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SPEAKING

IELTS

**Speaking Success
Skills Strategies &
Model Answers**

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I have been teaching English as a second language for over fifteen years in Taiwan and Australia, in language centers and universities. My area of specialization is teaching students how to pass the IELTS exam. I particularly enjoy teaching IELTS because I find it challenging to teach students the necessary skills and strategies that they need to pass, and I also find that my students are highly motivated – this is a joy for a teacher!

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1. INTRODUCTION

The IELTS speaking test lasts 11-14 minutes. The test is divided into three parts. The IELTS examiner will ask you different types of questions in each part as follows below.

Part 1: Short question and answers about familiar topics.

This part of the test lasts from 4 to 5 minutes and consists of questions about you and the country you are from. There is a maximum of three different sets of topics and each topic has a maximum of four questions. The first topic will be about whether you work or study, the place you are living in, or the place you are from. The other two topics are usually fairly straightforward topics such as hobbies, holidays, sports, and entertainment.

Part 2: Long Turn

You are given a card with a topic and then given 1 minute to prepare a 1 to 2 minute answer to this topic. You should try to talk for 2 minutes if you are able. Topics include describing or commenting on a person, place, object, activity, or experience. The topic also has sub-topics, which are provided to assist you to plan your response. The examiner may ask one or two rounding-off questions at the end of this part of the test. These should be answered briefly.

Part 3: Discussion

This part of the test lasts from 4 to 5 minutes and consists of questions roughly based on the topic area of the Part 2: Long Turn. Questions typically ask you to compare, analyze, speculate, or give your opinion on the given topic. In this part the examiner may push you hard to see the limits of your ability.

Overview of the three parts of the test

PART	REQUIREMENT
Part One General questions 4-5 Minutes	Answer up to four questions for three topics . Try to speak for about 2-4 sentences for each question.
Part Two Long Turn 3-4 Minutes	1. The examiner will hand you a card with a topic on it. 2. You have one minute to prepare for the topic. 3. Speak for one to two minutes. [Longer answers are need for higher scores!]
Part Three 4-5 Minutes	A discussion based on Part Two. This normally takes the form of the examiner asking a series of questions related to your topic in Part Two.

1.1 GRADING

Your speaking test is graded and marked from 1-9 in accordance with the four key criteria shown below:

The four criteria are explained in more detail in the sections following the tables. You can also refer to my YouTube videos for further explanation of the grading:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3uSntDcKTU>

Fluency and coherence:

6	7	8
<p>Speaks at length, but some effort is required</p> <p>some loss of coherence due to repetition, self-correction, or hesitation</p> <p>some inappropriate linking words</p>	<p>Speaks at length without noticeable effort</p> <p>no loss of coherence due to repetition, self-correction, or hesitation</p> <p>wide range of linking words used</p>	<p>speaks fluently; hesitation is usually to think of ideas and rarely to search for language</p> <p>develops topics coherently and appropriately</p> <p>wide range of linking words used that assist to make information highly coherent</p>

[Note that the criteria described in this section are based on the Public Version of the speaking band descriptors at: https://www.ielts.org/PDF/UOBDS_SpeakingFinal.pdf]

Pronunciation:

6	7	8
<p>uses a range of intonation, stress, rhythm; but with mixed control and it is not maintained</p> <p>can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times</p>	<p>Good usage of intonation, stress, rhythm; sustains flexible use of these features, with only occasional lapses</p> <p>easy to understand throughout; accent has minimal effect on intelligibility</p>	<p>uses a wide range of pronunciation features flexibly and appropriately</p> <p>easy to understand throughout; accent has no effect on intelligibility</p>

Vocabulary: [lexical resource]

6	7	8
<p>Vocabulary is <u>sufficient</u> to discuss topics at length and make the meaning clear in spite of some errors</p> <p>generally paraphrases successfully</p> <p>insufficient advanced language is used to award 7</p>	<p>vocabulary used <u>flexibly</u> to discuss a variety of topics</p> <p>uses paraphrases effectively</p> <p>uses some less common and <u>idiomatic</u> vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and <u>collocation</u>, with some inappropriate choices</p>	<p>uses a <u>wide range of</u> vocabulary readily and flexibly to convey <u>precise meaning</u></p> <p>uses paraphrases effectively as required</p> <p>uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skillfully, with rare inaccuracies</p>

Grammar: [grammatical range and accuracy]

6	7	8
<p>uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility</p> <p>may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems</p>	<p>flexibly uses a range of complex structures</p> <p>frequently produces error-free sentences</p>	<p>uses a wide range of structures</p> <p>most sentences are error-free with only very occasional errors that are not repeated</p>

Level 9 Grading Criteria

Fluency and coherence	<p>speaks fluently like a native speaker and any repetition or self-correction is extremely rare; and any hesitation is to think of ideas and not to think of vocabulary or grammar</p> <p>speaks coherently using a wide range of appropriate cohesive features</p> <p>responses to question are relevant and developed fully</p>
Pronunciation	<p>uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety</p> <p>sustains flexible use of pronunciation features throughout</p> <p>can be understood effortlessly</p>
Lexical resource	<p>uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision for all topics</p> <p>uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately</p>
Grammatical range and accuracy	<p>uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately</p> <p>produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech</p>

FLUENCY AND COHERENCE:

Fluency is about your ability to speak at a normal speed without excessive hesitation and restarting of words or phrases. **Coherence** refers to your speaking being easy to understand. In order to score highly you need to show willingness to talk at length and develop your topic, use **connectives** and **linking words**, avoid pauses and restarts.

Speaking speed

In order to score well, you need to speak at a good speed. This can be challenging when speaking in a foreign language. In order to improve this become familiar with the way the test is conducted, and the types of questions that get asked, so that you are able to respond in a quicker way. In addition, you do not have to speak quickly throughout the whole test you just need to show that you are able to speak at a good speed in parts of the test. Therefore, in areas where you are more comfortable try to speak at a quicker speed to show this ability to the examiner, and in parts that are a bit more challenging you might have to slow down a little.

Hesitations [pauses]

Try to avoid having hesitations in the middle of sentences. These types of hesitations suggest to the examiner that you are trying to think of the necessary words or grammar to complete the sentence. Hesitations at the start of sentences are not as serious as they may be a result of trying to think of ideas for your response to the question. For this reason it is better to hesitate at the start of a sentence rather than in the middle of it.

Transitions and Linking phrases

Transitions are words or phrases that suggest a change in direction to the listener. These include phrases like: *in addition, however, consequently*. These words increase coherence because the examiner is able to clearly know that you have changed topic or the direction of the topic you are talking about. To increase your score use a wide range of these and don't repeat any phrases excessively.

PRONUNCIATION:

Your grade is influenced by the level to which your accent makes it difficult to understand what you are saying, and also the degree to which you use language features of a native speaker such as **chunking, stress, and intonation**.

Specific sounds

Many candidates have errors with specific sounds such as: *th, w, v, r, l, long vowel sounds [nɑme]*.

