

## **ACERT C1 Oral Exam – Description**

As in the ACERT oral exam at the B2 level, the exam consists of two parts. The first part focuses on a data visualisation, such as a bar chart or a pie chart. However, the graphs are more complex, and students are required to discuss more detailed and intricate data.

For example, you may be given a chart illustrating the annual investments of private companies in a particular country. This is followed by a set of questions connected thematically to the data. These questions require candidates to think critically and present well-developed arguments.

It is important to begin by describing the data presented, ideally in a clear and detailed manner. Afterwards, you should move on to answering the questions provided below the graph. This part of the exam is completed individually.

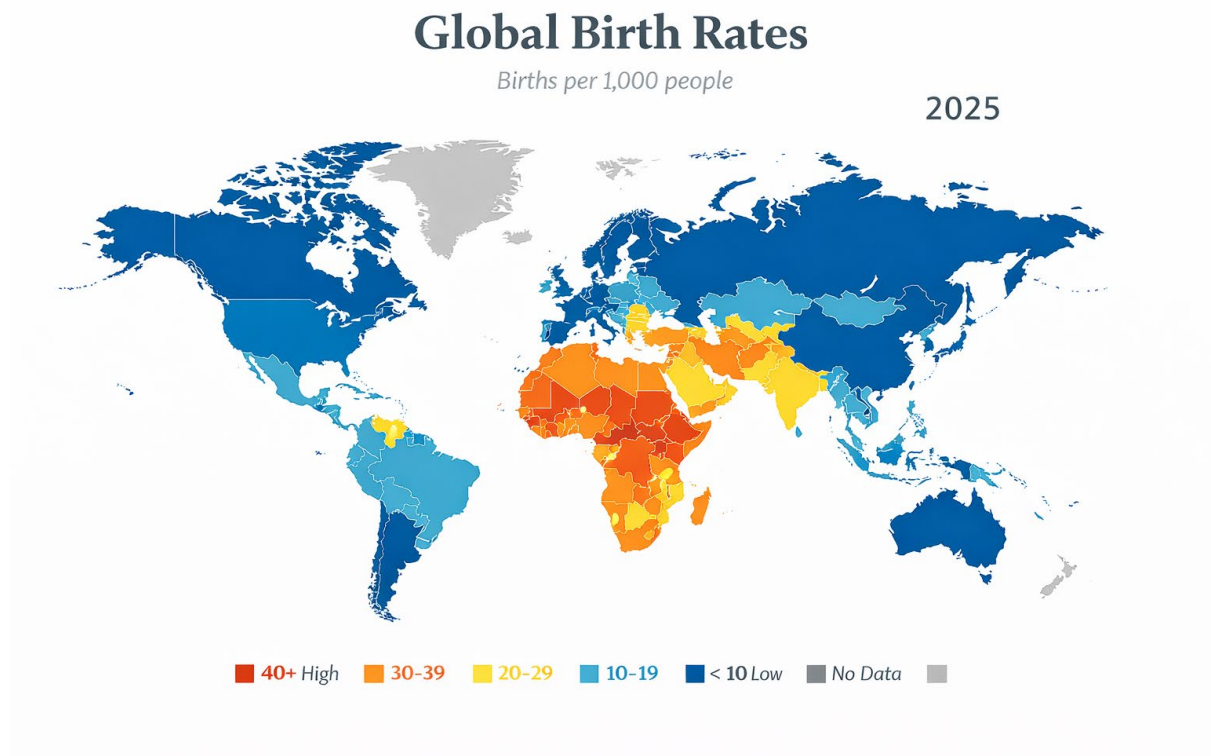
The second part of the ACERT exam is based on real-life situations and is carried out in pairs. Students are assigned specific roles and must take part in a role-play with their partner. As this is a C1-level exam, the situations tend to be more complex than those at lower levels and usually involve more extended discussions.

Below, you will find examples of Part 1 and Part 2 of the ACERT exam, along with model answers. Phrases and vocabulary suitable for a C1-level exam are highlighted in bold for reference.

## SET 1

### Part 1

Describe the graph and answer the questions below.



