

Listen to a conversation between 2 friends talking about overcoming pre-test nerves.

Optional activity:

While you listen, choose the correct option in **bold** in each of the following sentences.

- 1 Tim is worried about his **French/ German** speaking exam.
- 2 Tim is **good/ bad** at French.
- 3 Tim **knows/doesn't know** what the exam consists of.
- 4 Emma tells Tim to ask his **friends/family** to help.
- 5 Tim is worried that he'll speak too **little/much** in the exam.
- 6 Emma suggests downloading a French **film/podcast**.
- 7 Tim is not happy about the **content/number** of the photographs he'll have to talk about.
- 8 Emma shows Tim how to compare and contrast two **pictures/menus**.

Emma: Hi Tim, are you ok?

Tim: Er, no. Not really. I'm in a bit of a state actually.

E: Why? What's the matter?

T: I've got my French oral exam on Thursday and I'm really worried about it.

E: Why? You're really good at French.

T: I don't mind written exams but with orals ... I get nervous. How do you manage? You had your German oral last week, didn't you?

E: Yes. It was fine. I enjoyed it.

T: Enjoyed it?! Here I am trying to survive an oral exam and you are telling me that you actually enjoyed one!

E: Come and sit down. Let me give you some advice.

T: Thanks Emma - that would be great.

E: Ok, what exactly are you worried about? Your marks in French are usually good, aren't they?

T: Yes. It's one of my best subjects. I got 70% in the last exam.

E: And you know what the oral exam consists of, don't you?

T: Well, not exactly. I think we have to compare and contrast two pictures and they ask us about our hobbies ... the usual sort of thing.

E: Well, to start you ought to make sure you know what to expect. The more information you have, the better you'll feel. You get nervous when you don't know what to expect.

T: That's true.

E: So find out! Find out exactly what every stage of the exam consists of.

T: How can I do that?

E: Well, you should ask the teacher to explain exactly what happens. Ask her if you can do a mock oral in class.

T: A mock oral?

E: Yes, a practice. A trial run.

T: That's a good idea. I hadn't thought of that. What if she says no?

E: I'm sure she won't. But if she does, you should organise a mock oral with some friends. Two of you can practise while another person listens and takes the role of the examiner.

T: Ok. That sounds like good advice.

E: What else is worrying you?

T: I keep imagining myself in the exam and being unable to say a word.

E: Have you ever been unable to say a word?

T: No. I usually manage.

E: Then you ought to remember that! You shouldn't waste time worrying about something that can't happen.

You know enough French to have a conversation and so you won't freeze up. You ought to believe in yourself.

T: The trouble with a speaking exam is that you can't really revise before it.

E: Yes, you can! Why don't you read something in French, listen to some French music, watch a French film – it'll all help to get you into a French mood!

T: I hadn't thought of that.

E: Listening to the radio is a good idea too.

T: French radio?

E: Yes: You can listen on the internet – or download a French podcast – find something that you are interested in.

T: Good idea. I could listen to a film programme.

E: Yes. And did you say you have to compare and contrast two pictures?

T: Yes. The worst thing is that you have no idea what the pictures will show.

E: But you can practise.

T: How?

E: Just use any two pictures – and look for things that are the same and things that are different.

T: For example?

E: Well – look at this menu ... both of these pictures show sandwiches, but the first picture shows a ham sandwich and the other one

T:shows a cheese sandwich – yes. I get the idea.
(both laugh)

Answer key:

1. French; 2. good; 3. doesn't know; 4. friends; 5. much; 6. podcast; 7. content; 8. pictures