

# 2020 SPEAKING MODEL ANSWERS



**IELTS**

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## **PART ONE**

### parks

**Q1: How often do you go to a park?**

I try to visit my local park frequently on my way home from work, weather permitting. Fortunately, my local and favorite park is close to home. It is usually quiet and peaceful.

**Q2: What activities do you do in a park?**

After a long day at work, I usually enjoy a quiet spot on many of the benches beside the pathway. It's a good place to watch people and observe the activities. I'll also enjoy a snack and beverage.

**Q3: Do you prefer small parks or big parks?**

My daily park visits are at a small park near home. On the weekends, however, I like to go to a large park as there are lots of activities and things to do and see.

**Q4: Do people in your country like going to parks?**

In the village where I come from there are few parks nearby but lots of green spaces for people to enjoy. People in the cities love to get out of the house and frequent parks. I often see small groups enjoying a picnic, chilling out and relaxing.

### breaks from work or study

**Q1: What do you usually do during a break?**

At work, I get two coffee breaks and a mid-shift break. The coffee breaks are short and I like to stretch my tight muscles before grabbing a cup of tea and resuming work. Mid shift breaks allow me to have a bite to eat and relax for a while.

**Q2: Do you prefer a long break or several short breaks?**

I work at my desk and stare at my computer monitor for long periods of time. I therefore, prefer a number of short breaks. I like to get up, stretch, move around to get the blood moving and freshen my coffee before returning to my cubicle.

**Q3: How often do you take a break?**

At work my employer allows breaks which are scheduled every two hours with morning and afternoon breaks and a longer break mid shift to allow for a rejuvenating meal and a little bit of exercise. Although breaks are design to allow employees to get away from their desks, many of my colleagues prefer to continue working to meet their deadlines.

**Q4: Why do you need to take a break?**

Breaks are necessary for me to get away from my desk because gives me an opportunity to relax my muscles and sometimes massage my shoulders and neck. Also, they give my eyes a chance to rest from staring at my computer monitor.

## numbers and maths

### **Q1: Are you good at maths?**

In secondary school I did well in math especially in algebra and trigonometry however when I went to university I found the curriculum more difficult. I had to study intensively as math was more complex. I especially had difficulty with calculus.

### **Q2: How often do you need to use maths?**

I use math and arithmetic every day especially to calculate my daily spending. I rarely use a calculator for simple addition and multiplication, at and away from the office. For difficult calculations, I will use my computer or smartphone.

### **Q3: What is your favorite number?**

Seven is my favorite number as it has been a recurring number in my life. I hit a triple seven on a slot machine once which paid a sizeable jackpot. I always buy a lottery ticket with one or more sevens.

### **Q4: Are you good at remembering phone numbers?**

In the past before cell phones, telephone numbers were only 7 or 8 digits and easy to remember. Today with most people using mobile phones remembering numbers are not necessary. I also rely on my cell and don't remember numbers.

## science classes

### **Q1: Do you like learning about science?**

When I was in elementary school I was fascinated with dinosaurs and had many dinosaur figurines. My fascination with science continued as I watched many space and nature shows on TV. As an adult, I still love science and watch documentaries and other science shows.

### **Q2: Did you study science at school?**

In secondary school, I did not do well in the arts such as language nor did I do well in math. The sciences is where my interests lied. I enjoyed studying and science projects in the classrooms.

### **Q3: What kind of science classes did you take at school?**

In high school, I preferred chemistry and physics as there were a lot of hands-on experiments in the classroom. I had teachers that were very good at demonstrating and explaining how science worked. My least favorite science class was biology which was interesting but I didn't enjoy dissecting animals.

### **Q4: Do you think science is important?**

I believe science is very important we understand our earth's history, weather and climate. Science, of course, has led to the development of technology which we enjoy today such as transportation and communication. Sciences has also enabled us to explore our solar system and the universe beyond.

## history

### **Q1: Do you like learning about history?**

I find our history fascinating and I very much enjoy our evolution from prehistoric animals to our modern civilization. Unfortunately, history is riddled war and violence however hopefully we are learning from our errors and will become more peaceful. I watch historic documentaries as often as they are available.

### **Q2: When was the last time you read about history?**

Since I am planning to travel to Europe next year, I thought it would be a good idea to research European history during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I recently finished reading about the events leading up to, during and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. It was interesting and I think it will be beneficial for me when I visit historical sites in Europe.

### **Q3: Did you like history when you were young?**

When I was still attending school I was not interested in history. I was too busy hanging out with my friends and discovering my surroundings. Now I have respect for history as it is fascinating and educational. I also enjoy watching historical dramas and documentaries.

### **Q4: Have you ever been to any history museums?**

When I was in elementary school my parents took me to a historical museum. It was an inexpensive and fascinating trip and I especially enjoyed the old tools and equipment. Nowadays I regularly go to museums and historical sites to relax and be entertained.

## scenery

### **Q1: Is there good scenery in the area you live in?**

I live and commute in the city and the scenery is minimal at best. Therefore on my days off, I like to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and visit the countryside. There I can enjoy the fresh air, quiet places and take in the scenery.

### **Q2: Do you like to take photos of scenery?**

When I escape the pollution and congestion of the city, I have my smart phone to snap pictures of my surroundings. For example last month I went to the beach and watched the sunset. I got some amazing pictures of the ocean and the setting sun.

### **Q3: What scenic places are there in your country?**

There are many places to adventure and enjoy the scenery. Many people in my county travel to the beach, mountains and historical sites. Just last summer, my friends and I climbed up a mountain. The scenery along the way and the view was spectacular.

### **Q4: When you travel, do you like to stay in hotels with scenic views?**

Hotels with views are nice but not a necessity for me as I spend very little time there. I mainly sleep and freshen up in the morning to go to the places or activities I have planned. At home, I live in a high-rise apartment building and do enjoy the scenery and city view from my balcony.

## **cakes and desserts**

### **Q1: Do you like to eat dessert?**

For me, when I was growing up, mom would try to make healthy desserts. Sliced fruit with milk or ice cream was a common dessert, which I enjoyed. My mom would also make sweet-breads containing dried fruit which were a favorite of mine.

### **Q2: Have you ever made any cakes?**

When I was young, I would help my mother in the kitchen preparing meals. She believed it was important to teach me to cook so I could look after myself when I left home. I helped her make cakes for special occasions, but I have never made one myself.

### **Q3: Do you like eating cake?**

Myself, I am not a big dessert fan. I try to eat healthy; and cakes and desserts are too sweet for my taste and are full of sugar and calories. I will indulge in cake at birthday parties and wedding celebrations however.

### **Q4: What desserts do people in your country like?**

Where I live dessert is not a regular part of a meal offering. People will at times have a dessert like cakes and pies when they are out at a restaurant. Other sweets that people like are ice-cream, chocolates and candies which are very popular.

## **art**

### **Q1: Do you like art?**

I am not an artist myself, but as a kid, I painted and drew as part of art classes in elementary school. I do appreciate and admire the creations of artists. When I get more leisure time I may take up painting.

### **Q2: Have you ever visited an art gallery?**

There are many museums and art galleries that tourists and Chinese people like to visit for example The China Art Museum in Shanghai where historical and contemporary art is displayed. I was fortunate to have some time off and me and my friends visited the China Art Museum last summer.

### **Q3: Is there any artwork on the wall in your home?**

I don't have any original artwork in my apartment. I do however have some photographs that I had enlarged and framed that are hanging in my living room. They were taken during my trip last year to the beach and during the previous year climbing a mountain.

### **Q4: Have you ever had any art classes?**

A few years ago, my girlfriend convinced me that we should do more activities together. Perhaps inspired by the movie "ghost", she convinced me that pottery classes were the best choice. I still have some vases and bowls from those classes.

## pens and pencils

### **Q1: Do you usually use a pen or a pencil?**

Today pencils are not commonly available in general stores. If you want one you need to shop at a stationery store. My writing tool of choice is my computer but for quick notes I have a pen handy. I prefer a quality ball-point pen rather than the disposable pens that are available.

### **Q2: When was the last time you bought a pen or pencil?**

I recently went to an art store in my neighborhood to purchase some pens. My much younger cousin enjoys coloring pictures, so I thought colored pencils would be an excellent gift for her. I have them gift wrapped and will give them to her as a birthday present.

### **Q3: Have you ever received a pen or pencil as a gift?**

When I graduated from university, one of the special gifts I received was a ball-point pen with the school colors and engraved with the year of my graduation. I was excited and appreciated the thoughtfulness of the gift. It is a special souvenir that I cherish and keep safe.

### **Q4: Do people in your country prefer to use pens or pencils?**

Where I live, pencils are rarely available. You usually need to go to a specialty store to purchase one. Ink is more durable than lead pencils so pens would be the choice for the vast majority of people.

## spending time by yourself

### **Q1: How often do you spend time by yourself?**

I am single and don't have a special person in my life therefore I spend a lot of time by myself. When commuting back and forth to work, I take public transfer transit, so I share the bus with many people and at that time I am not by myself. Most of my time alone is during the evenings.

### **Q2: What did you do last time you were by yourself?**

I live a routine in scheduled life when not at work. Last night after a couple of hours of studying, I watched some television. Last night's show I watched was a documentary on space and our solar system.

### **Q3: Do you like spending a lot of time by yourself?**

I actually enjoy being single as I can schedule my activities when I want. I like being alone during my studies and have the flexibility with time. I enjoy being able to relax, read a book or watch television.

### **Q4: When do you usually spend time by yourself?**

My time is pretty well scheduled between my commute to and from work and my long working hours. On the way home I usually go shopping and may go to a restaurant for a casual meal alone. Most of my time being by myself would be in the evenings, studying, reading or watching a movie.

## laughing

### **Q1: How often do you laugh?**

I have a laugh or chuckle every day. It might be a funny post on social media or cartoon in the paper that I find humorous. On the weekends I will get together with my friends to relax, chill out and exchange some jokes.

### **Q2: Do you like to watch funny movies or TV shows?**

My preferred television and movie shows are drama and documentaries. To relax, however, I do enjoy watching comedy on television but I rarely go to a theater. I enjoy comedy centered on families and friends rather than slapstick humor.

### **Q3: Are you the kind of person who makes other people laugh?**

I am certainly not a stand-up comedian. I do, however, enjoy meeting up with my friends at a restaurant or bar and exchanging stories and jokes. I am not a person that likes to be the center of attention but I can tell a pretty good joke and make people laugh.

### **Q4: Do you think it is important to laugh with friends?**

I believe that having a good sense of humor and enjoying laughter is good for your health. I love to meet up with my friends and enjoy their company as we always have a few laughs over a meal and drinks. I believe having a good sense of humor that you share, builds friendship and comradeship.

## water sports

### **Q1: What water sports do you like doing?**

When I was a child I played with my friends at the local lake, swimming, fishing and splashing each other which was a lot of fun. In university, I competed on the swim team. We won a few tournaments and I enjoyed the comradeship and celebrations. I also enjoyed the competitiveness and challenges of swimming when I was a student.

### **Q2: What kind of water sports do you want to try?**

While watching the Summer Olympics hosted in Beijing, I was amazed by the talent and competitiveness of diving. I have always lived near the water and have participated in many water sports with the exception of diving. I would like to participate in this sport in the future.

### **Q3: Have you ever done any dangerous water sports?**

I have great concern for my safety and with the power of the ocean and rivers, I always ensure safety gear is handy should an emergency arise. When on small boats I will always wear a life preserver as I never know if there might be an accident. With these issues in mind, I have never participated in any dangerous sports.

### **Q4: Are water sports popular in your country?**

Chinese people have a very busy lifestyle with work and studying therefore leisure or free time is infrequent. Popular water sports in China would include swimming, diving, dragon boat racing and other rowing activities. On the beaches, you may also see people surfing and wind sailing.

## running

### **Q1: How often do you run?**

I have a busy life with working and studying so the opportunities to go for a run after work are few. I do however put time aside to jog at least three times a week which helps me relax and keep fit. On the weekends I would have a longer running workout.

### **Q2: Where do you usually go running?**

There are some different choices to go running near where I live. My local park offers a green space where joggers get together and run a predetermined course around the park. There is also a track and field facility that allows for more competitive running.

### **Q3: Did you like running when you were a child?**

When I was in elementary school, we had many sports days during the year that would involve running as one of the activities. I loved the running sports and although I wasn't the best runner, I was competitive and enjoyed the company and interactions with the other kids.

### **Q4: Do you think running is a good way to stay healthy?**

I believe running is an excellent way to stay healthy and improve your fitness. Not only does it help build muscles and endurance, it also is a good cardio exercise. However many people have difficulties when running with their knees and joints and alternate exercises including rowing and swimming may be better suited for them.

To just see a list of the current speaking questions see here:

<https://www.ieltsanswers.com/current-ielts-speaking-test-questions-2020.html>

## Questions From 2019.

Most of these questions are still in the test!