1. What factors might explain the significant differences in birth rates between regions? What are the possible long-term consequences of declining birth rates in developed countries? Is it a problem if the world population continues to grow unevenly? Why?
2. Do you think governments should try to influence birth rates? Why or why not? How do cultural values and lifestyle choices impact birth rates in different societies?

## Model answer

The map **illustrates** global birth rates in 2025, **measured** as the number of births per 1,000 people, with countries grouped into several colour-coded categories.

**Overall**, there is a clear and striking contrast between regions with high and low birth rates. **The highest figures**, indicated in dark orange and red, are heavily concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. In many of these countries, birth rates exceed 30 or even 40 births per 1,000 people.

Moving beyond this region, **moderately high** birth rates can also **be observed** in parts of the Middle East and South Asia, where several countries fall within the 20–29 or 30–39 range. These areas form a visible band stretching across parts of northern Africa and into Asia.

**By comparison**, much lower birth rates are evident in Europe, East Asia, and parts of North America. In these regions, many countries fall into the lowest category, with fewer than 10 births per 1,000 people. This pattern is particularly noticeable across most European countries **as well as** in countries such as Japan and South Korea.

**In addition**, there are regions with **moderate** birth rates, including parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia, where **figures typically range between 10 and 19** births per 1,000. These countries appear to form a transitional group between the highest and lowest categories.

**In summary**, the map **highlights** significant geographical variation in birth rates, with distinct clusters of high, medium, and low values across different parts of the world.

## Possible answers to monologue questions

1. **What factors might explain the significant differences in birth rates between regions? What are the possible long-term consequences of declining birth rates in developed countries? Is it a problem if the world population continues to grow unevenly? Why?**

Several **key factors** could account for the differences shown in the map. **Firstly**, one major influence is the level of economic development. In more developed countries, people often delay having children due to career ambitions and financial pressures.

Another important factor is access to education, particularly for women. It is widely observed that higher levels of education tend to be associated with lower birth rates. **In addition**, access to healthcare and family planning services plays a crucial role. In regions where such services are widely available, people are generally better able to control the number and timing of their children. **Moreover**, cultural norms and social expectations can also have a significant impact. In some societies, larger families are still highly valued, whereas in others, smaller families are more common.

One of the most **significant consequences** is an ageing population. As fewer children are born, the proportion of elderly people increases over time. This can place considerable pressure on healthcare systems and pension schemes, as there are fewer working-age people to support a growing retired population.

**Another potential issue** is a shrinking workforce. This may lead to labour shortages and could slow down economic growth in the long term. **Personally, I think** these issues are starting to be visible in a lot of European countries, Poland included. **Moreover**, countries with declining populations may face entirely different issues, including economic stagnation and a lack of workers. In my opinion, this has already been happening in small Polish towns.

**2. Do you think governments should try to influence birth rates? Why or why not? How do cultural values and lifestyle choices impact birth rates in different societies?**

**Moving on** to the second question, **in my opinion**, governments can play a role in influencing birth rates, but this should be done carefully and responsibly. **On the one hand**, it may be necessary to introduce policies that encourage higher birth rates in countries facing population decline, for example, through financial support or parental leave schemes.

**On the other hand**, governments should avoid being overly controlling, as decisions about having children are deeply personal. It is important to strike a balance between offering support and respecting individual freedom.

**I believe that** cultural values and lifestyle choices have a **profound** influence on birth rates. In some societies, having a large family is seen as desirable, often due to tradition or social expectations.

