảm hứng, và định hình những suy nghĩ của sinh viên về đạo đức, qua đó có thể giúp các em trở thành những thành viên có giá trị cho xã hội. **(not only ... but ... as well, thereby + V-ing)**

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+ Ai cũng có thể học thuộc lòng thông tin và được đào tạo tại chỗ làm, nhưng không phải ai cũng có khả năng tư duy phản biện và phân tích, đó là điều mà người học học được trong một môi trường giáo dục thật sự. **(Anyone can ..., but not everyone ...)**

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SOME VOCABULARY (They may or may not be related)

- theoretical (adj) thuộc lý thuyết
- practical (adj) thuộc thực hành
- nurture (v) nuôi dưỡng
- physical (adj) thể chất
- psychological (adj) tâm lý
- intelligence (n) trí thông minh
- intellectual (adj) thuộc trí óc (n) người trí thức
- motivate (v) làm thúc đẩy
- qualify (v) đủ điều kiện/phẩm chất/năng lực
- talent (n) tài năng
- curriculum (n) chương trình giảng dạy
- discipline (n) kỷ luật
- subject (n) môn học
- adolescent (adj) ở độ tuổi thanh thiếu niên, (n) thanh thiếu niên
- team spirit (n) tinh thần đồng đội
- well-rounded (adj) toàn diện
- adapt to (v) điều chỉnh để phù hợp/ thích nghi
- mature (adj) trưởng thành
- interactive (adj) có tính tương tác
- feedback (n) ý kiến phản hồi
- earn a living: kiếm sống
- feed/raise a family: nuôi sống gia đình
- learn by rote: học vẹt
- degree factory: nhà máy sản xuất bằng cấp
- learner-oriented (adj) hướng đến người học

- impart knowledge: truyền đạt kiến thức
- obtain/acquire knowledge and skills: đạt được kiến thức, kinh nghiệm
- practical and professional skills: kỹ năng nghề nghiệp và thực tế
- become qualified employees: trở thành nhân viên có trình độ chuyên môn
- become competitive in the job market: trở nên cạnh tranh trong thị trường lao động
- make contributions to social progress/development: đóng góp trong sự phát triển xã hội
- achieve life value: đạt được giá trị cuộc sống
- heavy burden of study and lack of sleep and physical exercise: gánh nặng học hành và sự thiếu ngủ lẫn thiếu vận động
- encourage students to think critically and independently: khuyến khích sinh viên tư duy phản biện và độc lập
- promote students' physical, intellectual and emotional development: thúc đẩy sự phát triển về thể chất, trí tuệ, và cảm xúc của sinh viên
- help foster in the young the morally sound values and outlook on the world and life: giúp lớp trẻ nuôi dưỡng những giá trị tốt đẹp về đạo đức và quan điểm về thế giới và cuộc sống
- A school is society in miniature: trường là xã hội thu nhỏ