### job...

#### What kind of work do you do?

Well now, I'm an athletic trainer in a small gym, and I also have to help out at the reception desk and also in the retail shop we run. I guess you can say that I have to wear many hats.

#### Why did you choose that kind of work?

Ok, that's quite an easy question. It's because I've always been keen on sports, so when I was trying to find a job, I decided to look for something I'm familiar with. Luckily I found a golden opportunity at the gym just down the road from my house.

#### Is there anything you don't like about your job?

Well there are some things I don't like, but it's not related to the job itself. I mean this job is great, I love to guide people about how to exercise, it's meaningful. However, the one thing I don't like is that there is not much team spirit amongst my co-workers. I guess you could say that my gym has low workplace

**morale. I think this is the only thing bothering me.**

### studies...

#### Where are you studying?

I'm studying at Sydney University. It's a very prestigious university, and the lecturers are really demanding and give lots of assignments, so I often have to study until the wee hours. [Underlined words are explained below in the idioms section.]

#### Why did you choose to study there?

Actually I chose the school for a few reasons. Most importantly, I chose to study there because it has the most up-to-date knowledge in my area. As well as this, the University has a student centered approach, so I feel my learning needs are really taken care of.

#### What would you like to do after you finish your studies?

Well I think it depends. I think that my course will help me to set the stage for my future career. I'd like to join one of the top five accounting companies, but if my grades aren't high enough I will go to work at my uncle's accounting firm.

## house/apartment

### **Do you live in a house or in an apartment?**

I live in a modern high-rise apartment complex. It's a wonderful place to live because it has lots of amenities such as a gym, sauna, and swimming pool.

### **Which room of your apartment do you like most?**

Oh, it's definitely the living room. I live on the 25th floor and it has lots of windows that give me a bird's eye view of the city. I love to sit on the sofa and drink my coffee in the morning and enjoy the fantastic view.

### **If you could change one thing about your home, what would it be?**

There are a couple of things. I guess the main thing is that it has become a bit run down. My dad really needs to renovate our apartment...you know...paint the walls...that sort of thing.

## hometown

### **What's the name of your hometown?**

Perth is my hometown it's a city located in the west of my country.

### **Is it a big or a small place?**

Actually, it is a small city with slightly over than 1 million people. It has beautiful beaches. In addition, due to the increasing economy, a number of businesses, especially in mining, are investing in my hometown that turns it into a promising area.

### **What do you like most about your hometown?**

I like the hospitality and the goodwill of people there. Everyone is willing to give others a hand when they need help. In addition, There are a lot of parks and recreational areas.

## singing

### **How often do you sing?**

I absolutely love singing. When I'm into a song, I can't help myself from singing it all day and night. Although my family hate it when I sing and they complain that it's not sounding great.

### **When do you like to sing?**

I sing whenever I feel like to, you know, when I'm bored or when I'm in a good mood. And since I'm not that type of a so-called performer, most of the time I sing for myself.

### **Do you like to hear other people sing?**

Well, it really depends who it is. My mother has an excellent voice and I love to hear her sing. However, my little sister has an annoying high pitch tone and I can't stand to hear her sing.

### **Have you ever wanted to be a singer?**

Well, from what I've known, being a singer is not easy at all. It's not just about performing, but it also involves in interaction with fans and other colleagues. Based on what I've known about showbiz, and even the music industry in general, I think that I don't belong to that world.

## **sunny days**

### **Do you like sunny weather?**

I definitely love sunny days, on which I can hang out with friends or do some sports. It is even better when the winds blowing. Sunny days are also good days to hang out laundry as well as cleaning both inside and outside the house.

### **What do you like to do when it's a sunny day?**

I love to participate in some outdoor activities under the sun like meeting up with some friends or do some sports, especially swimming. Or I grab the chance to do some photography. Everything becomes so clear and stunning on sunny days, no matter it's early in the morning or late in the afternoon, as long as the sun shines, I'm sure I'll find inspiration almost everywhere.

### **Do you do anything to protect yourself from the sun?**

Absolutely, I know all about skin cancer and when I go out I always like to put on sun screen and wear a hat. As well as this, to protect my eyes from the glare and UV rays of the sun I wear sunglasses.

### **Are there many sunny days where you live?**

It is a modern big city so unless it's our rainy season, otherwise the sun would shine most of the time, either during one day or the whole year. Sometimes the temperature rises so high that it feels like burning, that's when people prefer staying indoor enjoying the cool air produced by air conditioners.

## **weekends**

### **What do you do at the weekend?**

Usually I prefer staying at home, I spend my spare time on my hobbies such as gardening and pottery. Usually, in the evening I like listening to some music and going onto some social networking site such as Facebook or Instagram.

### **What did you do last weekend?**

Like every weekend I had a big sleep in both Saturday and Sunday mornings. I spent most of Saturday chilling out and cooked myself a big yummy meal and watched some TV. Besides, Sunday I spent most of the day online chatting with my friends and at night I went to bed early.

### **What are you going to do next weekend?**

I don't have any actual plan for this weekend, to be honest. If the weather is nice, I will probably have a barbeque and chit chat with my friends, since we don't see each other often during weekdays. Otherwise, if it's wet I'll just stay home, continue with my homework and watch a bit of TV.

### **Do you feel that weekends now are more important to you than when you were a child?**

Yes, weekends or day offs are becoming more important to me. Since working time accounts for higher proportion of my schedule, I barely have time for family or friends, not to mention taking care of ourselves. Back then I was of course more relaxed. There were no pressure, no deadlines and I have my parents take care of me.

## art

### Do you like art?

I have had a lifelong passion for art since I was a child. Beside official art class in school, I also participated in some drawing competitions back then. Until now I still draw in my free time, although not as often as I used to do.

### How often do you visit art galleries?

To tell you the truth, I have never visited art galleries before. Unless I had a guide to acknowledge me, art galleries would be quite boring for me. Well, I suppose if I went overseas I might visit some of the famous galleries.

### Do you think art should be a compulsory school subject?

Yes I do. Learning arts, especially at a young age, can help stimulate children's cognitive development and encourage them to think outside the box. So, I think it's important for every student to take this subject.

### What kind of paintings do people like in your country?

In my opinion, people love hanging landscape paintings at home. Bringing in the beauty of Mother Nature somehow ease people's mind after a long day at work. Another style that most people like is portraits. It could be portraits of someone important to them or even their lovely pets.

## hats

### Do you like to wear hats?

Although hats help shield your hair and face from direct sunlight, to be honest I don't really like wearing hats daily. My hair is always a mess after I take them off. Instead of wearing hats, I think I prefer bringing an umbrella with me.

### What kinds of hats do you have?

Well as I've mentioned, wearing hats is definitely not my daily style, so generally I don't have any hats at home. There is the only type of hat I'm particularly fond of, which is baseball caps. This kind of hat can give me a sporty and strong look, you know.

### Did you wear hats when you were a child?

Yes. My school uniform had a grey cap in it and we had to wear our cap to and from school, but we did not wear it when we were inside the classroom. My mother also used to make me wear a hat when I went to the beach to prevent sunburn.

### Is wearing a hat popular in your country?

Well in my country motorbikes are the most common means of transportation, and we must wear a helmet whenever we ride a motorbike for safety. Other than that it's not common to wear anything on our head.

## **PART TWO**

### **Describe a family member you spend a lot of time with**

You should say:

- Who this person is
- What kind of person he/she is
- What you usually do together

And explain why you spend a lot of time with him/her

Of course, when I was young, I lived with my parents and spent my most of my time with them. However, when I met my cousin, Chan, at a family gathering, we became best friends very quickly. Chan was the son of my father's sister and my aunt and Uncle lived in a nearby village so Chan and I did not attend the same elementary school. We did however keep in contact by texting and talking on Wechat and I was always excited to meet up with him at family get-togethers and parties.

As my village was small, it didn't have a secondary school and so we ended up attending the same high school. We were inseparable, so much so that many people thought we were brothers. I would bicycle five kilometers to school and we would meet up before class and hang out talking about friends and family.

After classes we would play football on the school playground where we became quite skilled, competitive and athletic. One day some older students were hanging out and watching us play. They suggested we try out for the school football team. Being younger than the other team players, I didn't we would make the team however the coach did invite us to play. We both made the team and the following years were starters. I was so proud of our red and gold jerseys and enjoyed the team spirit and comradeship. Chan and I still hang out and chill on a regular basis and stay in touch with many players.

## Describe a person in the news who you want to meet

You should say:

- Who this person is
- How you know about him/her
- What he/she is like

And explain why you want to meet him/her

I would be most interested in meeting Leonardo DiCaprio who is not only a famous actor but is an outspoken environmentalist. I am a Hollywood movie fan and have watched all his movies. He has won many awards including Academy and the Golden Globes as lead actor in many successful movies including Titanic, the Aviator and Blood Diamonds.

DiCaprio is also identified as one of the most active celebrities in the climate change movement and has established a foundation promoting environmental awareness. He has been an active supporter of numerous environmental organizations and sat on the board of the World Wildlife Fund, , and THE International Fund for Animal Welfare. He has also met with world leaders including president Clinton and Pope Frances. Although many have been critical for his environmental impact of his private jet and yacht, he has electric cars and a solar powered home.

He is newsworthy due to his high recognition, environment fund raising and opinions. DiCaprio's personal life is the subject of widespread media attention. He rarely gives interviews and is reluctant to discuss his private life. I think he is a fascinating individual and I would love to meet and discuss his movie career and his accomplishments.

## Describe a person who taught you something

You should say:

- Who this person is
- What he/she is like
- What he/she taught you

And explain how you felt about him/her

I enjoyed my time in high school even though studies were difficult and we were saddled with lots of homework. I would make my way to school and loved hanging out with my friends before and after class. However one of the most interesting and dynamic individual was my history teacher in high school. He was our modern history teacher and having lived through a lot of the international and domestic events in his lifetime he shared a lot of the stories and experiences.

One of the main thing that has stuck in my mind was his assignment that we should read the news every day and be prepared to discuss it in class the next morning. His motto was "today's news is tomorrows history". He would listen to our descriptions and interpretations of the news articles and then provide his take on the articles.

This not only made history interesting but also encouraged us to keep up to date on current affairs. Allowing everyone to participate in discussions helped boost my self-confidence to speak in front of the class. I am not too stressed about public speaking and expressing my opinions. Today I still follow his teachings and read the news every day and on occasion I will discuss the news with friends and colleges and exchange opinions.

## Describe a **time when you helped someone**

You should say:

- Why you helped
- How you helped
- Where you helped him/her

And explain how you felt about it

At end of my commute home a couple of months ago, I discovered the electricity was off and as my apartment hasn't got a backup generator, to my dismay, the elevators were not working. I live on the ninth floor of a fourteen floor apartment and rather than wait for the power to return, I chose to take the stairs.

During my ascent I caught up with an elderly lady who was struggling up the stairway. She had a couple of grocery bags and I offered to help her. She smiled and gracefully took me up on my offer. I carried the groceries in one hand while she held onto my arm and we made our way up the stairs ever so slowly.

It took some time to climb to the seventh floor where she lived. She was so grateful and offered me a cold beverage, but I politely declined. I believe people should help those less able and fortunate. I felt good being of assistance for her and I believe karma will repay me in the future.

As we live in the same complex, we sometimes see each other, she always gives me a sincere smile and we sometimes talk about things that are happening in the apartment and in the community.

## Describe a **time when someone apologized to you**

You should say:

- When it was
- Who this person is
- Why he or she apologized to you

And explain how you felt about it

Last month I was riding my motorcycle home and I was in a rush as I was tired and hungry. Also I had a lot of studying to do to prepare for an upcoming English test. Wouldn't you know it; I ran into heavy traffic and had to wait for the flow to resume.

As I was waiting, I was hit from behind by a car that caused me to fall. I scraped my knee and had some minor bruising but I was not seriously injured. I was sure thankful I was wearing a helmet as especially I felt my head hit the pavement. I might have suffered a concussion or worse.

Before I even had a chance to pick myself up, the lady driver ran over and apologized profusely, offering to take me to the hospital and pay for any expenses and damages. People nearby helped me up and righted my bike. I inspected my knee which hurt but not bleeding and since I had a first aid kit at home, I could easily bandage it. I accepted her apology as she was sincerely concerned and apologetic.

On reflection I could have asked for restitution of my pains and minor scratches on the motorbike, but accidents do happen and thankfully no one injured badly.

## Describe a piece of important news you got by text message or email

You should say:

- What it was
- When you got it
- Who you got it from

And explain how you felt about it

With today's technology we get inundated with countless news stories, texts, advertising and spam. I usually wait until I have lots of spare time on my hands to weed through the messages as I prefer to reply through my computer rather than my smartphone.

A couple of months ago, however, I had a nagging feeling that some communication was wanting my attention so I went online during my coffee break to check my messages.

While scrolling through the list of senders and subjects that I would reply to that night, there was one email that stood out as it was from a friend that I had not seen for a long time. It was a short message that said he would be in my neck of the woods that day and we should meet up.