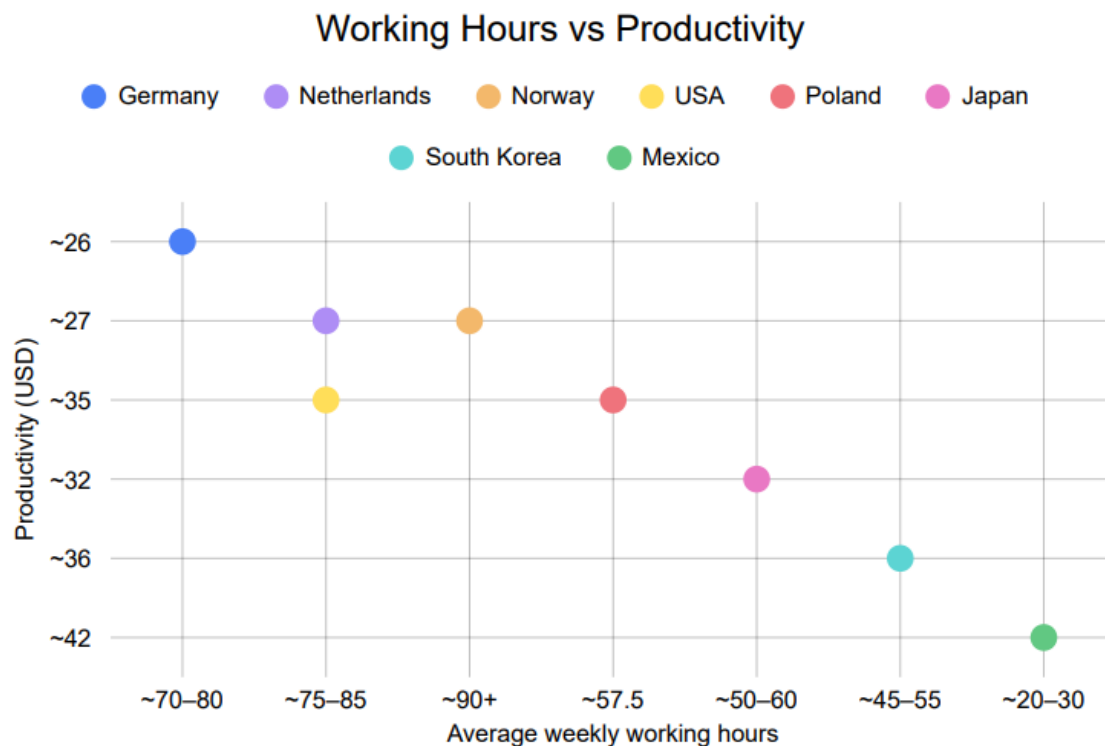
**In contrast**, in more individualistic societies, people may prioritise personal goals, such as education, career development, and travel, which can lead to delayed parenthood or fewer children. Lifestyle factors also play a role, particularly in urban environments, where the cost of living is higher, and living space may be limited. As a result, people may choose to have smaller families or not have children at all.

**Overall**, these cultural and lifestyle differences help to explain the variation in birth rates observed across the world.

## SET 2

### Part 1

Describe the graph and answer the questions below.



1. What underlying factors might account for the differences in productivity between countries? Why might countries with shorter working hours achieve higher productivity? What factors might influence productivity levels?
2. Do you agree that working fewer hours leads to greater efficiency? Why / why not? Should governments intervene to regulate working hours, or should this be left to the market? What are the social consequences of long working hours for individuals and families? How might these differences in working hours affect quality of life across countries?

## Model description

The table **provides an overview of** average weekly working hours in several countries, alongside their **labour productivity**, measured in USD per hour. **Overall, it is immediately apparent that** longer working hours **do not necessarily correspond to higher productivity levels**.

In terms of weekly working time, **Mexico stands out as** the country with **by far the highest figure**, at approximately 42 hours per week. **South Korea, Poland, and the United States also record relatively high values**, ranging from around 35 to 36 hours. **By contrast**, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway **report considerably shorter working weeks**, averaging only 26 to 27 hours.

When examining productivity, a **clear and somewhat surprising pattern emerges**. Norway **leads the ranking**, with productivity exceeding 90 USD per hour, despite its relatively low number of working hours. Similarly, Germany and the Netherlands **demonstrate strong performance**, with figures between 70 and 85 USD per hour. **In contrast**, Mexico and South Korea **show significantly lower productivity levels**, at roughly 20 to 55 USD per hour.

The United States represents a **notable exception**, combining longer working hours with **consistently high productivity**. Poland, however, **does not follow this pattern**, as it records relatively long working hours but **comparatively modest productivity**.

**In conclusion, the data clearly suggests that** working longer hours **does not automatically result in greater efficiency**, and that countries with shorter working weeks may, in fact, **achieve higher levels of productivity**.