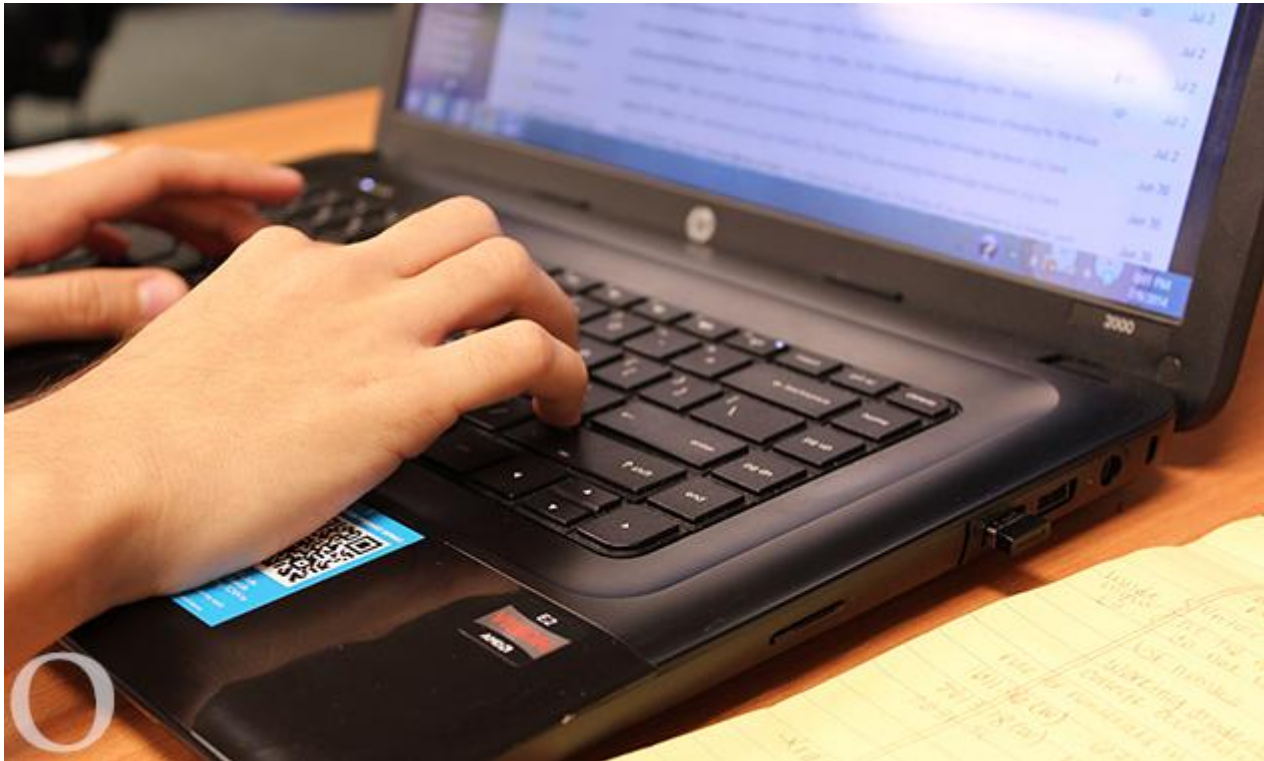
=> YOUR NOTES

PROS	CONS

READING SUPPLEMENTS FOR TOPIC 1**Online courses gain popularity on campus**

By Jeff Odom, STAFF WRITER

On January 29, 2015



Soon, a classroom with a professor who gestures and speaks to students may become a scene for the history films. With no end in sight, students are increasingly opting to take classes from behind a computer screen while in the comfort of their own homes.

USF is among the nation's leaders in online education, with graduate engineering, business and education programs ranked among U.S. News & World Report's list of the nation's top 30 universities for online learning.

Stephanie Harff, the executive director of marketing and recruitment for USF's Innovative Education program, said she thinks the high ranking is due to the university's growing number of options for online coursework.

Last year, 135 new online courses were added to the USF system, bringing the total to 3,064 among USF's Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota/Manatee campuses. All of USF's general education requirements can be completed online, as well as 17 percent of all degrees, according to Harff.

Cindy DeLuca, assistant vice provost for Innovative Education, said the substantial increase in options was done to meet the demands of students, 63 percent of whom have taken an online course during their enrollment.

"This is part of a broader national trend — one we expect to continue long into the future," she said.

The added number of courses also serves as a cost-effective measure for the university, Harff said. Each student is charged \$50 per credit hour as a long-distance fee that funds the "development and delivery" of all the courses.

The total amount of funding the university brings in depends on the semester. Since 2007, Harff said the fees have generated millions for the programs.

Many students have taken notice of the spike in online courses.

Abbie Smith, a junior majoring in biomedical sciences, said she noticed the increase while registering for classes and chose to take several different online options. She said they are convenient when balancing schoolwork with her part-time job as a pharmacy technician at a local grocery store.

"It can be much more convenient," Smith said. "Students are able to work at their own pace and complete the assignments at their own leisure. They don't have to wake up early to attend class. Instead, they can watch lectures at any hour of the day."

But some USF faculty members caution that convenience doesn't always necessarily mean the best choice.

Christopher Metzger, a geography and environmental science instructor, who taught several hybrid and online courses, said he saw firsthand the struggles that some students go through with online classes.

"I think it's better for some people, but not all people and that's something everyone has to assess," Metzger said. "I think if they take an online class and they don't do well in it, then they need to think about whether they are the type of person that needs to have it in-person and needs to ask questions to a human being. Some people are really good at it — some people shouldn't do it. It all depends."

Smith said she has found that the challenge is one reason online classes are more appealing to her.

"Online classes can also be much harder for some students," she said. "It requires time management, dedication and responsibility."

Metzger said while the online route provides a good option for students, he doesn't necessarily believe it's something that will be pushed enough to overtake the classroom completely because of older students that aren't completely technologically savvy.

"I think it's a matter of, is it good for them?" Metzger said. "I think that's what students and professors should think about and the schools should think about. If it's good, then that's fine. If it's not, then (students) need to take classes in person or take a hybrid or blended course."