Our past communications have mainly been casual birthday and holiday wishes so I was excited to catch up with him. I emailed back to him and invited him to meet at a restaurant that evening.

Our meeting was great as we had a terrific meal and exchanged stories and adventures. The importance of this communication is I learned about many past acquaintances and vowed to do as my friend had done, contact some of the past friends that I had not communicated with recently.

## Describe a team that you were a member of

You should say:

- What the team was
- Why you joined it
- What you did in it

And explain how you felt about being a member

I met my cousin, Chan, at a family gathering and we became best friends very quickly. Chan was the son of my father's sister and my aunt and uncle lived in a nearby village so Chan and I did not attend the same elementary school. We did however keep in contact by texting and talking on Wechat. As my village was small, it didn't have a secondary school and so we ended up attending the same high school. We were inseparable, so much so that many people thought we were brothers. After class we would play football on the school playground where we became quite skilled, competitive and athletic. One day some older students were hanging out and watching us play. They suggested we try out for the school football team. Being younger than the other team players, we didn't think the coach would invite us to play. However, we both made the team and worked very hard to improve and skill and score as often as possible. The following year we were starters. It was a challenge but we were successful in scoring and helping our team. I was so proud of our red and gold jerseys and enjoyed the team spirit and comradeship. Chan and I are still good friends and hang out and chill on a regular basis. We also stay in touch with many of the players from our football club.

## Describe an important journey that was delayed

You should say:

- What the purpose of the journey was
- Why it was important
- How it was delayed

And explain how you felt about it

Last year was very excited to return to my village from Beijing during Chinese New Year in reunite with my family and hopefully meet and hang out with a few of my friends from high school and University. Knowing that traveling at that time of the year especially during that event can be very busy on the transportation system. I booked my ticket to leave early and arrive as early as I could in my village.

Everything went smoothly although the train was very crowded during the first leg of my trip. When transferring to the bus however things changed. The bus I was scheduled to take had been delayed and would be at least two hours late. Since I started my trip early, I still had plenty of time and wasn't worried that I would get home late.

The bus finally arrived, three hours behind schedule, was loaded up and I continued on my trip. Difficulties compounded when an hour into our journey the bus skidded off the road. Although there was some panic, fortunately there were no injuries and we had to wait for the bus to be pulled back onto the road. With no apparent damage, we continued our way, finally reaching my stop without any other incidences.

As I waited for My Dad to pick me up at the bus station I was thankful and relieved that I had arrived safely. In the village many people had arrived already and some were in transit so I missed very little of the celebrations.

## Describe an occasion when you could not use your mobile phone

You should say:

- When it was
- Where it was
- Why you could not use your mobile phone

And explain how you felt about it

A few months ago, I don't know how, but I lost my smart phone. I was on the subway and after I disembarked I discovered it was gone. I didn't know if I was the victim of a pickpocket or it had just slipped out of my pocket. Early the next morning I went to the transit station to see if it had been turned in, but it had not. Deciding on a replacement phone to buy was difficult as there were new specifications and features available. I read reviews and listened to advice from friends and finally decided on the make and model I wanted. Fortunately the desired phone was coming on sale and I made my decision to purchase the latest Samsung model from the Samsung retailer at my local shopping center.

Now I don't know about you, but I rely on my mobile a lot to keep up to date on the news, stay in touch with friends and receive my emails and texts. Also I find it handy to search for information online and occasionally play some games.

I felt isolated and alone without my phone and disappointed that I would have to spend considerable funds on a new phone.

The day of the sale I rushed down to the Samsung store, made my purchase and returned home. Fortunately my pictures, videos and contacts were saved to the cloud online but it took some time to reinstall the applications I use.

## Describe an occasion when the weather prevented a planned activity

You should say:

- When it was
- Why it prevented your activity
- What you did instead

And explain how you felt about it

It was Friday afternoon and the weather forecast for the weekend looked promising. I decided a visit with my parents in the village would be my plan for the weekend as I had not seen them for a long time. I phoned my Mom and invited myself over to spend the weekend. I also mentioned that I would invite my cousin for a visit so we could catch up and hangout.

However the weather can be unpredictable and during my commute home, the skies opened up and torrential rain started. I got soaked just on the travel home so I called my mom to explain that I would have to make it another time. She agreed as it was raining heavily there too and understood my postponement.

I live in a large apartment complex and casually know a few people living there. I thought it would be a good idea to invite some people over to listen to some music and socialize. After a few calls, four of my neighbors agreed to come over at 7 O'clock.

As is traditional in China they brought some food and drink to share. We ate and drank while sharing some stories and it turned out to be a very enjoyable evening.

## Describe a change that could improve your local area

You should say:

- What it is
- How the change can be made
- What problems it might bring

And explain how you feel the area will benefit

I believe the number one issue that needs addressing in China is pollution. Even back in my village, we get poor air from the large cities and air pollution in the cities is worse.

Pollution has increased due to industrialization as economic growth seems to be the priority over the environment. It has been reported that “hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and incidents of serious respiratory illness have been caused by exposure to industrial air pollution”.

Also seriously contaminated by industrial discharges, has made many of China’s waterways unfit for direct human use.

Other symptoms of pollution include millions without safe and clean drinking water and large sections of oceans are without marine life.

The government needs to enforce stricter regulations with severe penalties on polluters. As individuals our carbon footprint can be reduced, for example by driving less, recycling more and reducing plastic use.

On a positive note, China recognizes the problems and is taking steps to make improvements by reducing fossil fuel consumption with alternate energy sources including wind and solar power.

## Describe a time when you were excited

You should say:

- When it was
- Where you were
- Who you were with

And explain why you were excited

One of the most exciting and memorable occasions was my graduation from university. I was celebrating the end of my student life with classmates, friends and family.

In China, as you may know, education matters a lot. It is a very stressful and labor-intensive experience and parents are anxious to see their child certified with high honors and embark on their career. As such, getting your diploma is quite a big deal in China, both for parents and graduates.

While I attended university, I lived in the dormitory but this day I stayed with my parents who lived in the suburbs. I was comfortable to be at their home and away from the dorm and especially away from the hustle and bustle of the city. I was looking forward to all the activities planned for me on this special day.

We drove to the University for the Graduation Ceremony and speeches. The auditorium was full with the graduates up front and the friends and family sitting towards the back. The commencement speech was delivered by the Dean which was long but very inspiring.

Next up was dinner at a buffet restaurant where there was a huge variety of dishes and desserts. I stuffed myself on my favorite foods.

I went back to my dormitory to change into casual clothes, before going to the after grad party. At the party we talked about our futures. Some graduates had job prospects and some were returning to school to further their education. All in all it was an exciting but very exhausting day.

## Describe a crowded place you went to

You should say:

- Where you went
- Who you went there with
- Why you went there

And explain how you felt about this place

Back in November I wanted to attend the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chinese Republic. It promised to be a spectacular display of military, culture and celebration events. I was especially looking forward to the fireworks that would likely surpass the display at the winter Olympics. I managed to book transportation to Beijing and accommodation online and started my journey early in the morning. The train into Beijing was filled to capacity. It was so crowded that many had to stand for the trip.

Once I arrived in the capital, I found my hotel and checked in. After freshening up, I headed to the ceremonies. The public transportation was as crowded as the train with standing room only. It seems everyone was going to the same destination.

The celebrations were spectacular and I enjoyed the military display but more so the cultural presentations. It was standing room only as the fireworks thundered in the sky and the fireworks were breathtaking. During trip back to my hotel I noticed the bus and trains had long waiting lines and were filled to capacity and they move the crowd away from the celebrations. At the hotel, I enjoyed a quiet meal in the hotel restaurant before retiring for the night. The trip was very worthwhile and entertaining and I enjoyed myself immensely.

## Describe a difficult challenge you met

You should say:

- What the challenge was
- When you met it
- How you responded to it

And explain why you think it was difficult

A few months ago I updated my smart phone. Deciding which phone to buy was difficult as there were specifications and features I did not understand. I read reviews and listened to the advice from friends and finally decided on the make and model I wanted. Fortunately the desired phone was coming on sale and I made my decision to purchase the latest Samsung model from the Samsung retailer at my local shopping center.

One of the main features I wanted was improved photos and videos capabilities and my new phone had better optics. I was amazed at the better quality and sharpness. Previously I would share the occasional picture and videos with friends and family, but now with better quality results I wanted to be more creative with my posts.

Therefore I took on the challenge of exploring audio and video editing software and making more interesting presentation. I downloaded and tried many free software programs but I didn't get the results I wanted.

Eventually settled on a package that was not too expensive, would not over burden my computer and gave good results. The program provides the usual clip, cut and paste features and also has numerous text features, transitions, overlays and elements that can be added to my presentations.

Although perhaps not important in the overall video experiences on the internet, it is important for me as I have a learning challenge and providing better videos for my friends.

## **Describe a new skill you learned recently that you think is important**

You should say:

- What it is
- How difficult it was to learn
- How you learned it

And explain why you think it is important

[same as the answer to the previous question]

A few months ago I updated my smart phone. Deciding which phone to buy was difficult as there were specifications and features I did not understand. I read reviews and listened to the advice from friends and finally decided on the make and model I wanted. Fortunately the desired phone was coming on sale and I made my decision to purchase the latest Samsung model from the Samsung retailer at my local shopping center.

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## Describe a uniform (in a school or company) you have worn

You should say:

- Why you wore the uniform
- What it looked like
- Who bought it for you

And explain how you felt about wearing it

Uniforms are a common part of the schools in China. Almost all secondary schools as well as some elementary schools require students to wear uniforms. They are practical, wear-resistant and dirt-proof.

Most importantly, a uniform means students don't have to worry about peer pressure when it comes to their clothes and fashion. When everyone is dressed the same, worrying about what you look like isn't so important. Also getting ready for school you don't have to be concerned about what to wear.

Online shopping was not popular when I was younger so my mother and I went to the recommended store to purchase my uniforms for high school. It consisted of a white shirt with a light blue collar with light blue trousers to match. We also bought a matching sweater for cooler days. We returned to the store in late winter to buy a similar set of uniforms of lighter material and shorts for the warmer spring and summer.

I was proud of my school uniform as it represented my school which had a good reputation for academics and had a good sporting record. It also let us recognize fellow student on the way to and from school and we would socialize on the way.

## Describe a live performance you have seen

You should say:

- What it was
- When you saw it
- Who you were with

And explain why you watched it

Recently my cousin and I went to the Cirque du Soleil or which translated means Circus of the Sun, performance as recommended by a Canadian friend. Cirque du Soleil is a Montreal, Canada based entertainment company and the largest contemporary circus producer in the world with tours and permanent venues around the world including North America, Europe and now Asia.

When I was in elementary school, my parents took me to a circus. I was in awe and excited with all the performance and animals. I discovered later that many animals were mistreated and stressed by circus work. Cirque du Soleil uses no animals in their acts which suits me just fine.

Cirque du Soleil also caters to the Chinese desires by providing a Western brand of entertainment and respecting the Chinese culture. Over fifty percent of the performers are Chinese. The shows have nonstop music and action with acrobatics and vivid colors.

We were memorized by the stunts and acts presented and it was definitely an entertaining experience that I would recommend to young and old. They are planning a show next year and I am sure that I will see that one too

## Describe an article on health you have read

You should say:

- What it was about
- Where you read it
- Why you read it

And explain how you felt about it

I recently read an article on what foods to eat and avoid for a healthy body and it provided recipes for the healthy food ingredients. The article also suggested that eating better would improve my energy level, so I searched for exercise and fitness.

Scanning my search results I found an article on outdoor exercises as opposed to a gym workout. The article outlined the advantages of outdoor exercise. For example “you will likely enjoy it more”, “save a lot of money” and “benefit from the sun”.

All exercise workouts start with the warm up by stretching, squats, and pushups to warm up your muscles. The routine suggested a brisk walk and since I needed to go to the market to buy those healthy food items I had read about earlier, I grabbed my shopping bag and walked to the market. With three kilos more weight I was carrying, I returned home at a slower pace. “Climb stairs” they say. Well my apartment is on the third floor so I had no choice. When I finally got to my place, I was winded and felt I had done enough for the first day.

I read the rest of the article and found it very interesting with other exercises and routines that I tried on other days. I believe these lifestyle changes are improving my health and well being.

## Describe a time you saw an interesting animal

You should say:

- What it looked like
- Where you saw it
- What it was doing

And explain why you think it was interesting

A fascinating creature I went to observe recently was the giant Panda at the Beijing zoo.

In China, the Panda is a magnificent national treasure, reflecting the country's gentle nature, uniqueness and ancient culture. It is also has a unique species found only in China and unfortunately is classified as endangered with fewer than two thousand remaining in the wild as humans have encroached on its habitat.

People around the world recognize it as a symbol of China having been featured as an Olympic mascot in Beijing and as a symbol of the World Wildlife Foundation.