If you think you have these kinds of errors then ask a teacher or at least a native speaker their opinion. And if you do have these errors they are definitely going to have an impact on your score for pronunciation. You must get rid of them! You must practice saying them correctly... and practice doing it every day. This is because our pronunciation is based on habits. We speak without thinking about our actual pronunciation. Therefore, if you have a bad habit of mispronouncing a sound you need lots and lots of repetition of saying that sound correctly in order to create a new habit. Bad habits are hard to change!

Chunking

Chunking is how words are characteristically grouped together in spoken segments. You can think of these as being like clauses or sentences when we write. Between these 'chunks' you should have pauses at the appropriate places. Think of a comma when speaking as a short pause, and a full-stop is a longer pause including a breath. Each chunk is an idea and the pauses help the listener to know when you are moving onto a new idea. One of the best ways to improve your chunking is to notice the way native speakers naturally do this. Watching movies is a good way to achieve this!

Stress of syllables and words and sentences

Stress has to do with where speakers put the emphasis on particular syllables or words. In English every word has one of the syllables emphasized more than the others [PHOtograph, phoTOgrapher and photoGRAPHIC.] If you incorrectly stress syllables of words, then it can make it difficult for the listener to understand what you're saying. A lack of stress at the sentence level can make your speech sound flat and make it difficult for the examiner to catch the key point of the sentence. As with chunking, one of the best ways to improve this is to notice the way native speakers naturally do this. You also need to understand how altering the stress of words in sentences changes the meaning of the sentence:

I didn't say HE stole the money = I think someone else stole the money

I didn't say he STOLE the money = I think he didn't steal the money...maybe he borrowed it.

Intonation

As with stress above, if you speak without any intonation your speech will sound flat and boring to the examiner. Intonation is about how the tone of the voice rises and falls during speech. This intonation needs to be done naturally or it can have the influence of lowering your score. Essentially, if the intonation occurs in the wrong place or in the wrong way it will lower your score for pronunciation. For instance, we usually end a statement with a falling tone. A rising tone is often used when asking a question that is expected to result in a yes or no answer. This is probably one of the hardest aspects of learning English, and as a result, it can be one of the factors that can prevent a score of eight. As with other elements of pronunciation, the only real way to make progress here is by observing the way that native speakers naturally use intonation. Actively watching movies and actively noticing the intonation of native speakers is very important.

VOCABULARY: [lexical resource]

To score highly you must use higher-level words, pay attention to **collocation** (which are words that go together). In addition, control your **word endings** (use the correct form of a word such as noun, verb, or adjective). As well as this, you should try to show ability to **paraphrase** (rephrase words) and use **colloquial language** (conversational style language). Show precision with vocabulary by modifying your verbs with adverbs [*extremely busy*] and nouns with adjectives [*magnificent city*]

Errors with word choices

Errors with word choices lower your score according to how frequently they occur, whether they are repeated errors or just isolated errors, and also depending on how seriously they interfere with communication. Try to avoid words you are unsure of. However, you do need to show talent to the examiner, so use more advanced language where possible. Remember it is a language test!

Errors with word forms

This is an error where you use the correct word, but not the correct form of the word. For example, a noun where a verb is needed ("You need to ~~management~~ manage your business"). These errors are less serious than the errors with word choices, but still lower your score. If you know you have frequent errors with any aspects such as confusing adverbs and adjectives then try to work on reducing these errors by doing quizzes and reviewing the rules.

Lack of talent

In order to get beyond six requires that you show the examiner some advanced language such as idiomatic language or topic-based language. If you have lots of time before your exam, then learn language related to a wide range of topics. I'm also a big fan of learning idiomatic language because it can be applied to a wide range of topics. My main suggestion here is that rather than trying to learn lots of new words and phrases you focus on learning a few well so that you are able to use them effectively in the exam. This is covered in detail in Chapter 6 and 7.

GRAMMAR: [Grammatical Range and Accuracy]

To score highly you need to avoid grammatical errors, such as with articles and prepositions and sentence order especially when they make your speaking difficult to understand and also use a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, passive). Using lots of complex sentences is particularly important. These are sentences that have a dependent and independent clause. Grammar is covered in detail in Chapter 8.

Use complex sentences

To score well for grammar requires you to use a wide range of sentence types. Especially, complex sentences which are sentences with a dependent and independent clause. As with my advice regarding vocabulary, I suggest you don't try to learn too many types of sentences. Instead focus on learning a few and learning them really well. My two top suggestions are learning how to use conditional phrases; [if phrases] and relative pronouns [who, which, that, when], which enable you to add extra information about the subject of the sentence. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 8.

Tenses

For the most part you can limit the number of errors with tenses by just sticking to the tense of the question. If the examiner is asking you a question about your childhood, then it is likely that your answer is going to be in the past tense. When you read the Part Two question card you should think about what tenses you need to use in your answer.

Word order

This type of error is very serious and easily noticed by the examiner. A common cause is due to differences in the sentence structure between your native language and the English language. It is a good idea to become aware of what the main differences are. You may need to frequently review these differences.

Prepositions and Articles

Errors with prepositions [in on at]; and articles [a, an, the] are minor and are likely to be not noticed or forgiven by examiners. However, if you frequently make mistakes with these then it will start to limit your score for grammar. Repeated errors make it difficult to get to 7 and almost impossible to get to 8. As with other aspects of grammar you need to review the rules and perhaps do some quizzes to become more familiar with them.

1.2 PREPARING FOR YOUR TEST

To improve your score in the IELTS speaking section, you should focus on the following areas:

1. Understanding how the speaking test is graded
2. Preparing for and practicing common questions that are asked
3. Learning ways of structuring your answers to extend your answers and to improve your coherence
4. Learning to paraphrase, which is when you use a phrase to explain a word you can't think of
5. Improving your pronunciation, and ensuring you can make all sounds correctly (th, l, r, long vowel sounds) and also getting natural sounding stress, intonation, and connected speech.
6. Improving spoken grammar by correcting any frequent errors, and learning to use a couple of complex sentence structures such as conditional phrases or relative pronouns.
7. Broadening your vocabulary especially by building common phrases that can be used for a variety of responses, such as connectives and linking words and idiomatic language.

2. GENERAL STRATEGIES

This section introduces strategies that can be used in all three parts of the test. The strategies will be briefly introduced in this section, and then the way to use these strategies will be explained under each part of the test.

BAD EXAMPLE OF A SPEAKING TEST:

Do you like to watch movies: **yes**

What sort? **Drama**

Do you have a particular favorite? **no**

Do you have a favorite actor? **no**

It is really important to produce language in the test to get a good score for all four grading criteria. The example above fails to do this. It is very short so the examiner is not able to see any fluency. Very few words have been spoken so it is difficult to assess pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

The strategies outlined below can be used in all three parts of the test to extend your answer. You may also like to see my YouTube video on this topic. It is my most popular video with hundreds of thousands of viewers!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4VYB-hXNkw>

Extend your answers

The strategies below are used to answer the question:

"What kind of food do you like?"