## Possible answers to monologue questions

1. What underlying factors might account for the differences in productivity between countries? Why might countries with shorter working hours achieve higher productivity? What factors might influence productivity levels?

A range of **underlying factors may account for** the differences in productivity observed between countries. **First and foremost**, the level of technological development plays a crucial role, as more advanced economies tend to **benefit from automation and efficient systems**. In addition, education and workforce skills are likely to **have a significant impact on** output per hour. It is also worth noting that cultural attitudes towards work, as well as management practices, may **contribute to shaping** productivity levels.

As for why countries with shorter working hours might achieve higher productivity, one possible explanation is that employees are **less prone to fatigue and burnout**, which allows them to **maintain a consistently high level of performance**. **In other words**, working fewer hours may encourage greater focus and efficiency. Furthermore, organisations in such countries may place a stronger emphasis on **output rather than time spent at work**, thereby **maximising overall effectiveness**.

2. Do you agree that working fewer hours leads to greater efficiency? Why / why not? Should governments intervene to regulate working hours, or should this be left to the market? What are the social consequences of long working hours for individuals and families? How might these differences in working hours affect quality of life across countries?

**Personally, I would argue that** working fewer hours can indeed lead to greater efficiency, although this is not always the case. While reduced hours may **enhance concentration and motivation**, excessively short working weeks could potentially **limit overall output**. **Therefore, a balance needs to be struck** between working time and productivity.



When it comes to government intervention, this is a **highly debated issue**. On the one hand, governments may need to **step in to regulate working hours** in order to **protect employees' well-being** and prevent exploitation. On the other hand, leaving such decisions to the market could allow for **greater flexibility and competitiveness**. **Ultimately, a mixed approach may be the most effective solution.**

The social consequences of long working hours are **considerable and far-reaching**. Individuals may experience **increased stress levels, fatigue, and a decline in mental health**, while families may suffer due to a **lack of quality time together**. Over time, this can lead to **weakened social bonds** and reduced overall well-being.

Finally, these differences in working hours are likely to **have a direct impact on quality of life** across countries. Societies with shorter working weeks may enjoy **a better work-life balance**, more leisure time, and improved health outcomes. **By contrast**, those with longer hours may face **greater pressure and lower life satisfaction**, despite potentially higher total earnings.

## **PART 2**

Below you can see a list of situations or discussion issues similar to those that are likely to come up during the second part of the Acert C1 exam. This part is taken in pairs.

### **1. Gap year**

A. You want to take a gap year to travel and volunteer abroad instead of going straight to university. Try to convince Student B, your teacher, that this will be beneficial for your future.

B. You are Student A's teacher. You believe taking a gap year is risky and may negatively affect their academic progress. Try to persuade Student A to continue their education without a break.

## 2. Building a shopping centre

Your city is planning to build a large shopping centre. You support the idea. Try to convince Student B, a local resident, that this development will benefit the community.

B. You are a local resident who strongly opposes the construction of a new shopping centre. Explain your concerns and try to persuade Student A that this is a bad idea.

## 3. Career change

A. You want to change your career path completely. Discuss your decision with Student B, a close friend, and explain your reasons.

B. You think Student A is making a risky decision by changing careers. Express your concerns and try to make them reconsider.

## 4. Free university education

A. You believe that university education should be free for everyone. Try to convince Student B of your viewpoint.

B. You believe that students should contribute financially to their education. Challenge Student A's arguments and defend your position.

## 5. Pet adoption

A. You want to adopt a pet from an animal shelter. Try to convince Student B, your flatmate, that this is a good idea.

B. You are Student A's flatmate, and you are not convinced about having a pet at home. Explain your concerns and suggest alternatives.

## 6. Social media impact

A. You believe that social media has a mostly positive impact on society. Try to convince Student B of your opinion.

B. You believe that social media does more harm than good. Present your arguments and challenge Student A's views.

Below, there are models of answers to the first two topics. Again, a vital thing to do is to use functional language, which is highlighted and explained below the conversations. The language does not have to be very formal, but ensure you use a variety of language structures and vocabulary on a C1 level. Moreover, using two or more arguments in each case will be beneficial for your overall exam score.