The giant panda has a body shape typical of bears. It has black fur on its ears, eye patches, muzzle, legs, arms and shoulders. The rest of the animal's coat is white.

The giant panda's [diet](#) is primarily [herbivorous](#), consisting almost exclusively of bamboo but will eat meat, fish, and eggs when available.

I am not a fan of zoos as I believe it is cruel to cage animals, denying them their freedom and placing them in a boring and unnatural environment however the zoo would be the only opportunity to view a panda.

As I approached the Panda hall, I was pleased to see a huge enclosure where I could see a panda first hand.

I was excited and watched in amazement as they quickly feasted on bamboo and supplements provide by the zoo keepers

It was a worthwhile, informative and interesting visit.

## Describe something you bought that was difficult to use at first

You should say:

- What it was
- Where you bought it
- Why it was difficult to use at first

And explain how you felt about it

One of the hardest items to learn and become familiar with was my first smart phone, I purchased many years ago. I had to transition from my simple cell which I used for texting and the odd phone call, to in my opinion, a complicated and unnecessary luxury.

My friends would chuckle as I pulled out my old phone as they all had newer technology. I resisted their teasing and recommendations to keep up with the times.

There came a time however, when my cell service provider updated their equipment and would no longer support my older technology.

Deciding which phone to buy was difficult as there were specifications and features I did not understand. I read reviews and listened to advice from friends and finally decided on the make and model I wanted. Fortunately the desired phone was coming on sale and I made my decision to purchase the latest Samsung model from the Samsung retailer at my local shopping center.

The challenge started with a gadget that was totally unfamiliar to me, but with the internet and help from my friends, I overcame the difficulties. I have upgraded a few times over the years, use it daily and I never leave home without my phone.

## Describe a job that you would not like to do in the future

You should say:

- What it is
- How you know about it
- Why you think it is undesirable

And explain why you would not like to do it

As I was walking to the super market recently to purchase some items for dinner, I noticed a section of road near the sidewalk that was blocked off with traffic cones and rope. The traffic was backed up as it maneuvered around the obstacle.

Curiosity got the best of me, so I stopped to see what was happening. I observed a sewer maintenance crew wearing dirty coveralls and hard hats working on the sewer system. They had the sewer cover off and I saw one crew member climbing down the pipe.

Although they actually get paid very well, that job would be the most undesirable that I could imagine.

I'm not a physical person and prefer to work in an office so this kind of work would not appeal to me. I am sure it would be very warm in the summer and extremely cold in the winter to work in a wet and enclosed environment. For me, working outdoors without the comfort of air conditioning and central heating would be hard unbearable. And I could only imagine how filthy the crew would be after a day's work and how bad the locker room would smell where the crew would shower and change clothes before their commute home.

During this time watching the men work, I had to take a step back as I smelt the stench coming from the system. I can only imagine how filthy and smelly the crew would be after a day's work.

I am sure there are worse jobs but I would dislike that one the most.

## Describe a successful small company you know about

You should say:

- What sort of company it is
- How you know about it
- Why you think it is successful

And explain how you feel about it

When I was still attending university, I asked my dad if he knew of any part-time jobs that might be available to help with my expenses. He had a friend that had a warehouse and retail business that might have a vacancy. He called his friend and enquired about possible employment. Asking me when I might be available for an interview, he made an appointment for me.

When I arrived at the warehouse, I noticed that it was substantial but not huge. The owner outlined the product mix that included pet and farm animal foods, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, farm and garden tools and supplies like fencing wire and posts.

My job was to be working on the weekend and during holidays in the warehouse loading pallets with feed and other items that local farmers had ordered for delivery.

It was backbreaking work but I soon built up my body and stamina and worked in the warehouse until my graduation.

The owner offered me a job working in the office making up packing slips for the warehousemen and invoicing and accounting after I had graduated.

I would say the owner and his sons are workaholics as they are on site from morning to night. Their business has grown due to good customer service, prompt delivery and a well stocked operation with the necessary products for pet owners and farmers.

## Describe an ideal house or apartment that you want to live in

You should say:

- Where it is
- What it is like
- Who you would like to live there with

And explain why you think it is ideal

Location would be important for the perfect residence for my needs. I would need to be where I need to commute, preferable within walking or bicycling or at least near quick public transportation. It would also need to be near green spaces to relax and chill out and have easy access to amenities like shopping, restaurants and entertainment complexes.

As for the structure, I would desire a three bedroom rancher style townhouse in a quiet subdivision.

Let me provide more detail. I prefer a subdivision because it is away from the main traffic areas so is quieter and you can meet easier with neighbors. A townhouse community also usually has a smaller land size thereby reducing maintenance and has shared facilities, for example a community swimming pool with food and beverages available.

Three bedrooms would be adequate with a master bedroom and one for a child's room and the other for a guest room that can also double as a quiet computer desk.

The living room would be modest with simple wall hangings and comfortable furniture. I would prefer a western kitchen with a stove and oven, refrigerator and it would have ample counter space.

## DESCRIBE AN IMPORTANT FESTIVAL THAT IS CELEBRATED IN YOUR COUNTRY

You should say:

- what festival it is
- why it is important
- what do people usually do on that festival

and explain how important it is for you personally

The festival that I would like to talk about is Chinese New Year, which is one of the most essential and widely celebrated festivals in my country. This is the occasion that people celebrate with great joy, hope and festivity with their beloved ones. One of the most *integral* moments that is expected by all people is the stroke of midnight according to Lunar Calendar.

It is often celebrated with fireworks and people send each other their best wishes for an awesome year ahead. In my country, people often get careful preparation *for* Lunar New Year in order to ensure that every single thing is perfect for welcoming a new year. On the last night of the year, people stay awake, reunite with their family and wait for the very first sacred moments of the year.

According to the *conventions*, people dress smartly on the following days, pay their relatives, friends a visit and send them the beautiful regards for the upcoming year. It is also traditional in my country to go to *sacred places* like pagodas or churches with the aim of praying for peace and happiness in the future. In people's belief, red is considered as the lucky color in the new year. That's why people often choose to dress in vivid color as the way to *eliminate* bad luck and welcoming good things. My country also has some *unique* traditions like lucky money, preparing homemade food or decorating home in the first days of the year. It is also a precious time for family reunion, resolution and relaxation after a hard-working year.

### VOCABULARY

*integral*=essential

*conventions*=ways of doing things

*sacred places*=religious places

*eliminate*=get rid of

*unique* = special and only one

## DESCRIBE A POSITIVE CHANGE THAT YOU MADE TO YOUR LIFE

You should say:

- what the change is
  - why it was important to make the change
  - how you made the change
- and explain how important this positive this change is

The positive change that I would like to talk about is getting up earlier. They say *old habits die hard*, which *made perfect sense* to me when I first started to *get rid of* my *unhealthy routine*. There were so many temptations during the night time that kept me awake for hours. And it could be anything such as the latest episode of The Walking Dead, a music video that I had been counting down for weeks to be released or I simply wanted to *meet a deadline* because I had been *procrastinating* for a month and so on. As a result, going to bed after 1 or 2 AM was *inevitable*. It took me long enough to be fully aware of how destructive this sleeping habit could be for me, both physically and mentally, especially in a long run. Therefore, I had no choice but to give up that kind of toxic habit.

I have learnt a lot since starting waking up early in the morning. The key is starting small and taking one step at a time. It was so *tiresome* and torturing at the beginning that I tended to get irritated whenever anyone approached me about 10 minutes into my running session. However, everything has its own way of getting better and so is my temper. I now feel fully energized and extremely refreshing in the morning and even more *productive* at work.

### Vocabulary

**Accomplish:** to succeed in doing or completing something

**early riser:** person who wakes up early in the morning

**old habits die hard:** People find it difficult to change their accustomed behavior

**make sense:** to be clear and easy to understand

**get rid of:** to remove or throw away something unwanted

**procrastinate:** to delay doing something that you should do, usually because you do not want to do it

**inevitable:** that you cannot avoid or prevent

**tiresome:** making you feel annoyed

## DESCRIBE AN ATTRACTIVE OUTDOOR PLACE YOU VISITED AS A CHILD.

You should say:

- where this place is
- when and how you went there
- what the place looked like

and say what you found attractive about this place.

**I'm going to describe** a really beautiful park I used to visit when I was a child. It is a national park about 100km away from my hometown of Ho Chi Minh City.

**With regards to the question of** when I used to go there, my parents and I often went there whenever we had a long weekend. Since, it's not far away we used to drive our car. We would set off in the wee hours to avoid the hellish rush hour traffic of my city. I am not an early bird so I usually slept during the journey... and woke up in paradise!

**Now concerning** what this place looks like, I really felt over the moon every time I went there. It is a wonderful place with fascinating and marvelous natural beauty. There is a large salt lake in the centre of this park with extremely clean water, in which I could see the reflection of the blue sky, white clouds and green hills.

**Another thing that** really attracted me was that there are many kinds of fish in this lake, such as carp and trout. We often went boating and fishing in the lake. Once I even caught an angelfish, which is a beautiful fish with long fins. I wanted to bring it home as my pet, but I was afraid that I couldn't take care of it, so I just set it free.

**Finally I'd like to mention that** the most attractive feature is that the lake there is surrounded by a variety of tropical fruit trees, including lichi trees, durian trees and mango trees. Usually, after fishing we would have a BBQ for our lunch under those fruit trees. In the afternoon, we would rent a tandem bicycle and ride together on a small path around the lake, enjoying the tranquility and fresh air.

## DESCRIBE A PIECE OF GOOD NEWS THAT YOU RECEIVED

You should say:

- what the good news is
- how you heard about it
- why this news was good

and explain how important this news is for you personally

The good news that I would like to talk about is the time I received an offer letter to attend a national conference for young leaders and individuals who are **passionate** about international affairs last summer. The program called Youth Model United Nations was held in NY City 3 days and was one of the most exciting journeys I've ever experience. It's safe to say that being elected as one of the candidates for a *national scale* event where brilliant, dynamic and ambitious young people gathered *gave me some sense of confidence and satisfaction*.

The *recruitment process* was not terribly complicated but *highly competitive*. We had been through 3 different rounds where we were tested about our knowledge of international affairs in general, our solutions for various issues like environment and sustainable energy as well as English proficiency. Though it required time and effort to actually get tuned into the world's current status and to provide relevant answers, the result was *immensely rewarding*. I recalled it was 9PM in the evening and our family were all in the living room for some quality time when I got an email from the organizer.

I was speechless, then *shouted my heart out* because that was a fully-funded trip and I would be able to travel alone for the very first time. Even though my parents had been worried and against it at first, I managed to *convince* them that if they didn't allow me to *step out of my comfort zone* and explore the world, I would forever dream small and be small.

Eventually, everything went smoothly and the conference was a blast. It was an *eventful* and memorable 3-day adventure where I made friends with people from diverse backgrounds and became more independent in every decision and action that I took – a better version of myself. Hence, I wouldn't mind receiving good news like this more often in the future.

### Vocabulary

- **Passionate:** having or showing strong feelings of enthusiasm for something or belief in something
- **Competitive:** used to describe a situation in which people or organizations compete against each other
- **Rewarding:** worth doing; that makes you happy because you think it is useful or important
- **Shout one's heart out:** to shout with vigor or intensity
- **Eventful:** full of things that happen, especially exciting, important or dangerous things

## DESCRIBE A SPECIAL GIFT YOU HAVE GIVEN

You should say:

- what the gift was
  - who you gave this gift to
  - why you gave this gift
- and explain what was most special about this gift

The gift that I would like to talk about is a scarf. It was my mom's fiftieth birthday that my sister and I managed to surprise her with our gift – an *exclusive* emerald green scarf *tailor-made* by the most *renowned* tailor in town.

Mom is the most *warm-hearted* and forgiving person I've ever known and should be given "Mom of the Year" award if there is one. However, since there isn't, my sister and I decided to give her the best she deserved when she turned 50 – a milestone in one's lifetime and it was her birthday after all. Therefore, we started saving money from our part-time jobs 4 months before D-day and met up with Joe – the talented tailor who was most well-known for his *remarkable* collection of beautifully handmade scarfs: from silk to wool with a variety of unique patterns.

Our choice was the long and emerald one which was made in silk charmeuse, allowing it to show off saturated colors so well. The smooth texture felt like a soft touch on your skin and depending on how you tied it, you could emphasize on the shiny side or the matte. We chose it not only because of its *elegance and affordability* in comparison with others but also its usage. It matched perfectly with different kinds of clothes and was not too thick for daily use in a tropical country.

Our mom fell in love with the scarf at first sight because it was in her favorite color or simply just because we were her favorites in the whole world. She *bragged* about it to all her friends and family days after that and we didn't mind, not even the slightest as there was nothing as precious as the smile that lit up her face.