1. DIVIDE INTO 2 OR 3 PARTS:

This strategy involves giving 2 or 3 reasons for your answer, as follows:

Well, there are three kinds of food that I'm really keen on.

The one I like best is *Italian food* because...

I also really like to eat *Korean food* as it's very...

I'm also kind of partial to *Mexican food* because it is...

Well, there are three kinds of food that I'm really keen on. The one I like best is Italian food because I am a big fan of pasta. I also really like to eat Korean food as it's very healthy and flavorsome. I'm also kind of partial to Mexican food because it is so hot and spicy.

2. GENERAL TO SPECIFIC

This strategy involves giving a general reason for your answer, and then explaining it more specifically, and even giving an example as follows:

Well, I'd have to say that I'm a big fan of seafood. In particular, I really like to eat Japanese seafood because it's always so fresh. **For instance,** sashimi is delicious because the raw fish is so flavorful.

general = seafood

specific = Japanese seafood

example = sashimi

3. DEPENDS: describing different situations

This strategy involves giving different reasons for different situations for your answer, as follows:

*I think it **depends** really.*

***If I'm working I prefer** to get something like fast food such as McDonalds because I only have a short break.*

***But, if I'm out with friends I would rather have** something more exotic such as Thai food or Indian food.*

4. CONCESSION:

This strategy involves making a main point and then giving a counterargument to it, as follows:

*Well, recently I'd have to say that I have been enjoying eating steak and each time I feel like a steak I go to Outback Steak House because the steaks there are huge. **However**, I think that it may not be all that healthy to eat so much red meat, as I've heard it can lead to high levels of cholesterol.*

5. AVOIDANCE:

This strategy involves not directly answering the question at first, and then answering it, as follows:

***Well, to be honest, I don't really have** a favorite food; **but I guess that if I had to choose one**, then I'd go for something like pizza— you know, I just love all that cheese and tomato sauce.*

Avoiding phrase = *Well, to be honest, I don't really have...*

Answering phrase = *but I guess that if I had to choose one...*

Speak at a variable speed rate

Your grade for fluency requires that you speak at a good speed. You must demonstrate this to the examiner, but you do NOT need to speak quickly throughout the entire exam. Vary your speed as follows:

Slow down when you...

1. reach a difficult area or are unsure of what you will say
2. want to emphasize something
3. are using high level language to make the examiner notice it

Speed-up when you...

1. are comfortable with the topic and what you are saying
2. are giving less important information

Use redundant language

Redundant language is words that don't have any real meaning such as: **oh, well, actually**. Research shows that native speakers use lots of redundant language, but non-native speakers rarely use it. So use it to be more native-like!

Use punctuation

When we speak we use punctuation. Spoken punctuation takes the form of pauses and these pauses act like punctuation in writing. They guide the listener. A short pause signals a new clause. A longer pause with a breath of air signals a new idea. And, an even longer pause signals a change of topic.

comma = short pause

full-stop = longer pause with a breath of air

paragraph= even longer pause

Use lots of adjectives and adverbs

Adjectives make things more interesting. There is a difference between eating a nice dessert, and eating a bowl of the freshest, sweetest fruit, topped with a delicious chocolate sauce! Adverbs allow you to explain an activity more precisely. Again, there is a difference between running and running swiftly.

Adjectives and adverbs increase the precision of your language and this increases your score for vocabulary.

We can also use adverbs with adjectives to add even more precision and show even more talent with vocabulary to the examiner. The following adverbs are organized from providing weak modification to strong modification of an adjective:

slightly tiring

fairly tiring

particularly tiring

really tiring

extremely tiring

Listen carefully for key words in the questions

In English the key words of questions usually come at the very start of the sentence. If you miss this word, you may struggle to know what the examiner is asking. Some common question words are listed below:

Question	Function	Example
what	asking for information about something	What types of shops do you like?
when	asking about time	When do you usually go shopping?
where	asking about a place	Where do you like to go shopping?
which	asking about a choice	Which is more important to you the quality or the price of a product?
who	asking about other people	Who do you usually go shopping with?

Entering the test room

When the time comes for your speaking test you will enter a room with a table and two chairs and usually sit opposite the examiner. In theory, your test does not begin until after the examiner has checked your identification (passport). In reality though, as soon as you enter the door the examiner is forming an opinion about you!

You may feel nervous. It's pointless to tell the examiner you feel nervous as they hear this often. The best thing is to try to hide the nervousness. Try to show confidence and calmness. Try to show the examiner that you are confident to speak English. It can be helpful to smile at the examiner to establish warmth between you. Overall, you don't really need to worry about doing anything because the examiner is experienced and will guide you through the process of the exam.

Before your test starts the examiner needs to record some details such as the date and time. You should stay silent during this. However, you can use this as an opportunity to get accustomed to the examiner's accent and pronunciation. Essentially, you can be tuning your listening to make it easier to catch the questions when the examiner starts asking them.

The examiner also needs to check your identification and will ask you a few questions such as: *What is your full name? Where are you from? Can I see your identification please?* The test has started at this point, but just give simple answers to these questions. This is not the time to be giving extended answers. You will frustrate the examiner if you do this!

After the examiner has finishing checking your identification the examiner will say something like *"Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself"* and the examiner will introduce a topic and start asking you questions about it.

3. PART ONE: QUESTIONS ON FAMILIAR TOPICS

Part One	Requirement	Suggestions
4-5 Minutes	<p>Answer up to 4 questions about 3 different topics.</p> <p>The examiner can repeat the question one time.</p> <p>You can ask the meaning of a word but the examiner cannot rephrase the whole question.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Full response – not just yes/no2. Try to speak for about 2 or 4 sentences for each question.3. Focus on language not ideas or real opinions.

Requirement

This part of the test lasts from 4 to 5 minutes and consists of questions about you and the country you are from. In this part of the test, the examiners read questions directly from their examiner's book. There is a maximum of three different sets of topics and each topic has a maximum of four questions. The first topic will be about whether you work or study, the place you are living in, or the place you are from. The other two topics are usually fairly straightforward topics such as hobbies, holidays, sports, or entertainment.

Procedure

1. After checking your ID the examiner will start Part One of the test.
2. The examiner will say: *"Now, I am going to ask you a few general questions"*
3. The examiner will ask three or four questions according to different topics. The examiner will then introduce the topic by saying something like:
"Now, let's talk about where you live"

Make sure you pay attention to the keywords the examiner uses to introduce the topic. This is because you will have three or four questions based on this topic and you want to be clear what the topic is about.

4. The examiner will ask you three or four questions based on the topic, such as:

Do you live in a house or an apartment?

Which room do you like the most in your home?

In the future, what sort of home would you like to live in?

5. When the examiner has finished asking you 3 or 4 questions based on the topic, the examiner will move onto the next topic, by saying something like:

"Now let's talk about your hobbies and interests"

6. After three sets of topics [each with three or four questions] the examiner will finish Part One and move onto Part Two of the test. Note that Part One of the test lasts 4 to 5 minutes. If you give longer answers, it is possible that you may only get two topics. This could be an advantage because there is less chance of getting an unfamiliar topic!

