Compare photos

The examiner doesn't want two descriptions. They want a comparison and an answer. Here's how.

Cómo comparar fotos en el Speaking de B2 First y C1 Advanced (Part 2), con plan, frases y respuesta modelo.

1 What is the task?

¿En qué consiste?

B2 B2 First · Part 2

You get **two photos** and a question printed above them. Compare the photos **and** answer the question. Then answer a short question about your partner's photos.

1 min	2	30 s
your turn	photos	partner's photos

C1 C1 Advanced · Part 2

You get **three photos** and two questions. Choose **two** photos, compare them and answer **both** questions. Then a short answer about your partner's photos.

1 min	3	30 s
your turn	photos (use 2)	partner's photos

2 The golden rule

La regla de oro

✕ **Two separate descriptions**

"In the first photo there is a man. He is fishing. He is alone. In the second photo there are a lot of people. They are at a concert..."

✓ **A real comparison**

"**Both photos show** people spending their free time outdoors, **but while** the man in the first one is enjoying some peace and quiet, the people in the second one are surrounded by noise and crowds."

3 Your 60-second plan

Tu plan de 60 segundos

1 · 0–5 s	2 · 5–20 s	3 · 20–30 s	4 · 30–55 s	5 · 55–60 s
Link	**Compare**	**Contrast**	**Answer**	**Round off**
Say what both photos have in common.	One clear similarity...	...and one or two differences.	The question above the photos. **Speculate!** This is the key part.	Personally, I'd rather...

4 Before you start

Consejos rápidos

1. **Read the question** above the photos first. Half your minute should answer it.
2. **Don't describe details** (colours, clothes) unless they help you compare.
3. **Speculate** with might, may, could, must, can't — examiners listen for it.
4. **Keep talking** until the examiner says "Thank you". Silence wastes your time.
5. **Listen** while your partner speaks — you'll get a question about their photos.
6. **C1:** say which two photos you've chosen, and answer **both** questions.

5 Phrases for each step

Frases útiles por nivel

Function	B1 B2 B2 First	C1 C1 upgrade
Compare Similitudes	Both photos show... · In both pictures... · They both...	What the two photos have in common is... · Similarly, ...
Contrast Diferencias	The main difference is... · While the first..., the second... · However, ...	In stark contrast, ... · Whereas..., ... · The second photo, on the other hand, ...
Speculate Especular	They might be... · It looks as if... · Perhaps they...	They must have... · It can't be easy to... · I get the impression that... · Judging by their faces, ...
Answer the question Responder	I think they've chosen this because... · The reason could be...	The most likely explanation is that... · What they probably value most is...

6 Model answer

Respuesta modelo · nivel B2

≈ 145 words · 1 minute

Photo A: a man fishing alone by a lake · **Photo B:** young people at a music festival
Question: Why have the people chosen to spend their free time in these ways?

1 Both photos show people spending their free time outdoors, 2 but they couldn't be more different. While the man in the first photo is completely on his own by a lake, the people in the second one are at a crowded music festival. 3 The man might have chosen fishing because he needs to get away from a stressful job. It looks as if he's really enjoying the silence. The people at the festival, on the other hand, seem to be there for the atmosphere and the music. They must be having a great time with their friends, although it can't be very relaxing. 4 Personally, I'd rather go to the festival — I'd find fishing a bit boring!

1 Link both photos immediately.
2 Contrast in the same sentence.
3 Answer the question with modals of speculation.
4 Short personal round-off.

7 Spanish speakers' traps

Errores típicos

✗ ~~The both photos show...~~
✓ **Both photos show...**
no "the" before **both**

✗ ~~In the other hand...~~
✓ **On the other hand...**
on the other hand

✗ ~~It seems that they are be happy.~~
✓ **They seem to be happy.**
seem **to be**

✗ ~~This is more better.~~
✓ **This is much better.**
no "more" + -er

✗ ~~Maybe... maybe... maybe...~~
✓ **might / could / it looks as if**
vary your speculation

✗ ~~They are doing sport like hobby.~~
✓ **They do sport as a hobby.**
as = role/function

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