### Vocabulary

- **exclusive:** of a high quality and expensive and therefore not often bought or used by most people
- **tailor-made:** made for a particular person or purpose, and therefore very suitable
- **renowned:** famous and respected
- **remarkable:** unusual or surprising in a way that causes people to take notice
- **elegance:** the quality of being attractive and well designed
- **affordability:** the fact of being cheap enough that people can afford to buy it or pay it; how affordable something is
- **brag:** to talk too proudly about something you own or something you have done

## DESCRIBE A GOOD FEATURE OF YOUR PERSONALITY

You should say:

- what the feature is
  - why it is a good feature
  - how this feature has benefited you
- and explain how important this feature is for your future

the good feature that I would like to talk about is my *non-judgmental* attitude.

The state of being non-judgmental is not to pass judgement on anyone or anything too quickly without full *acknowledgement*. It's an unhealthy habit as well as a sign of people with a *fixed mindset* that *hinders* them from *truly perceiving* the surroundings as what they are. Therefore, I try to avoid it at all cost, which is not impossible because, fortunately, it has *imprinted* in my mind at early age that everything has its own reason for existence.

An ability to be fair and to reserve my comments on everything around has opened up my eyes and *afforded me an opportunity to* actually reach out to people and learn about their inner desire and motivation. For example, if you have a classmate who breaks the school's record for the number of times him being late, you could presume that he is a lazy boy who spends the whole night playing Play Station 4.

However, little do you know that he wakes up at 4.00AM every morning to deliver milk and newspapers in a nearby neighborhood. No, you don't. You just want to be right and don't have a heart to dig deeper. That's exactly where things go wrong. As a result, I've made a promise to myself that no matter what the situation is, I would look into it with the eye of an outsider, someone who can view it in different angles. Admittedly, it's easier said than done. Once in a while, your emotion will cloud your *common sense*. Still, practicing non-judgmental attitude is one step closer to perfection.

## DESCRIBE THE PERSON WHO YOU MOST LIKE TO SPEND TIME WITH

You should say:

- who the person is
- why you like to spend time with them
- how much time you spend with them

and explain why this is the person you most like to spend time with

I'm grateful to have such a supportive family and a large circle of friends who are always be there for me no matter what. I spend most of my free time surrounded with my beloved friends and family. Even though I **love** them all *to the moon and back*, my younger sister, Kate, is the one that's closest to me.

Kate is seven years younger than me, which might create some sense of *generation gap*, yet, we still get along well, or at least most of the time. She is in high school now and has a dream of becoming a doctor one day. In term of appearance, we *have little in common*. By that I mean while I'm kind of tall, she's relatively short; while I *take after my father*, she's my mom's *spitting image*. Same thing with our characteristics. I am *people-oriented* and a true free spirit, Kate, on the contrary, is quite *introverted* and into stability. Hence, that came as a huge surprise when others acknowledge our strong bond. We're like 2 sides of the same coin.

No matter how different we are, we have never neglected or *abandoned* each other. In fact, we are *partners in crime* in so many *impulsive* and silly acts that our family has lost count. Once, I tried to play the victim with my uncle as I accidentally broke a crystal vase that my aunt adored, Kate backed me up as we *put the blame on* our poor cousin. What a *shameful* act! But that was years ago and we learnt our lesson in a hard way. Another time when my sister's teacher asked to meet our parents because Kate had ditched class. *To her defense*, that subject was boring and I was the one who talked to her teacher. In the end, Kate had to serve more time at the library and we kept this from our parents and so were other things. We got each other's back and we always will because that's what sisters do and simply because I love her.

## DESCRIBE A GIFT YOU RECEIVED THAT MADE YOU HAPPY

You should say:

- what the gift is
  - who gave it to you
  - how you used the gift
- and explain why this gift made you happy

The good gift that I would like to talk about is a book I received my best friend who is now residing in England. It was an utter surprise since I thought she had forgotten it because she didn't once mention it during our conversation the previous night. What inside the box intrigued me more. It was a book called "How to win friends and influence people" by Dale Carnegie, one of the most classic books of all time and has been my bible ever since.

The book was first published about 60 years ago but still holds the same value until today. It was also one of the most *influential self-help* books that provided wonderful, yet practical advice on how to become a social person who earned respect from as well as was *well-liked* by others. My version was the 14th edition with a hard, black cover which was *engraved* with the title in gold script. The book comprised 6 main sections, each focusing on one aspect varying from handling people, presenting yourself in a proper way to influencing others. Those were timeless lessons that were widely applied on a daily basis as and especially formal occasions.

There was plenty to take out from "How to win friends and influence people" but the one thing that I found most applicable and everyone should practice it was "6 ways to make people like you". It might sound as *easy as pie* and inevitable truth like smiling and being a good listener, however, few had mastered it or took it seriously since they failed to acknowledge the importance of simple but powerful act. I've read the book countless time but still struggled to bring those philosophies into life. But practice makes perfect.

## DESCRIBE SOMETHING OLD THAT YOUR FAMILY HAS KEPT

You should say:

- what the thing is
- what it looks like
- what it is used for

and explain why your family has kept this thing for a long time

The old thing that I would like to talk about is an *astonishing* pearl necklace that belonged to my great grandmother. It has been there for quite a long time as a family *heirloom* on my mom's side, which, I guess, would become mine when the time comes. Though I haven't seen neither my Grannie nor my mom wear it, the necklace still holds an *underlying meaning* and is always treated with greatest care and love.

The pearl necklace is super classic and simple, just like what it represents: pure beauty. The strand was hand-strung with a notch between each pearl to avoid them rubbing against each other. Even though it has been *carefully preserved*, the shiny surface of each pearl is no longer at its best; instead, a few scratches have appeared and the bright white color has started to get dull. It was on our great grandparents' wedding that my great grandfather presented his beloved wife this precious gift and it immediately became her favorite. She wore it whenever there was an occasion, which means practically every time she went out. This was proven by the number of pictures we found her wearing the chain years later.

My Grannie *inherited* it after her mom passed away but almost never touched it unless to clean or move it from box to box. She said she wanted to keep its true spirit and the beautiful story behind as it was meant to be. As a result, years has gone by but that *delicate* pearl chain has always stayed untouched inside the jewelry box and will still be there in many years to come as a sign of respect and reminder of the good old days.

### **Vocabulary:**

**Astonishing (adj)** very surprising, amazing

**Heirloom (noun)** a valuable or special possession that has belonged to a family for many years

**underlying meaning (expression)** are the real or basic meaning, although they are not obvious or directly stated

**inherit (verb)** to receive property or money from someone who has died

**delicate (adj)** attractive with many small details

To just see a list of the current speaking questions see here:

<https://www.ieltsanswers.com/current-ielts-speaking-test-questions-2020.html>

## **PART THREE**

### families living together

**Q1: What are the benefits of younger and older generations living together?**

One of many advantages that young and older family members residing in the same residence would be the splitting of expenses between the income earning members thus alleviating financial stress.

Additionally there is a wealth of knowledge that can be exchanged with elders teaching the youth life skills they have acquired like crafts and recipes and the youth perhaps assisting with technology like computers and smartphones. Another that comes to mind would be the sharing of household chores, for example food preparation, laundry and shopping. Although there are many more, the final benefit would be the strengthening of family relationships and comradeship.

**Q2: What are the disadvantages of younger and older generations living together?**

The drawbacks of different generations living together would begin with the lack of privacy. With so many people living under one roof everyone would know your business. You would rarely be alone and to have quiet times would be difficult. This would be tough on me as I value my relaxation and rest. Also I would lose my feeling of independent and being in control of my life and surroundings.

**Q3: Do people in your country prefer to get help from family members or friends?**

I believe choosing to seek help from my family or friends would be dependent of what assistance I am seeking. For example, I wouldn't ask for financial assistance from a friend as he would most likely be in a similar situation. I would not want to jeopardize my friendships with them worrying about if and when I could repay my debt. Family however would be my choice for help on my future like continuing education or changing jobs as they can give worthwhile advice based on their experience.

**Q4: Is it important to visit family members often?**

Many share my belief that family is important and try to visit frequently. Today's busy lifestyle does restrict the number of times families can get together. Family can be also helpful with advice and be supportive. I always look forward to going to my village to meet up with friends and family during special events like Chinese New Year as I enjoy the shared meals and catching up on the local news and rumors.

## people in the news

### **Q1: What kinds of people, in your country, are usually in the news?**

Politicians are frequently in the news announcing new government policies and legislation. It is important for them to keep their constituents informed and helps with possible reelection efforts. Actors, entertainers and musicians are also in the news a lot announcing new films, concerts, and promoting upcoming entertainment events. Sport management and players are also announcing future contests and commenting on past and future performance. They want to build fan loyalty and attendance at their games. The news occasionally will reveal a celebrities' personal accomplishments, issues and transgressions.

### **Q2: Are stories about celebrities in the news always true?**

Of course not all news is true about celebrities and famous people. Newscasters will exaggerate celebrity news to boost audience viewership and many reports are pure speculation. For example we all love gossip but just because someone is seen dining with another person doesn't mean they are in a serious relationships. Social media has a huge impact on the news and spreads many falsehoods, speculation and gossip. I take most things I read with a grain of salt and will search for supporting articles for verification.

### **Q3: Why is the news often about famous people?**

Almost every form of media including TV, newspapers, tabloids and magazines pay a great deal of attention to the professional and personal lives of famous people. It seems the public cannot get enough of this kind of news. Of course promoters want to keep their clients in the news to advertize upcoming events like movies, tv shows and sporting events. I believe that the media had become intrusive and should present a balanced view in respect to celebrities.

### **Q4: Could superstars bring positive influence to the public?**

I believe superstars can and do provide positive things for the public. For example Leonardo Dicaprio is not only a very accomplished entertainer but is also an outspoken supporter of environmental and animal issues which educate the public. Also many superstars share their fame and fortune with performing at charity events and making donations to worthwhile causes. Many youngsters have superstars as their role models which encourages them to study the arts like acting and singing or excel at a sport.

## learning

### **Q1: What qualities do you think a good teacher should have?**

I think the most important quality a teacher should have is good communication skills. Even though he might have a deep knowledge of the subject, a teacher needs to effectively communicate that knowledge in an interesting and informative way. He or she should recognize when the class is having difficulties and provide a different approach and field questions from students. A good teacher will also make themselves available to provide individual help to students.

### **Q2: Do you think young people learn faster than old people?**

It is accepted that children learn faster than adults. A youngster's brain has a natural ability to absorb information as part of their development. They are curious, creative and experimental in arts, sports and other activities early in life. Adults on the other hand have learned the skills necessary in life and usually focus on their day to day activities and work. If an adult is removed from the education system for a while, they may have difficulties with planning and studying a new subject.

### **Q3: What do you think is the best age for children to go to school?**

I believe children should start school at age 3 or 4 depending on their development. Rather than daycare which is essentially a babysitting environment, a good preschool will help the child develop social skills and promote creativity with art and music. Additionally preschool will develop a sense of pride, accomplishment and self-confidence. These early developed skills will make the transition to kindergarten easier and less stressful.

### **Q4: Do people in your country prefer to study alone or in groups?**

Although some prefer to study alone without interruptions, most students in China prefer to study as a group. Group studying provides the benefit of exchanging ideas and different explanations which can make studying more interactive and less tedious. Also they learn to interact with each other and have discussions and accept different views on a subject. Most importantly is in their future career they will most like be part of a team and the group study experience will be make the teamwork project easier.

## children and help

### **Q1: What kind of help should parents give to their children?**

Children learn by example from their parents. If the parents are polite and respectful the children will do likewise. Parenting also means providing encouragement and motivating their kids with praise and compliments. Spending quality time and participating in activities is another important way to bond and interact with children. Perhaps the most important help a parent provide is encouraging dialogue as it develops self-expression and encourages them to talk about their difficulties and stresses.

### **Q2: Should parents help their children with their homework every day?**

Helping with homework and doing the homework are two different things. I believe, parents should not do a person's homework nor be a tutor and look over a student's shoulder constantly. For example when I was studying, the computer was in a common area and my parents were available should I need help on a question or problem. This worked out well for me as I could focus on my study and only call them when necessary.

### **Q3: Should parents give their teenage children dating advice?**

I support parents providing dating advice to teenagers since they can share their experiences. My father told me to not waste my time and reject anyone that was impolite, disrespectful, had extremely bad habits like drinking and drugs, and avoid people that are abusive verbally and physically. My mom's advice was focused on communication. She stated that you and your partner should be comfortable talking about goals, desires, dreams and issues of conflict and take the time to get to know each other. In my opinion, both provided good advice and I likely avoided disastrous relationships and heartbreak.

### **Q4: Can children provide any kind of help to parents?**

There are many ways children can assist and teach their parents. When I was still attending primary school, I would help my mom with food preparation, setting the table and help to clean up after meals. When I got older, helping with housework like cleaning, keeping my room tidy and laundry were my regular chores. As a teenager, I had computer classes in school and helped my parents with new technology, for example computer software and phone applications. So yes, children can help their parents.