3.1 STRATEGIES

1: Expansion

Expansion is making something bigger. In IELTS it is good to give expanded answers to questions. This shows that you understand the question, and gives you more chance to show your language ability and get a higher score. This is illustrated below:

QUESTION: Do you like riding bicycles?

BAD RESPONSE: "Yes"

BETTER RESPONSE: *"Yes, because it's fun, good for health, and doesn't cost a lot."*

GREAT RESPONSE:

Well, I like to ride bikes for a few reasons. **The main reason** I like to cycle is that I think it is really fun and it is a good way to go sightseeing. **I'd also like to point-out** that riding a bike is very good for my health because it can help me to lose weight. **I would also like to add** that recently I haven't been riding my bike much, as I am quite busy at work.

You should refer back to Chapter 2 about the different ways to expand your answers which include:

1. Dividing your response into two or three parts:
2. Explaining something from general terms to specific and maybe giving an example
3. Depends: describing different situations
4. Concession: making a main argument and then giving a concession to it
5. Avoidance: not directly answering the question at first and then answering it

2: Show language

QUESTION: What colors do you like?

BAD RESPONSE: *"I like green and blue."*

[This answer has no advanced vocabulary.]

BETTER RESPONSE: *"My favorite colors are **light green** and **navy blue**."*

[This answer is more precise and precision increases your score for vocabulary.]

EVEN BETTER RESPONSE:

Well, my favorite color is **magenta**, I guess that's because I'm really into bright and bold colors. I also like **turquoise**, as I find that a very relaxing peaceful color that reminds me of the ocean.

This answer uses some less common colors, and can impress the examiner with your vocabulary about colors. It also includes the idiomatic expression *"I'm really into."* This means to like something.

3. Buy time to think

There are a few ways to buy some time to think of your answer. Note that you shouldn't use any particular method too often! Use a range of these methods below:

Repeat the question: One way to do this is to rephrase the words of the question *"Oh, so you're asking about my favorite color."*

Ask the examiner to repeat the question: In Part One of the test the examiner is permitted to repeat the question one time. Note that the question cannot be repeated a second time and the examiner is not supposed to rephrase the question. You could ask the question to be repeated just so that you can have time to think of how to

respond to it. Essentially, while the examiner is repeating the question you are thinking of what you can say. Doing this once won't lower your score, but obviously if you do it often it will lower it!

You can use language like: *"I'm sorry I didn't quite catch that...could you please repeat the question."*

Use some memorized phrases to start your answer: if you memorize a few phrases, while you are saying these phrases you can be thinking of how you will actually respond to the question. Some phrases could be:

"Well, that's a really interesting question"

"Oh I'm not too sure about that... Let me think for a minute...Oh yes it is...."

"With regards to your question, I guess I would have to say that....."

4. If you don't understand the question

If you do not hear or understand the question, the examiner can repeat each question one time. If you do not understand the meaning of a word, you can ask the examiner to explain that word. However, the examiner is not able to rephrase the whole question if you are not able to understand it, except in Part Three. If you didn't answer the question, it doesn't mean you've failed your exam, but you wouldn't want to do this more than once or twice. If you can't understand the question then tell the examiner. The worst situation is that you stay silent and make the examiner unsure about whether you will give an answer or not. This makes both you and the examiner uncomfortable. Another choice is to listen out carefully for key words in the question and then try to give some sort of response to the question. This is a bit of a gamble! Do you feel lucky?

3.2 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Note that this section will use the general strategies outlined in Chapter 2. More than one of the strategies could be used for any particular question. The purpose of this section is to show you how to actually use these strategies to answer questions.

The following types of questions are outlined below:

Question Type	Strategy
description	divide into 2 or 3 parts
types of	divide into 2 or 3 parts
liking	general to specific
disliking	general to specific
habits	depends
yes/no	depends
"Wh" questions	concession
when you were a child	concession
in the future	avoidance
comparing	avoidance

1. DESCRIPTION QUESTIONS

STRATEGY: divide your response into two or three parts

STRUCTURE: point 1 + point 2 + point 3

SAMPLE QUESTION: *"Tell me something about your hometown?"*

Well, I come from Taipei and I have lived here all my life. **I'd like to begin by saying that** it's the capital of Taiwan and also the cultural center. **On top of that I can also add that** It's very crowded, maybe even one of most congested cities in Asia I guess. The roads are so jammed that even the locals have problems finding their way around! **Finally, I'd also like to mention** that it offers splendid examples of contemporary architecture. Actually, some of the most renowned landmarks are in the middle of Taipei, such as Taipei 101, the second tallest building in the world.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Starting-off (redundant language)

ok, then; actually; alright; well, you know;

Point 1

I'd like to begin by saying ...

The first thing I'd like to mention is ...

The main thing you need to know is ...

Point 2

On top of that I can also add that ...

Another interesting point ...

Not only that, but _____ is also exceedingly

Point 3

Finally, I'd also like to mention

And, I shouldn't forget to mention that...

I guess I could also say that (it's) sort-of

Practice Questions:

1. What sort of work do you do?
2. What does your house look like?
3. What does your neighborhood look like?
4. What does your city/town look like?
5. What sort of clothes do you like to wear?
6. Describe a city you would like to visit?
7. Describe a country you would like to visit?
8. Describe a park you have visited?

2. "TYPES OF" QUESTIONS

STRATEGY: divide into 2 or 3 parts

STRUCTURE: general statement + type 1 + type 2

SAMPLE QUESTION:

"Tell me about the different types of public transportation in your city."

Well, you know there's quite a mixed variety of public transportation in my city. **I think the most common one** is buses because they seem to go everywhere. **In addition,** the trains **are also extremely popular** for those people who are lucky enough to live near a train station.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Rephrasing types: kinds, sorts, variety, range of, array

Useful phrases to start [General statement]

There's quite a mixed variety of ...

There's a fairly wide range of ...

There's quite a diverse mixture of ...

Type 1

I think the most common one is...

The main one is....

The first one that comes to mind is...

Type 2

In addition, X ...is also extremely popular

Another kind is ...

Not only that, but X ...is also exceedingly.....

Type 3 [if needed]

And I shouldn't forget to mention that...

I guess I could also say that...

Finally, I'd also like to mention...

Practice

1. What kinds of restaurants are popular in your country?
2. What types of shops can be found in your local area?
3. What types of things do people collect in your country?
4. How do you spend your free time?
5. How do people spend their free time in your country?
6. What sorts of TV programs do you watch?
7. What sorts of TV programs are popular in your country?
8. What sort of things do people collect in your country?

3. LIKING

STRATEGY: general to specific

STRUCTURE: general statement + more precise statement + reason

SAMPLE ANSWER

"What kind of animals do you like?"

Well, in general I would say **I'm pretty fond of** small animals. In particular, **I'm really keen on** cats and dogs; **and, I guess this is because** we often kept them when I was growing up, and they were good companions for me.

Rephrasing "liking"

I'm pretty fond of...

I'm really keen on...

I'm a big fan of...

I'm extremely passionate about...