Functional language and advanced, C1 vocabulary are highlighted for your reference. Moreover, functions are explained below each conversation.

## Model Discussions

### 1. Gap year

**A:** I was thinking about taking a gap year before I go on to university. I know what you think about this idea, **but I'd like to start by saying that** taking a gap year could be a **valuable opportunity for personal development**. I'm planning to travel and volunteer, which would allow me to **gain practical experience and broaden my perspective**.

**B:** I see your point, **but I'm concerned that** taking a year off might disrupt your academic progress. **You might find it difficult to return to studying afterwards**.

**A:** **That's a fair concern; however**, many students actually come back **more motivated and focused**. **In fact**, this experience could help me **make more informed decisions about my future studies**.

**B:** **While that may be true**, there's also the risk that you could **lose momentum**. **Have you considered** how you will stay academically engaged during that time?

**A:** **Yes, I have**. I **intend to** take part in structured programmes and possibly complete online courses. **This way, I would be able to** continue learning while gaining real-world experience.

**B:** I'm **still not entirely convinced that** this is the best option. **From my perspective**, it would be safer to continue directly to university.

**A:** I understand your reservations, but I strongly believe that this experience will make me a more independent and well-rounded individual, which could ultimately benefit my academic performance.

**B:** It sounds like I cannot convince you, so I'll be crossing my fingers that you do everything you've just said, and I'll be seeing you starting college in a year!

Functional Language Used:

- “I’d like to start by saying that...” formal way to introduce your argument
- “I see your point, but...” polite disagreement
- “That’s a fair concern, however...” acknowledgement + counter-argument
- “In fact,” strengthening your argument
- “While that may be true,” balanced, academic-style contrast
- “Have you considered...?” soft challenge / prompting reflection
- “I intend to...” / “I would be able to...” expressing plans clearly
- “I’m not entirely convinced that...” cautious disagreement
- “From my perspective...” giving an opinion in a formal way
- “I strongly believe that...” emphasising your stance
- “I understand your reservations, but...” advanced concession + persuasion

## 2. Building a shopping centre

**A:** Have you heard about the new shopping centre plans? They look **outstanding**. Not only this, but I firmly believe that building a new shopping centre would bring significant economic benefits to the area, particularly in terms of job creation and investment.

**B:** I’m afraid I have to disagree. Such a development could have a negative impact on local businesses, which might struggle to compete. All local shops will close!

**A:** That’s a valid point, but at the same time, the shopping centre could attract more visitors, which may actually increase overall economic activity. Some of those local enterprises can just relocate to the new shopping centre. I’ve heard that it stimulates competition and is beneficial for businesses to be in one place.

**B: I'm not convinced that** this would benefit everyone. **In many cases**, small shops are forced to close as a result of large developments, and instead of relocating, as you said, only big names will be available. Renting retail space is often too pricey for small companies, often owned and managed by just one or two people.

**A: While there is some truth in that**, the project could also **create new opportunities for local people**, for example, by creating new job opportunities.

**B:** So instead of being self-employed, you can work for the H&M brand? I just don't see it. **Another issue to consider is that** such a project could lead to **increased traffic and environmental damage**.

**A: That's certainly a concern. However, it could be addressed by** careful urban planning and investment in public transport.

**B: Even so, I would argue that** the disadvantages **outweigh the potential benefits**.

**A: I take your point, but on balance, I would say that** the development is likely to **have a positive long-term impact** on the community. Let's agree to disagree and see how it plays out!

#### Functional Language Used

- **"I firmly believe that..."** strong, confident opinion
  - **"I'm afraid I have to disagree."** polite but clear disagreement
  - **"That's a valid point, but..."** acknowledging + contrasting
  - **"At the same time..."** adding balance
  - **"I'm not convinced that..."** expressing doubt
  - **"In many cases,"** generalising carefully
  - **"While there is some truth in that,"** sophisticated concession
  - **"Another issue to consider is that..."** introducing a new argument
  - **"That's certainly a concern. However..."** structured counter-argument
  - **"Even so, I would argue that..."** formal persuasion
  - **"On balance, I would say that..."** weighing arguments
- "Outweigh the potential benefits"** advanced evaluative