# **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)

## 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