General statement

Well, in general I would say ...

Generally speaking...

Overall, I think that...

More precise statement

In particular,

Specifically,.

To be more precise...

Reason

And I guess this is probably because...

I think this is due to the fact that...

The reason for this is because...

Practice:

1. What do you like about your hometown?
2. What do you like about your job/studies?
3. What sort of music do you like?
4. What sorts of books do you like reading?
5. What type of movies do you like?
6. Where do you like to shop?
7. What types of food do you like?
8. What types of free time activities do you like?

4. DISLIKING

STRATEGY: general to specific

STRUCTURE: General dislike + more precise statement + reason

SAMPLE ANSWER

"Is there anything you don't like about your hometown?"

Generally speaking...I'd have to say that I'm not really fond of the weather. **To be more specific**, I really can't stand the summer months. **I think this is due to fact that** it is always humid, so it makes me feel quite hot and sweaty!

Rephrasing "Disliking"

I really can't stand...

I'm not really fond of...

I'm not much of a fan of...

... simply gets on my nerves.

General statement

Generally speaking...

Well, in general I would say ...

Overall, I think that...

More precise statement

To be more specific...

To be more precise...

Specifically,....

Reason

I think this is due to the fact that...

And I guess this is probably because...

The reason for this is because...

Practice

1. Is there anything you don't like about your hometown?
2. Is there anything you don't like about job/studies?
3. Is there any food you don't like?
4. Are there any clothes that you don't like?
5. Are there any colors that you don't like?
6. What type of weather do you dislike?
7. What type of noises do you dislike?
8. What type of movies do you dislike?

5. Habits

STRATEGY: Depends

STRUCTURE: Depends + if preference 1 + if preference 2

[note that the structure uses conditional clauses which can increase your score for grammar]

SAMPLE QUESTION

What do you usually do at the weekend?

Well, it is contingent upon how I feel.

If I'm exhausted after working all week, **I prefer to** do something relaxing like chilling out on the sofa with a good book.

But, if I feel energetic **I would rather** do something more exciting like go hiking or camping.

LANGUAGE

Depends

Well, it is contingent upon...

I think it depends really.

Well, to be honest, I would have to say that it really depends.

Preference 1

If I'm... I prefer to...

Usually, I prefer...

Sometimes, I prefer to...

Preference 2

But, if I... I would rather...

Although, sometimes I would rather...

However, if I have...

Note: To describe past habits we can also use “used to” or “would”, with an appropriate adverb of frequency:

*When I was a child, my brother often **used to** take me fishing.*

*My mother **would always** tell me a story to get me to fall asleep*

Practice

1. What do you usually do on the Internet?
2. Where do you usually study?
3. What do you like to do for holidays?
4. When do you go shopping?
5. What do you do to relax?
6. How much sleep do you usually get?
7. How do you celebrate festivals in your country?
8. How much TV do you watch?

6. Yes/no questions

STRATEGY: Depends

STRUCTURE: Depends + preference 1 + preference 2

SAMPLE QUESTION

Do you eat healthy food?

Well, to be honest, I would have to say that it really depends.

Usually I prefer to eat something quick and convenient such as instant noodles because I am very busy with my studies. **Although, sometimes I would rather** spend a little more time and cook something healthier such as a rice and veggies *.

[*veggies = vegetables].

LANGUAGE

Depends

Well, to be honest, I would have to say that it really depends.

Well, it is contingent upon...

I think it depends really.

Preference 1

Usually I prefer...

If I'm... I prefer to...

Sometimes I prefer to...

Preference 2

Although, sometimes I would rather...

But, if I... I would rather...

However, if I have...

Practice Questions

1. Do you like the weather in your country?
2. Do you enjoy eating food from other countries?
3. Do you enjoy your work/studies?
4. Are there enough festivals in your country?
5. Do you enjoy going shopping?
6. Do you like to get up early?
7. Do you play or watch any sports?
8. Are you planning any vacations?

7. "WH" Questions

[these are questions that start with the words: **who, where, why, what, and how**]

STRATEGY: CONCESSION (making a main point and then giving a concession to it)

STRUCTURE: main point + concession

SAMPLE QUESTION

"What sort of restaurants do you usually eat at?"

Well, recently I'd have to say that I have been enjoying eating steak and each time I feel like a steak I go to Outback Steak House, because the steaks there are huge. **Although, I suppose it could be argued that** it may not be all that healthy to eat so much red meat, as I've heard it can lead to high levels of cholesterol.

LANGUAGE

Concession

Although, I suppose it could be argued that...

However, I'm quite aware that...

Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that...

DIFFERENT TYPES OF "WH" QUESTIONS

QUESTION	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
what	asking for information about something	What types of shops do you like?
when	asking about a time	When do you usually go shopping?
where	asking about a place	Where do you like to go shopping?
which	asking about a choice	Which is more important, the quality or the price of a product?
who	asking about other people	Who do you usually go shopping with?
why	asking for a reason	Why do you go with that person?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What do you do at the weekend?
2. When do you usually read?
3. Where do you usually go for holidays?
4. Which do you prefer, reading a book or watching T.V?
5. Who do you spend your evenings with?
6. When do you usually sleep?
7. Why do you work/study there?

8. How often do you play or watch sports?

8. When you were a child

STRATEGY: Concession

STRUCTURE: main point + concession

SAMPLE QUESTION

What games did you enjoy playing when you were a child?

Well, I was always very keen on playing video games. I spent almost all my free time playing them. **However, I'm quite aware that...** It wasn't the healthiest way to spend my childhood and perhaps it's contributed to my myopia*.

[* myopia is an eye problem of short-sightedness]

Concession

However, I'm quite aware that...

Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that...

Although, I suppose it could be argued that...

Practice Questions

1. What colors did you like when you were a child?
2. Did you like to wear bright clothing when you were a child?
3. Did you like any sports when you were a child?
4. What type of food did you like when you were a child?
5. Did you have a lot of friends when you were a child?
6. What types of indoor activities did you do when you were a child?

9. In the future

STRATEGY: avoidance [not directly answering the question]

STRUCTURE: avoiding phrase + answer to the question

SAMPLE ANSWER

"Where would you like to go for your next vacation?"

Well, to be honest, I don't really have a clear plan **but I guess that I will probably** go overseas to some exotic location like Nepal because I'm really into hiking and exploring new areas.

Avoiding phrase

Well, to be honest, I don't really have...

Actually, I'm not really sure about that.

Oh, I've never really thought about that.

answer to the question

... but I guess that I will probably...

... but I guess that if I had to choose one, then I'd...

... perhaps the end result will be that

Practice Questions

1. Would you like to learn a new language in the future?
2. In the future, what sort of home would you like to live in?
3. In the future, do you think people will use mobile phones more than now?
4. In the future, do you think people will be healthier or less healthy than now?
5. Do you think your hometown will change much in the future?
6. Do you think you will have more free time in the future?

10. Comparing

STRATEGY: avoidance [not directly answering the question]

STRUCTURE: avoiding phrase + answer to the question

SAMPLE ANSWER

"Do you prefer to read a book or watch TV?"