## apologizing

### **Q1: On what types of occasions do people usually apologize to others?**

Often we have minor incidences like bumping into someone or accidentally cutting in line and a simple “sorry” is all that is necessary. Sometimes we commit minor things, or example like being late for a meeting or forgetting to bring home groceries. We might say or do something that hurts someone you know and a more sincere apology is appropriate. The worse situations are when our actions or inactions, we cause serious emotional or physical damage.

### **Q2: Do people in your country like to apologize?**

People are human and we all make mistakes. From my observations the Chinese culture encourages politeness and concern for others. Notwithstanding that we would prefer not to hurt or harm anyone, we are courteous and quick to apologize when the situation calls for it. So I would say we like to apologize.

### **Q3: Do you think people should apologize for anything wrong they do?**

When people cause harm to another they should apologize showing concern for their actions and providing sympathy for the harm they caused. As an example, recently I has hit from behind while stopped at a traffic light. I fell off my motorbike and suffered some minor scrapes and bruises. The lady was concerned and quickly apologized which I accepted.

### **Q4: Why do some people refuse to apologize to others?**

Some people are reluctant to apologize because they are embarrassed and don't want to “lose face”. With more serious incidents people will not apologize for fear of incriminating themselves and risking financial damages. Politicians are notorious not owning up to their mistakes and put a spin or an outright lie about an error to maintain voter support. Most people however are polite and accept responsibility for their actions.

## messages

### **Q1: Do you think traditional letters are a good way to send messages?**

In my opinion technology has taken over the postal service and written communication has decreased considerably. Today with social media and messaging applications, communication is convenient and quick. Postcards are fewer too as a person can post a picture and description on the internet. Some written correspondence still happens for long and detailed information.

### **Q2: In what situations is it better to make a phone call than send a message to someone?**

There are many situations where a telephone call we be more effective than voice or text messaging. For example, you don't know if the recipient is listening for message notices and you have an urgent message that needs a quick response or you may need some immediate information to make a decision. Also during a phone call, you can use intonation to express your feelings better. Lastly, I think a phone call is more personal and allows easier communication

**Q3: In your country do people prefer to send email or text messages?**

Where I live people prefer to use texting as opposed to email as mobile application provides text notifications quickly. Also email is mainly for longer and more detailed communication that in most cases doesn't need an immediate reply. In my case, for example I prefer to use my computer rather than my phone to weed through the numerous messages, advertisements and spam.

**Q4: Is technology having a negative impact on communication among people?**

I believe that technology has indeed affected communication. As an example before the Internet people would have to write letters which would contain more information as people had to pay for the service and wait for replies. In the past written communication was more formal with proper grammar and punctuation. Today's technology allows us to communicate quickly by texting and emailing and quick replies usually means we usually have short messages and expect short replies.

## teams

**Q1: What are some reasons why people join teams?**

People prefer to play on a team for many reasons. Foremost I think you have comradeship playing in a team environment as opposed to an individual sport. Team members will help you with your training and develop skills. You also have the team spirit and fellow players to share celebrations of wins and achievements individually and as a team. Playing on the team also gives you the opportunity to meet new people and form new friendships.

**Q2: What causes disagreements within a team?**

On a sport team conflicts can arise between players and coaches. For example players may not feel that they are being played enough or being recognized for their accomplishments. Criticisms of other players will also cause conflicts and disagreements where one player may criticize another teammate who feels they have to defend themselves. Disagreements in other team groups like school study groups and workplace groups have conflicts in regards to workload and contribution to the tasks.

**Q3: Do you think it is good for children to join a team?**

Children will gain many positive advantages when participating in a sport team. It will teach them how to interact with other people and make new friends. Team work teaches, learning to work with others and improve their individual and team skill. Teamwork can improve their self-confidence, and develop pride in their individual and team accomplishments.

**Q4: What skills do team leaders require in the workplace?**

There are many qualities a good team leader should have. Communication is probably the most important attribute. It is very important for a leader to effectively convey duties and responsibilities. Time management is also a very important part of a leader's job. Lastly an effective manager should lead by example and be willing pitch in and help others.

## travelling

### **Q1: How do people usually travel long distances in your country?**

Destinations outside the country are usually travel by airplane because the airports in foreign countries are prepared for international travelers. Planes also provide long distance travel within the country. Alternately trains and buses are less expensive and although the trips may be longer, the seating is usually more comfort and you have the advantage of enjoying the scenery during the trip

### **Q2: In what ways can traffic conditions in a city be improved?**

Traffic conditions in the city can be a nightmare at times especially during the rush hour. The flow of traffic can be improved with properly synced traffic lights and traffic police to help direct traffic in busy intersections. Infrastructure such as overpasses and underpasses, although expensive may help improve the flow of vehicles within the city.

### **Q3: Do you think people will still drive a car if public transportation is free?**

Public transit is relatively inexpensive as compared to owning and operating a motor vehicle at the moment. Providing free transportation may encourage some to use public transit as a alternative to driving. Many people also need their vehicle for more than just commuting, for work for example sales people. Also even if it was free many people would prefer their own vehicle because it is comfortable and convenient.

### **Q4: How can transportation in rural areas of your country be improved?**

Transportation in rural areas has its own problems which need to be improved. Frequently highways are in need of repair and better engineering and maintenance would improve transportation. Public transportation such as buses and trains are improving but more modern buses and faster trains would be very beneficial for the traveling public.

## mobile phones

### **Q1: Is it necessary to have laws on the use of mobile phones?**

It has been proven around the world that laws are necessary to prohibit the use of cell phone in different circumstances and places. The main danger is use of smartphones while driving has distracted many drivers causing accidents and fatalities. Regulations are already in place that cell phones cannot be used when an aircraft is taking off or landing. Another rule that would be beneficial is the restriction of using a telephone in quiet areas such as a theater.

### **Q2: Should young children have mobile phones?**

I believe young children in primary school have no practical use for a cell or mobile phone. There does become a time, however, when they have more independence and participate in many after school activities that may need to be in contact with their parents to arrange pick up times and transportation. There are phones specifically designed for this age group with tracking applications so parents can know where their children are and they provide simple functions like texting and calling.

### **Q3: Do people in your country prefer to use a computer or a mobile phone?**

Most of the population in my country use smart phones as they are convenient, easy to carry, and have many features that a computer does not have such as voice recording and video. Computers however are the technology of choice at home where children and adults can do homework, research and enjoy multimedia with the convenience of a larger screen and keyboard.

**Q4: Do you think mobile phones could totally replace computers in the future?**

Technology has advanced so much in the Past 20 years that it is hard to predict what might be available in the future. Will smart phones or mobile phones replace computers? It is a difficult question as there maybe alternate technologies. That being said, I don't believe that smartphones will completely replace computers because computers have more power and storage space.

## weather

**Q1: Can the weather have any impact on people's daily activities?**

Of course weather can have different impacts on one's daily routines. For example I bicycle to work but during a rain storm I take public transportation. If the weather is too hot, cold or raining, people would be less inclined to go to parks and green areas and likely would participate in indoor activities to relax and chill out like theaters and restaurants. Shopping habits could also change with outdoor markets losing business to shopping centers.

**Q2: Why do people do different kinds of sports in different seasons?**

Where I grew up we had distinctive seasons where it would be hot in the summer and cold, with snow in the winter. Naturally the weather would play a part in the sports that we would participate in based on the season. During the summer we would enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, football and other fair-weather sports. During the winter however we would ski and snowboard or move indoors and play sports such as badminton and basketball.

**Q3: What kind of weather do people in your country like most?**

I would say most people in my country enjoy dry and warm weather. They can enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, exploring and sightseeing. You'll also see many people in the parks playing badminton, exercising to music or simply relaxing and enjoying the scenery. This type of weather is also beneficial for transportation options and many people will go sightseeing or visit their friends and family.

**Q4: Is the weather in your country changing?**

We see in the news on a daily basis weather extremes and changes occurring around the world. My country is no exception. We seem to have a less precipitation during the rainy season and temperatures have become more extreme. Additionally droughts and flooding in the rural areas have become more common. Has human activity contributed to climate change and what might be done to alleviate it are subjects of debate.

## local areas

### **Q1: What are some of the main problems in local areas?**

The term local areas could apply to cities and the countryside depending on where you live. The large cities areas suffer from air pollution, traffic congestion and noise. Outside of the large cities local areas would be in need of infrastructure improvements and features including things like libraries, better roads, highways and public transportation options. Rural areas could use more employment opportunities so the youth would not have to live in the big cities.

### **Q2: What are the best solutions to these problems?**

I believe the number one issue in my country is air and water pollution. Studies have shown hundreds of thousands of people die prematurely and suffer from respiratory illnesses. Portable water is also becoming less available. It may seem simplistic but I believe that encouraging high paying and clean industries away from the big cities and manufacturing centers would help with some of these issues. This would encourage young people too not move to the big city thereby reducing traffic stress and pollution.

### **Q3: Do people in your country like joining social groups in their community?**

Human beings as a whole are social animals and interact with friends and neighbors in many different social activities. People in China like to socialize and you'll see them in restaurants sharing meals and exchanging stories. Also you will see many that are involved in sporting and exercise activities. For example, I love going to restaurants with my friends to relax and hangout and when I was in high school I joined the football team.

### **Q4: What are the benefits of living in a friendly community?**

Having friendly neighbors in the community has many benefits. You are more likely to meet people whose company you enjoy and become friends. With friends you may get invited to a special event such as a birthday party or wedding. Good neighbors are always respectful of your space and try not to disturb your peace and quiet.

## celebrations

### **Q1: What personal events do people usually celebrate?**

Family celebrations that come to mind are birthdays, graduations and weddings. Western style birthday traditions are making their way into Chinese birthday celebrations. Graduations are celebrated with a graduation ceremony and presentation of degrees earned. After a Chinese wedding ceremony which usually takes place in a city hall office, the genuine celebration generally occurs later at a wedding banquet and reception.

### **Q2: How do people celebrate their personal events?**

Most personal events are celebrated in my hometown where many of my friends and relatives come too share a meal and provide congratulations to a bride, groom, graduate or birthday party celebrant. These celebrations are usually informal with lots of interaction with friends and family catching up personal news. The ladies prepare lots of food with their specialty dishes and family favorites. After everyone has had enough to eat we start up the music, sing karaoke and dance.

### **Q3: Do you think it is necessary to spend a lot of money on celebrations?**

I don't believe that family and cultural celebrations need to be extravagant and expensive. Most people are content and excited to have been invited and have an opportunity to share with their friends and family a meal and drinks. Most participants are happy to listen to the music and exchange stories since they might not have spoken for a while. This type of celebration will be of modest in cost with everybody enjoying themselves.

### **Q4: Do you think the government wastes too much money on celebrations?**

Citizens have different views about the spending by the government for celebrations and special events. Well many people believe that money is wasted, I would argue that money spent on traditional holiday celebrations outweigh the drawbacks. Events give people an opportunity to take a break from work and escape the hustle and bustle of the cities to return to their home villages. Although it may be expensive holidays and celebrations, provide pride of country and happier people.

## crowded places

### **Q1: Do people in your country like to go to crowded places?**

I think most people would prefer less crowded places so they would have more personal space. However many events and venues are very popular and attract a large audience, for example music concerts. Other attractions such as historical sites, cultural buildings and entertainment sites also can attract large audiences. Fortunately where I live there are some quiet and not crowded green spaces and parks to relax and enjoy the scenery.

### **Q2: How can the problem of traffic congestion be solved?**

Traffic congestion within cities is an obvious problem taking a lot of time for commuters to travel and creates air pollution. The obvious solution would be improved and inexpensive public transit to reduce the use of private automobiles. I also believe that encouraging high paying and clean industries away from the big cities and manufacturing centers would help with some of these issues. This would encourage young people too not move to the big city thereby reducing traffic stress and pollution.

### **Q3: Why do people still like to live in big cities?**

Despite the drawbacks of living in a large city which would include pollution, crowding and higher expenses, many people prefer to live in the cities. Some are required for educational and working opportunities and some people prefer the big cities as they can provide shopping opportunities, entertainment venues, restaurants and interesting places to visit and hang out.

### **Q4: Do you think cities will be even larger in the future?**

Due to the world's increasing population cities in the future are likely to be larger both in area and population density. This trend has been happening for many generations as cities provide better education and job opportunities. As urban areas become larger, cities will need to address issues such as pollution and congestion. They will have to invest in rapid fast public transportation public amenities like libraries and parks.

## challenges

### **Q1: Do you think parents should give kids challenges?**

Challenges for children are important for their development as it is an essential life skill. Learning how to cope with problems will help them both in their youth and as adults. Parents should be challenging their children with easy tasks at first and more difficult ones as they build their abilities and self-confidence. Parents also should be supportive and not over stress their kids.