Oh, I like them both so it's hard to choose only one. But I guess that if I had to choose one, then I would rather read a novel **and the main reason for this is because I slightly prefer** the storylines of novels to TV.

[Note: the comparative words are underlined]

Avoiding phrase

Oh, I like them both, so it's hard to choose only one.

Well, to be honest, I don't really have...

Actually, I'm not really sure about that.

Oh, I've never really thought about that.

Answer to the question

... but I guess that I will probably...

... but I guess that if I had to choose one, then I'd...

... perhaps the end result will be that

Comparatives

I slightly prefer..

I'd much rather

I enjoy X much more than Y

Practice Questions

1. Do you prefer studying in the morning or in the evening?
2. Do you prefer taking photos with your phone or with a camera?
3. Would you rather live in a place with hot weather or cold weather?
4. Do you like to take lots of short holidays or one long holiday?
5. Do you prefer to write by hand or using a computer?
6. Do you prefer to send text messages or to call someone?

3.3 COMMON TOPICS

There are a wide range of topics that can be asked at any particular time. As well as this the questions used in the test change frequently, so it's difficult to predict exactly what topics you will receive.

Note that the first topic you receive is likely to be about your work or study, your home, where you are from, or where you are living now. In this case it makes sense to be really well prepared to answer these questions. I am amazed when I have students that don't know how to describe their job or pronounce their job title correctly! Or, have no ideas about their hometown. Prepare well for these sets of questions, so that you can get your test off to a good start. This will make a favorable impression with the examiner and also help you to relax.

Important note: Do you work or are you a student?

If the examiner asks whether you work or study, it makes things difficult for the examiner if you don't specify one clearly. I suggest that if you are working and studying you talk about the one that is the easiest for you to talk about and use higher-level language. And, if you're not doing anything, I suggest you talk about what you were doing most recently. If you want to avoid having to talk in the past tense, then just pretend that you're still doing it! It's okay to pretend in the exam. According to one of my Buddhist students, even though it is not okay to lie...it's okay to tell stories!

Sample questions and answers

...Let's talk about your 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. [The underlined phrases are explained in the section below regarding idiomatic language]

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.

Did you have to do any training or study for this job?

Well, for this type of job there is no formal training. I mostly learnt from the other staff and through hands-on experience.

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.

Nouns	Meaning
deadline	to finish a project by a specific time
occupation	type of job
overtime	needing to work beyond your normal working hours
perks	extra benefits you get from a job
shift work	working at different times of the day
social skills	the ability to communicate and interact well with others
morale	team spirit

Verbs	Meaning
be involved in	to be doing
concentrate	to focus attention towards an activity or problem
help out	help [phrasal verb]
persevere	to not give up. To keep doing something.
procrastinate	to delay or put off doing something

Adjectives	Meaning
casual	relaxed and not following strict rules
exhausting	tiring
formal	observation of conventional forms and rules
hectic	busy
inspirational	motivating
monotonous	boring
passionate	intense or strong emotional feeling about something [positive]

Idioms	Meaning
golden opportunity	an excellent opportunity <i>An internship at Google would be a <u>golden opportunity</u>.</i>
hands-on	to learn by actually doing. <i>We can get <u>hands-on</u> experience by actually doing things.</i>

on the go	<p>busy</p> <p><i>I've been <u>on the go</u> all week so I haven't had a chance to play golf.</i></p>
wear many hats	<p>someone who has to do many different types of tasks or roles.</p> <p><i>My job description is very broad, so I have to <u>wear many hats</u>.</i></p>
work flat out	<p>work very hard</p> <p><i>Sometimes I have to <u>work flat out</u> to finish my work on time.</i></p>

Practice questions about your job

1. What kind of job do you do?
2. Was it easy to get this job?
3. Did you like your first day at work?
4. Why did you choose this kind of work?
5. Have you always wanted to do this type of work?
6. How long have you been doing this job?
7. How long will you continue to do this type of work?
8. Would you like to do a different job in the future?

Sample questions and answers

...let's talk about your 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.

Did you enjoy your first day there?

Yes, it was really great because I got to meet lots of fantastic new people. That first day was quite relaxing, but after that the course got really intense and I found that I had to hit the books every day just to keep up.

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.

Nouns	Meaning
nurture	to help grow or develop
pedagogy	the way of teaching including the instructional methods that are used
qualification	what someone gets when they graduate from school. For instance, a diploma is a qualification.
student centered education	a philosophy of education where the student is the central focus
the curriculum	the entire school program including course materials and testing of students. Everything that a school aims to teach.
tuition	the fees for studying a course

Verbs	Meaning
enroll	to join a class
graduate	to pass a course or level of study
interpret	to understand in a particular way. For example, we need to interpret the meaning of a painting.
revise	to review materials that have already been taught

Adjectives	Meaning
academic	relating to education especially universities.
multi-disciplinary	involving several different subjects or areas of study.
pedagogical	relating to teaching methods and principles.
prestigious	of high reputation
tertiary education	university or vocation school
vocational	concerns teaching the skills necessary for a particular job. This concept is often applied to trade schools. So if you are studying cooking or plumbing you are going to a vocational school.

Idioms	Meaning
hit the books:	to study hard <i>I have to <u>hit the books</u> because I have a 5,000 word essay due tomorrow.</i>
set the stage for	create conditions to allow something to happen in the future. <i>I think that my course will help <u>set the stage for</u> my future career.</i>
the wee hours	very early in the morning <i>I often have to study until <u>the wee hours</u> because my course has a really heavy work load.</i>
up-to-date	the most recent <i>I chose to study there because it has the most <u>up-to-date</u> knowledge in my area.</i>

Practice questions about your studies

1. What are you studying?
2. Why did you choose to study this?
3. Is it easy to study this?
4. Have you always wanted to study this?
5. Is there anything about your subject that you don't like?
6. How long will you continue to study this?
7. What do you hope to do in the future when you have finished your studies?
8. Who are more important to you, your teachers or your classmates?

Sample questions and answers

Let's talk about where you live...

Do you live in a house, or an apartment?

Oh, I live in a high-rise apartment complex in an up-market neighborhood on the east side of the city. [Underlined words are explained below in the idioms section.]

Do you like living there?

Yes, I really do. Even though it's my uncle's house he really makes me feel at home. And it's a fantastic apartment complex because it includes a lot of facilities such as a swimming pool and a gymnasium. As well as that I have become friends with some of the neighbors and we often hang out together.

Which is your favorite room?

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.

Is there anything you don't like about your home?

There are a couple of things. I guess the main thing is that it is quite an old apartment and it has become a bit run down. My uncle really needs to renovate his apartment. As well as this, it has really lofty ceilings and so it's difficult to keep the rooms warm in the cooler months.

Nouns	Meaning
apartment complex	an apartment building. Especially when there are multiple buildings.
architecture	the style of the design of a building
ceilings	the inside of the roof
detached house	a house that is separated from other houses by land
neighbors	the people who live next to or near someone
neighborhood	area that someone lives in

Verbs	Meaning
commute	regular travel. For instance, commuting to work every day
having access	being able to easily get somewhere or use something
reside	live. I reside in a five-storey building

Adjectives	Meaning
built-up	an area with many buildings, especially tall ones
cozy	comfortable
classic	old or traditional style
contemporary	modern
fantastic	wonderful, really good
lofty	tall; e.g., lofty ceilings
modest	not large or expensive
rooftop	something that is built on a roof [it has a rooftop garden]
spacious	lot of space inside [a spacious room]
well-appointed	attractive or expensive decoration and furniture

Idioms	Meaning
bird's eye view	a view from a high point <i>I live on the 25th floor, which gives me a <u>bird's eye view</u> of the city</i>
feel at home	To feel comfortable in a place <i>Even though it's my uncle's house he really makes me <u>feel at home</u>.</i>
run down	in bad condition <i>My neighborhood is not so good because many of the houses are owned by poor families and their houses are <u>run down</u> and need to be repaired.</i>
up-market	expensive <i>I live in an <u>up-market</u> neighborhood on the east side of the city</i>

Practice questions:

1. What sort of furniture does your home have?
2. How do you think your home could be improved?
3. How long have you been living there?
4. Do you think you will live there for a long time?
5. In the future what kind of home would you like to live in?
6. What do you like about the area where you live?
7. Is your neighborhood a good place for families with children?
8. What do you like about the rooms in your home?
9. Is there anything you don't like about your home?
10. What sort of home would you like to live in, in the future?

Hometown/cities

Sample questions and answers

...Let's talk about your hometown...

Tell me about the hometown you come from?

Well as you can probably guess I come from Taipei and I have lived here all my life. The first thing that most people notice about Taipei is that it's very crowded, and you know it's one of the biggest cities in Asia. It's so congested that there can be traffic jams at any time of the day! Another significant characteristic is that it offers splendid examples of contemporary architecture. Actually, some of the world's most renowned landmarks are in the middle of Taipei, such as Taipei 101, the second tallest building in the world. [Underlined words are explained below in the idioms section.]

Is it a good place for young people?

It's a great place for a few reasons. One of the main ones is that it is a fun place to hang out with friends because we have access to lots of different types of entertainment. There are lots of different places to go to such as night markets and up-market cafes. As well as this it's a really convenient place to live because the public transportation is excellent and there are even free bicycles to ride around the city.

What would you like to change about your hometown?

Well, if it's possible, it would be good to have more parks and green spaces. You know sometimes it feels a bit like a concrete jungle here because you just feel surrounded by tall buildings. Another thing would be to try to make the city a little bit less crowded. Sometimes the hustle and bustle of the city really gets to me.

Do you think your hometown will be better in the future?

Well, I think that depends. If the local government can continue its plan to develop the subway system and reduce the traffic congestion, I think it will be better. However, if the public transportation can't be increased quickly enough, I think the traffic is going to get much worse... And this is going to make our daily commute much worse.

Nouns	Meaning
architecture	the character or style of buildings
downtown	the city centre
green spaces	parks, gardens and areas with trees, plants, or grass
landmarks	a highly noticeable building or place
subway system	an underground train system in a city
suburbs	the residential areas outside of the city centre
traffic congestion	traffic jams

Verbs	Meaning
commute	regular travel. For instance, commuting to work every day
have access	being able to easily get somewhere or use something
reside	live in
surrounded by	encircled [the house is surrounded by trees= the house has trees all around it]

Adjectives	Meaning
built-up	an area with many tall buildings
contemporary	modern
distinctive	clear and easy to notice [Taipei 101 is a distinctive landmark]
industrial	relating to industry. An industrial area has lots of factories.
residential	relating to living. A residential area has lots of homes.
splendid	wonderful, amazing
sprawling	built over a wide area in a spread out way
unique	only one in existence. [Taipei 101 is a unique building]

Idioms	Meaning
concrete jungle	an environment dominated by large tall buildings
hustle and bustle	busy and noisy <i>The city is really crowded, so there is a lot of <u>hustle and bustle</u>.</i>
traffic jams	streets crowded with slow-moving traffic
up-market	fashionable and expensive

Practice questions:

- 1 Do you live in a city or a town?
- 2 What is the best thing about where you live?
- 3 Do you know many people who live near you?
- 4 How do you think your city/town could be improved?
- 5 Do you think your city/town will be better in the future?
- 6 Will you live in this city/town in the future?

Other topics

There are lots of other potential topics that you may get asked in Part One. You can read the sample questions below to help prepare for these. In addition, you can find more Part One questions and vocabulary for different topics in Chapter 7 of this book.

Now let's talk about birthdays

How do you usually spend your birthday?

Who do you prefer to spend your birthday with?

Are birthdays important in your country?

What is the most important age or birthday in your country?

Let's talk about children

Do you like children?

Do you know many children?

When do you usually meet children?

What kind of child were you like when you were young?

Now let's discuss games

What kind of games did you like to play when you were a child?

Did you prefer outdoor or indoor games?

Nowadays, do you like to play computer games?

Do people in your country enjoy playing computer games?

Now let's talk about cars

Do you have a car?

Do you have a driver's license?

Do you prefer to be the driver or the passenger in a car?

Do you often go on long car journeys?

Now let's talk about swimming

Have you learnt how to swim?

Do you think all children should learn how to swim?

Are there a lot of places for swimming in your country?

Do people prefer to swim in swimming pools or the ocean in your country?

Let's discuss weekends

What do you usually do at the weekend?

What did you do last weekend?

What are you going to do next weekend?

Do you like your weekends now more than when you were a child?

Now let's talk about dancing

Do you like to dance?

Have you ever taken any dancing lessons?

Do you like to watch other people dance?

When do people dance in your country?

Let's move onto the topic of giving gifts

When do people give gifts or presents in your country?

Do you ever take a gift when you visit someone in their home?

When did you last receive a gift?

Do you enjoy looking for gifts for other people?

Now let's talk about telephones

How often do you make telephone calls?

Who do you talk to the most on the telephone?

Do you prefer to call people or send text messages?

Do you think sending e-mail is more convenient than calling people?

Let's move onto the topic of history

Do you like to learn about history?

Do you think learning about history is important?

Do you think history should be a compulsory school subject?

What do you think is the best way to learn about history?

Let's discuss the ocean

Do you enjoy visiting the ocean?

Do you like to do any activities at the ocean?

Would you like to live by the ocean?

Do many people in your country live by the ocean?

Now let's talk about toys

What sorts of toys did you like when you were a child?

Did you have a favorite toy?

Was playing with toys very important to you?

Do you still have any toys?

Let's talk about Days of the week

Which is your favorite day of the week?

Which is your busiest day of the week?

How many days off do you have every week?

What do you like doing on your days off?

Let's discuss clothes and clothing

What sort of clothes do you usually wear?

Do you wear the same sort of clothes as your friends?

Do you spend a lot of money on clothes?

When did you last shop for clothes?