### **Q2: What challenges do you think children might benefit from most?**

Children will face many challenges as they grow up. Some will be everyday challenges like interacting with other and some should be provided by their parents. Two challenges I feel parents should focus on with their children are health and management of money as they are important skills for them to learn for their future. Encouraging and challenging them to exercise and participate in athletic activities would be beneficial. I also suggest parents provide an allowance for children so they can learn money management and prioritize spending.

### **Q3: What is the most challenging thing for adults?**

We have many challenges for example time management and stress management. We live in a fast and demanding culture where work and social activities require a lot of time. Good time management skills will make life easier. Many adults also struggle with monetary issues trying to budget and live within their means. These and many others can be very stressful and reducing stress by exercising and taking some time out to relax are important.

### **Q4: Do you think it's beneficial for senior citizens to have challenges?**

As the expression goes if you don't use it, you lose it. I think the challenges for senior citizens are keeping their bodies and their minds active and healthy. Both my parents do yoga as their indoor activity to keep fit and weather permitting enjoy going to the park to exercise to music with their friends. Keeping your mind active is also important and my dad is an avid reader and my mom loves to knit. My dad also enjoys going to the park and playing chess with friends.

## skills

### **Q1: What skills are important for people these days?**

We have many challenges that require considerable skill, for example time management and money management. We live in a fast and demanding culture where work and social activities require a lot of time. Good time management skills will make life easier. Many adults also struggle with monetary issues trying to budget and live within their means. These and many others can be very stressful and stress management like exercising and taking some time out to relax are important.

### **Q2: What is the difference between skills required in the past and those at present?**

I think things were easier in the past and the necessary skills we're not as demanding as they are today. With changing innovation and technology many more employment opportunities are available which requires many different skills. For example, communication and interaction with colleagues is a skill that is necessary to succeed. Also learning the more difficult technological and other skills like computer use can be demanding. In conclusion, I believe times were easier than they are today.

### **Q3: Do you think teamwork and communication skills are important?**

I believe that communication and teamwork skills are essential to succeed in today's society. I learned in college that group study sessions were more effective than studying alone. I learned to listen, respect others and consider their opinions and also learned to negotiate and compromise. These skills I also use in my workplace and they have been beneficial to me.

### **Q4: What kind of skills might become more important in the future?**

It is difficult to predict what changes might occur and what appropriate skills will be necessary in the future. If I must speculate, In the future I foresee AI, artificial intelligence, and robotics being in great demand. I believe, computer and robotics skills will be necessary as those seem to be areas that are in their infant stage and are being researched and developed.

## uniforms

### **Q1: Do you think students should wear school uniforms?**

I agree that uniforms should be compulsory attire when attending secondary school. They are practical and reduce this peer pressure in regards to clothes and fashion. Other advantages include not having to decide what to wear everyday which makes it easier to get ready in the mornings. Additionally it is easy to recognize other students from your school so you can hang out and socialize. It also encourages pride in your school.

### **Q2: What types of occupations should wear a uniform?**

Many occupations require uniforms to make it easy for the public to identify, for example police and emergency personnel wear uniforms that make it easy to seek assistance. Health providers like doctors and nurses are easily recognized by their uniforms are durable and easy to keep clean. Other uniforms or maybe more descriptive dress codes are a common practice among professionals working for recognized companies. Many people can be seen wearing company jackets with suitable shirts and ties.

### **Q3: Should companies ask for employees' opinions about the design of uniforms?**

Uniforms are important for public recognition and practicality. I believe management should consult with their employees about the uniforms that they desire. Employees with have a better understanding of what uniform features and design would be best for the jobs that they are in. I also believe employees would have more pride and would take better care of uniforms that they helped design.

### **Q4: Do you think it is becoming more popular for people to wear uniforms?**

Uniforms are compulsory in many occupations for example the military and police therefore in those occupations we would not gain anymore popularity. However I am of the opinion that people like to be identified with their professions and their companies and uniforms fulfill that desire. Uniforms also removes the peer pressure in regards to fashion and are practical and durable. In conclusion, I feel that uniforms will become more common in the future.

## live performances

### **Q1: What's the difference between watching a performance live and watching it on TV?**

When watching a performance on television you are usually by yourself or perhaps with friends and family. The TV gives you the opportunity to adjust the volume and record for viewing in the future. Attending a live performance is an experience totally different in that you are sharing the entertainment many others in the audience. You can feel the audience's excitement and appreciation of the performance. Also you can feel the sound and see the special effects that are not as prevalent when watching TV.

### **Q2: Do people in your country prefer live music concerts or live sports?**

I believe people in my country prefer live sporting events rather than music concerts. Music concerts can be exciting and entertaining but many people find them too crowded enter noisy. Sporting events however are very popular as people can identify with the team and can cheer and interact with other spectators. Being part of a sport audience also allows you to get up and move around and perhaps have some food and drink during intermissions.

**Q3: Should the government provide money to promote traditional performances?**

I think it is important for people to embrace their heritage and culture therefore performances would be very special and entertaining. People also like to get together and share experiences. As many of these performances would not necessarily happen if not organized by the government providing their monetary support I think it is important and necessary.

**Q4: Do you think learning drama or dancing is helpful for children?**

Children have many development difficulties and I believe dancing and drama will address some of those problems. Many children are shy and do not like to be noticed therefore to help them overcome shyness, performing would be very helpful. Also these activities would help children work and interact with others. Lastly I would mention that drama and music would also give children an appreciation of the arts which they may pursue or enjoy when they get older.

## health

**Q1: Do you think people in your country are generally healthy?**

Overall I would say the vast majority of people in my country are healthy. Physical activity and good dietary habits are promoted through advertising and having areas available for exercise, for example, parks and green spaces. However, there are many people that do not take care of themselves. Some bad habits include smoking, drinking in excess, eating fattening and not exercising enough

**Q2: What can governments do to improve people's health?**

Government should advertise healthy lifestyles to educate the population about the necessity of good health and what healthy habits including nutrition and exercise can provide. The government should also strictly enforce nonsmoking regulations and sale of alcoholic beverages to minors. Another deterrent would be to implement taxes on unhealthy snacks and beverages to encourage better alternate foods.

**Q3: What activities can schools organize for children to keep fit?**

Healthy food and exercise are very important for a child's growing body. Schools should provide physical education and health classes to promote a good lifestyle. Schools can provide opportunities for children to exercise, such as sports days, team sports and hiking or walking trips. For example when I was in high school we had a number of physical and running challenges that I competed in against fellow schoolmates

**Q4: Do you think people are healthier now than in the past?**

I believe people were healthier in the past than they are today. In the past work was usually more labor intensive, people would walk to many places and food was more natural and not processed. Today we consume a lot of manufactured and unhealthy food. In addition air and water pollution has made our environment toxic leading to many health issues.

## pets

### **Q1: Do people in your country like taking care of pets?**

People in my country enjoy providing for their pets. A pet needs a lot of attention, specialized foods and exercise. People enjoy being responsible for their pets and animals can encourage their owner to get out of the house, for example taking their dog for a walk. In return a pet provides companionship, entertainment and a purpose in life.

### **Q2: Do you think it is safe for animals to live in cities?**

Due to the number of animals in a city, life in the city can be dangerous for a pet especially with traffic volumes and interactions with other animals. Unfortunately I have seen many dogs and cats injured and killed in traffic. I've also witnessed many dog and cat fights resulting in cuts and bruises. Due to the density of animals within the city, they are also more susceptible to many diseases including parvovirus and rabies.

### **Q3: What problems are caused by keeping pets?**

Pets provide companionship and a sense of responsibility however pet keeping has its problems as well. Keeping a pet healthy and properly fed can be expensive therefore it brings a financial burden on its owner. Pets also need constant care and attention which can be detrimental if you spend many hours away from them or want to go on holidays. You are more likely to outlive your pet as well so you will have to deal with grief when they die.

### **Q4: Is keeping pets becoming more popular?**

I think pet keeping has become more popular in my country. Many of my friends and neighbors have pets, mainly cats and dogs however some do also have exotic animals like birds and reptiles. I find the more exotic animals very interesting and educational as I will research their habitat and requirements. Myself, I love animals and fondly remember my family dog who was a constant companion and my protector.

## products

### **Q1: What kinds of products are most popular in your country?**

Based on popularity, in the agricultural area, rice is a major product in China, and being a staple it is served with almost every meal. Almost everyone has technology at home or in hand including computers and smart phones. China is noted for its technology and domestic consumption and exports include computer parts and systems In addition to smart phones. Other popular items in China would be western products like fashion and food.

### **Q2: What kinds of products do young people think are useful but old people may not?**

Young people embrace the newest technology in computers and smartphones. Older people would not necessarily desire them as they limit most of their communication with phone calls and texts therefore older phones would be suitable. In China western influences have fashion entertainment and technologies that younger people will purchase whereas the older population would not demand as much and save their money.

### **Q3: Are people, in your country, buying more products than in the past?**

As we have become more affluent we purchase and consume more products, especially luxury and imported items. For example when new technology is available frequently old technology is abandoned. We live in a consume and dispose society where many items could be repaired or gifted to others less fortunate. Statistically, we import much more products from abroad than we did years ago.

### **Q4: What problems is consumerism causing nowadays?**

Consumerism has put a great deal of stress on our environment, land and water resources. Industrial waste and development has left many oceans areas depleted of fish and has encroached on the wildlife habitat. With increased industrialization, to meet consumer demands, pollution has become critical in cities and industrial areas affecting people's health and comfort.

## jobs

### **Q1: What kind of jobs do young people like doing in your country?**

There are many different types of jobs that young people enjoy based on their education and experience. Many students major in computer science technology and would prefer a job as an IT or computer specialist. Some other popular professions are in the health industry where students have been trained to be nurses, doctors and health professionals. Other popular professions would be in business as managers, supervisors, and marketing executives.

### **Q2: Do people in your country prefer physical work or mental work?**

I think most young people would prefer to work with their minds rather than their bodies. Office and managerial positions would be most suitable for many graduates. Some people, however, did not have the desire to spend years in University and would prefer to start work earn a living. Although there are exceptions most of those jobs more labour-intensive.

### **Q3: What factors should people take into consideration when choosing jobs?**

When choosing a job people should take into consideration how much education, time and effort the prerequisites require to qualify for an occupation. The big factor I believe people should consider is will they enjoy and excel at the profession they are choosing. It is difficult to be effective and motivated in an environment or job you dislike. Income and experience would also factor in choosing an occupation.

### **Q4: Do people in your country like to work in other countries?**

Many Chinese people need to work in the cities where commuting is difficult and hours of work are long. Additionally cities are very congested and have high levels of pollution which can be detrimental to a person's health. I know many Chinese people that are working very hard on their English skills to be accepted at a foreign University or obtain employment overseas. They are looking forward to shorter working hours better pay and an opportunity send money home to their families.

## companies

### **Q1: What types of companies are most common in your country?**

There are many popular businesses where I live. In the cities the service industry has created many entertainment businesses serving a large population such as clubs, drinking establishments, restaurants and entertainment venues. Also many service businesses are clinics, salons, fitness centers and retail stores. Serving the many tourists that visit provides popular business opportunities which include transportation and tour guiding for example.

### **Q2: What are the important factors in making a company successful?**

Successful businesses identify and fulfill the demand for a product or service that they are providing. They will also provide a desirable work environment with competitive wages to attract qualified and competent employees. Successful businesses will also have good managers and supervisors to motivate employees.

**Q3: What kinds of qualities should a successful businessman have?**

There are many qualities a businessman should have. Communication is probably the most important attribute for a businessman to have to work effectively with colleagues and staff and he should be receptive to feedback and suggestions. Next, I would say time management is a very important to complete required duties and transactions without procrastinating. Lastly, an effective businessman should be a leader, leading by example and be willing pitch in and help others.

**Q4: What kinds of new businesses are emerging in your country?**

There are several new business trends that are emerging. I believe more focus will be on Internet purchasing and marketing of hard goods and services. I also see, as technology is becoming more sophisticated, development in artificial intelligence and robotics will become more prevalent. Other rising business opportunities are health and fitness related because the population has become more informed and desires to develop a healthy lifestyle.

## homes

**Q1: Do people in your country prefer to live in a house or an apartment?**

Which accommodation or home people in my country would prefer to live in would be dependent on if they are in a rural or urban area and what financial resources they have to purchase it. I believe most people living in smaller communities would prefer to have a free standing house with some land to grow flowers and vegetables. For city residences, their home would likely be apartments or townhouses with easy maintenance close to where they work.

**Q2: Is the cost of housing rising in your country?**

Relative to people's income, housing and accommodation prices have risen considerably in the last couple of decades. In the past a couple could afford to finance and purchase a modest home whereas today people need to save and perhaps borrow from family to purchase the same or similar property. Apartments and condos are more affordable especially in high density areas within cities.

**Q3: Why do many people like to live in cities?**

Despite the drawbacks of living in a large city which would include pollution, crowding and higher expenses, many people prefer to live in the cities. Some are required for educational and working opportunities and some people prefer the big cities as they can provide shopping opportunities, entertainment venues, restaurants and interesting places to visit and hang out.

**Q4: Do you think living in the countryside will be more popular in the future?**

I believe people's desires to live in the countryside are prevalent now and will increase in the future. The main deterrents from living within city are cost, pollution, congestion and noise which makes country living more attractive. Other features of country living such include parks and green spaces which are an incentive to live in rural areas. I believe also that business, such as research and technology development will recognize that there are many advantages to locating their businesses in less expensive and desirable areas.

To just see a list of the current speaking questions see here:

<https://www.ieltsanswers.com/current-ielts-speaking-test-questions-2020.html>

## Model Answers from 2019

These are highly likely to still be in the test

### traditions:

#### Do you think it is important to protect traditions?

Well yes I do because each and every country has its own traditions, and it is these traditions that *distinguish* one country from another. As a matter of fact, traditions not only represent the people of a nation but they also reflect that nation's history as well. Therefore, I believe that if governments wish to promote *patriotism* and national pride, it's essential that customs are continually practised and adapted, so that they suit modern society better yet remain *relevant* to the life of people.

#### What do you think is the most important tradition in your country?

I suppose one of the most important traditions is showing other people, especially the elderly, respect by adding specific words into our speech and behaving in an appropriate way. While some Westerners may see this as unnecessary and rather *awkward*, it is a way of being polite and avoiding giving unintended *offense* for people in my country. In addition to this, there are other important traditions, such as exchanging red envelopes on New Year or eating mooncakes during the Mid-autumn festival.

#### What kinds of traditions have disappeared in your country?

As society develops, some traditions have been *done away with*. For example, people used to dye their teeth black in the past, but not in modern days anymore. This is probably because of the difference in beauty standards now and then. While it was once considered elegant to have black teeth, which *entails* having to dye them several times to make them look smooth and shiny, these days, white and even teeth are what people **yearn** for.

#### Why should children learn about traditions?

In my opinion, if children are informed about the traditions of their country, they'll feel stronger love and responsibility for the culture of their country. Moreover, it is young children who will eventually be responsible for *preserving* traditions and *passing them down to* future generations. If the young aren't properly educated about traditional customs, those customs will most likely disappear in the future.

#### What can governments do to protect traditions?

Well, I think there are several measures that governments can take. One way is to maintain the celebration of traditional festivals and encourage people to take an active part in them. It's important to make sure that these festivals are not only celebrated among local citizens but also known *nationwide* which, with the help of social media, can now easily be done. Governments, especially those of developing countries, need also to limit the impacts of globalisation on their culture to prevent traditional customs from being replaced by foreign ones.

## good news

### How do people share good news?

Good news is meant to be spread wide and far. Accordingly, everyone does that, especially with their beloved ones first. However, the way in which they share it may vary from person to person and depend on what kind of news it is. One of the fastest one to **disseminate** information, or in this case, good news these days is via social media, the internet-based platform that has transformed the way in which people communicate. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram are widely used for this kind of purpose.

– **disseminate**: to spread information, knowledge, etc. so that it reaches many people

### How does modern technology affect the delivery of information?

Technology basically affects everything we come across in this modern world and the advance of *artificial intelligence* somehow arises some concerns, too. However, its advantages seem to *outweigh* its drawback, especially regarding how information is being delivered. Prior to the advent of smartphones or portable tablets, people used to rely mostly on newspaper or printed materials to get updated with all the latest events around the world. But that's ancient history. Now, you have 24/7 access to all kinds of

information you want with only a click, not only news but academic knowledge provided by different kinds of online courses and apps. How convenient!

– **artificial intelligence**: an area of study concerned with making computers copy intelligent human behavior

– **outweigh**: to be greater or more important than something

### What kinds of good news have you received before?

Well, to be honest, good news is just good news no matter what kind it is, at least to me. Through my 20-something years of existence, the majority of good news I received were those related to my studying. Not that I meant to brag but truth to be told, I was excel at school and had always been in the group of students with best performance. In other words, I was a nerd. Therefore, more often than not, I was chosen to **represent** my class or school to compete in many contests for students in subjects like literature, English or biology. Together with other teammates, we brought home quite a few prestigious prizes that made our families, teachers and friends extremely proud.

– **represent**: to act or speak officially for somebody and defend their interests

## money

### **What can parents do to teach children to save money?**

Children are quick learners and can be easily affected by others' behaviors. Therefore, it's both a simple and challenging task at the same time to teach them anything, including how to efficiently *manage their budget*. Since we all learn through *imitating* and *replication*, the most practical way is to set a good example and be open to conversation. For instance, parents shouldn't overspend if they want their children to learn how to save money. An occasional exception like Christmas can be accepted, but other than that, no. Parents can even talk to them about *financial management* and do not *underestimate* your kids since they may understand more than we believe they can.

### **Why do young people tend to waste money?**

First of all, because they are young. Youngsters nowadays usually justify their financial issues with the YOLO philosophy which means "you only live once". Since life is too short and aint nobody got time to waste, they tend to spend much more than they can earn, buying unnecessary things they barely *afford to enjoy the best out of life*. Secondly, that is not even their money, but their parents'. Therefore, they don't value the effort behind those bills and keep throwing them out of the window as long as it suits them.

### **What kinds of things do people like to buy in your country?**

I can't tell for sure what the overall consumer behavior is like, but one thing everyone can notice is that just like most of other nationalities people is *obsessed* with high-tech devices, especially smartphones and tablets. The *sales volume* of such *digital gadgets* has significantly increased over the past few years, together with the proliferations of mobile stores. From my experience and observation, Apple's products are *in high demand* among the middle-class, which can be proven by the moment you step into any coffee shops in Madrid City where iPhones and MacBooks are of various types and colors.

### **Do schools teach anything about financial management?**

Unfortunately, I have to say no, or at least it is what I know. Only after students attend university, are they going to be introduced to finance and anything related. That is if they go to schools of economics, other than, I can't guarantee, which is actually a sad truth. Since financial management is so important in how youngsters will shape their mind and prepare for the future, such subject should be taught at high schools as one of the most essential skills that allow students to deal with any issue related to money at the early age.

### **Why is it necessary to teach teenagers to manage money?**

There are many topics to cover when it comes to financial management, I suppose. However, for students, I believe teaching them about the labor value, *financial stability* and independence is more crucial. Teenagers maybe a little young to understand how hard their parents have to work to afford the whole family but it would help if we let them do some voluntary or part-time jobs for them to have a closer look of where money comes from. From there, they would learn how not to *overspend* and take any amount of money for granted.

### **How do parents give pocket money in your country?**

Frankly speaking, it heavily depends on each family and their lifestyles. Some parents **grant** their children a specific amount of allowance daily or weekly which they can spend on snacks or necessary learning materials and stationery when needed. Others may not give at all since their kids already are fully provided with lunch boxes and everything else.

## personalities

### **What kinds of characteristics are common in modern society?**

People in modern world tend to have bigger vision, *curiosity* and ambition than those of the earlier days. Youngsters no longer limit themselves in four walls but reaching out to explore the world with endless energy and passion. With constant effort and firm *determination*, we are now experiencing considerable changes resulted from thousands of innovations and *disruptions* every second, which leads us to where we are now. If it hadn't been for those *remarkable traits*, we wouldn't have ever gone this far.

### **What qualities should a good teacher have?**

If you ask me, inspiring and tolerate are the most desirable characteristics I find in any teachers. There is nothing more encouraging and motivational than having a teacher who constantly stimulates and challenges students by providing *two-way conversations* and *conveying meaningful messages* through his or her lectures. As we all know, teenagers are troublemakers; therefore, the one who can overlook the *impulsive* acts and guide them back on track with pure compassion will definitely win them over.

### **Do you think parents' personalities can affect their children's personalities?**

There is no doubt parents' characteristics can have *profound influences* on their children's development, particularly in their *formative years of childhood*. What they say and how they do things will probably be *duplicated* by their kids without their acknowledgement. If parents are caring, supportive and tolerate, their children may consider them their peers and be open with them about their hopes and concerns. Since love and care are what the kids know, they will treat others with the same manners. On the contrary, if children are **neglected** or inappropriately treated at home, they *couldn't care less* about what happens to others.

### Would you like to develop a specific personality in the future?

Nobody is perfect and neither am I. There are many things I need to work on to improve myself, personally and professionally, one of which I would like to deal with most is my *procrastination*. I have a tendency to put everything off and wait until I have an urge or enough motivation to *kick start* myself, which has proven to be extremely dangerous sometimes. Once I almost missed a deadline of my final thesis for graduation just because of my laziness and, of course, procrastination. They say old habits die hard, especially the bad one, but I'll try my best to get rid of that unhealthy style of working.

## living with others

### Why do some young people dislike living with old people?

The most common reason might be a large generation gap between youngsters and their **senior citizen** in terms of mindsets and living style. To be more precise, young people are more open-minded and always up for adventures in comparison to the elder. They live bolder, act more impulsively and refuse to settle for anything less than freedom and

big dream while their grandparents are more careful in every decision and *take into account* possible consequences before making any move. Hence, when living together, they can hardly reach any mutual **consent** in any aspect. However, there are also exceptions where 2 or 3 generations living in harmony under the same roof.

### What are the advantages of living with old people?

Old people are like living dictionaries packed with endless stories about lifetime experience and wide *bread of knowledge*. Though born and raised in different social context, they can always provide youngsters with practical pieces of advice and be a valuable reference sources whenever we are in need. For example, if you get bored with all the facts and dates listed in history books, which are highly informative, yet, **tedious**, turn to your grandparents and get ready to be inspired by their personal insights and

*authentic* experience. No one knows the stories better than those who have been through it.

### Should young adults live on their own?

In my opinion, adolescences who have *reached their maturity* should live apart from their families to be more emotionally and financially independent. This kind of practice is more common in European and American countries compared to their Asian counterparts, which can be explained by traditional lifestyles and mindsets. However, the number of Asian youngsters moving out of their parents' houses are growing substantially since living on their own not only force them to be more responsible with their lives from washing their own dishes to ironing their clothes, but also offer them certain freedom to pursue what they want.

# shopping

## **What types of shops would you recommend a visitor to your country should go to?**

If travelers ever want to have an *authentic* and unforgettable experience during their journey, I would highly recommend they *pay a visit to* traditional markets or food stands on the street to have a taste of true street foods, which are not only diverse in types and flavors, but also *signature features* of cuisine. Street vendors will also offer visitors a wide range of delicious dishes and true dining experience.

## **What do you think are the advantages of buying things on the internet?**

Online shopping has *prevailing* in a past few years for reasons. First and foremost, buying online is incredibly *time-saving*. Well, obviously, time is considered the most precious *asset* that everyone has but many have *taken for granted*. Instead of spending hours driving to your favorite malls to get some new clothes of the latest collection, your problem can be solved with only Internet connections and, of course, your fine taste *in fashion*. No energy is needed, either.

## **Are there any disadvantages (or dangers) of buying on the internet? (What?)**

Every cloud has a silver lightning. Online shopping, in particular and e-commerce in general are true advancement in modern world, however, their drawbacks couldn't be overlooked. It is widely known that there is no such thing as 100% nowadays, cyber security included. No less than once or twice have I heard about users' information has been leaked, which can cause serious trouble to customers who are using that company's products or services. Another concern should also be taken into account is overspending due to constant exposure to products of preference.

## **In your country, how has shopping changed in the past few decades?**

Just like any other parts of the world, Singapore has experienced dramatic changes in customers' behavior when it comes to shopping. One of the striking features of shopping habits these days is people tend to buy things online and get them delivered to their houses, regardless what kinds of items. It could be pizzas, clothing or kitchen appliances.

## **Do you think people spend too much time (or money) on shopping? (Why?/Why not?)**

I can't tell for sure because the amount of time spent on shopping varies among different people. Nevertheless, thanks to the advent of Internet and online shopping, that amount might be relatively less than it used to be. Besides, people seem to be busier and their schedules get tighter with much more important tasks other than shopping itself. Therefore, I don't think shopping is people's priority or anything more than a necessary deed to *get on with* life.

## What kinds of people spend an excessive amount of time or money on shopping?

There is no doubt that people who spend an excessive amount of time or money on shopping are those with purchasing power and time to spare. In other words, they are of *high-income class* and love to *pamper themselves with* qualified products and premium services. They, regardless of gender, are people with fine taste and know what they want. They can sacrifice hours just to choose a dress or suit, which can cost a fortune just to attend an opening party.

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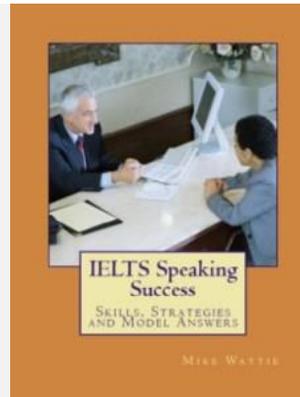
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