4. PART TWO: SPEAK FOR 2 MINUTES

Part Two	Requirement	Suggestions
1-2 minutes Long Talk	Prepare a topic for 1 minute and then speak about it for up to 2 minutes.	<p>PREPARATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify key words in the question 2. choose a response for the topic that is familiar to you 3. choose a response that you have language to describe
Possibly 1 or 2 follow-up questions	Briefly answer any follow-up questions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. think about the tenses required 3. write down some key points <p>SPEAKING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. answer the topic directly at the beginning of your talk 2. expand your key points to make your talk longer 3. make it clear when you move onto a new key point 4. use high level language

Requirement

In this part you are given a card with a topic and then given 1 minute to prepare an answer of up to 2 minutes on this topic. Topics usually include describing or commenting on a person, place, object, activity, or experience. The topic card also has sub-topics, shown as bullet points. These are only provided to assist you to plan your response and you do NOT have to respond to all of these. The examiner may ask a brief rounding-off question at the end of this part of the test.

Procedure

1. The examiner will introduce Part Two by saying:

Now I am going to give you a topic and I would like you to talk about it for 1 to 2 minutes. I will give you a pencil and paper to make notes. Do you understand?

2. The examiner will pass you the topic card and say:

Here is your pencil and paper for making notes....and here is your topic, I would like you to talk about... [first sentence on topic card]

3. The examiner will now stay silent and give you 1 minute to prepare your answer. You should use this time to prepare your topic and write down some notes to help you.

4. After 1 minute the examiner will ask you to start speaking by saying:

Remember you have 1 to 2 minutes for this, so don't worry if I stop you. Can you start speaking now please.

5. If you stop talking before 2 minutes is up the examiner will pause a few seconds and then tell you: *"You still have time if you want to add anything."*

[This is to give you the opportunity to say more]

6. The examiner will be timing this part of the test and once two minutes is reached the examiner will ask you to stop talking. You MUST stop talking. The examiner will say something like "*Thank you*" and then ask a follow up question if it is appropriate. Answer a follow up question in one sentence. DO NOT talk at length here as the examiner needs to start Part Three of the test. You will frustrate the examiner if you start talking at length here, and the examiner may cut you off in the middle of your sentence.

4.1 PREPARING YOUR ANSWER

You only have 1 minute to prepare your answer so you should use it wisely. Focus on the following things:

1. Identify key words in the question
2. Think about the tense required
3. Choose to talk about something familiar to you and that you have language to describe. This is really important!
4. Write down some key points. These key points will form paragraphs in your answer.
5. Write down some key vocabulary [if you have time for this]

Important note: You do not need to stick to the sub-questions on the topic card; as long as you are talking about the topic you can say anything about it. You also do not need to cover ALL of the sub-questions.

Sample question

Describe a place that you have visited that you particularly liked.

You should say:

- a. When you visited there?
- b. Who you went with?
- c. What was most memorable?

And explain what you liked most about this place.

Procedure to answer the topic

1. Read the question and then underline the key words. It should look something like below.

Describe a place that you have visited that you particularly liked.

You should say:

- a. When you visited there?
- b. Who you went with?
- c. What was most memorable?

And explain what you liked most about this place.

2. Decide the place you will describe then write down some notes. You are given paper for this and you can keep your notes during your talk.

Place: San Francisco, USA

Sub-questions	A few key points
a. When you went there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For 4 months in 2013• summer
b. Who you went with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• friend who is from Viet Nam• vegetarian guy• brother was an artist
c. What was memorable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lots of cool places to visit such as Fisherman's Wharf and Alcatraz Island
d. What you liked most	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-cultural people• great restaurants and cafes• relaxed lifestyle

Your handwritten brainstorm might look a bit like this:

San Francisco	<i>When</i>	<i>4 months 2013 Summer</i>
	<i>Who</i>	<i>Thomas from Viet Nam Vegetarian Brother artist</i>
	<i>Memorable</i>	<i>Fisherman's Wharf Alcatraz Island</i>
	<i>Like most</i>	<i>Multi-cultural restaurants and cafes lifestyle</i>

3. Introduce your answer, rephrasing the question and directly answering it, to show you clearly understand the question.

Well, a fantastic place I went to is San Francisco in California.

4. Use phrases to signal when you change to a new subtopic:

I went there in ...

I went there with ...

The thing I remember most is ...

Some of the things I enjoyed were ...

MODEL ANSWER

Well, a fantastic place I went to is San Francisco in California. It's definitely the best holiday I ever went on, so it's a place I will never forget.

I went there in 2013 for about four months during summer. I remember the climate is weird at this time of year as it got really foggy at about four o'clock every day and also it was surprisingly chilly during the night.

I went there with a chum of mine who is from Viet Nam, and we shared an apartment together. He is a vegetarian, so I also became a vegetarian during that time. You know I had to give up eating some of my favorite food like sirloin steak and lamb chops. We only ate veggies and I remember eating a lot of pasta with shitake mushrooms. I also remember his brother who was a very talented artist.

The thing I remember most about San Francisco is that there were many cool places to visit such as Fisherman's Wharf, which is famous for its delicious seafood and sour dough bread. Oh, and Alcatraz Island, which used to be a prison for murderers and other serious criminals.

Some of the other things I enjoyed about San Francisco were the different types of people and the easy-going relaxed lifestyle they seem to be leading. As well as that, there were many trendy places to hang out and also some great restaurants and cafes.

4.2 STRUCTURAL LANGUAGE

The phrases below can be used to add coherence to your part 2 answer by guiding the listener regarding what particular aspect you are talking about.

Opening: Introductory phrases to use when you start your talk:

I'm going to talk about...

OK, I'm going to describe...

Well, I'd like to talk about...

The first point:

The first thing I'd like to mention is ...

I'd like to begin by highlighting that...

The most important point about [rephrase question] is...

In terms of [rephrase question], I would like to mention...

The second point:

Going on to [rephrase question], and what I'd like to highlight here is that ...

Now concerning the matter of [rephrase question], what I would like to mention here is that ...

The third point:

Progressing to the subject of [rephrase question]. I would like to explain that...

Moving onto the question regarding [rephrase question], what I would like to make clear is that...

The last point:

Finally, I'd like to discuss [rephrase question]

Finally then, if there is still enough time, I would also like to mention that...

Phrases for adding details:

At that time...

It happened...

It took place...

It's been going on since...

It's near...

Phrases to describe something that had an effect on you

... influenced me

... had an effect on me

... impressed me

... motivated me

... touched me deeply

4.3 STRATEGIES

Prepare some high-level language

Most of the questions are about people, places, things, activities, experiences. It is a good idea for you to brainstorm higher level words that you know that can be used to respond to these types of questions. For instance, for any topic about a person you could describe them as an INTROVERT [shy] or an EXTROVERT [outgoing]. For places you could talk about the AMBIENCE [the atmosphere of the place]. To describe an object like a smart-phone you could have language to describe its size as TINY [small], shape as RECTANGULAR and the color of its case as MAGENTA [purplish-red]. Try to start by thinking about the words you already know. To assist you with this process you can also refer to Chapter 7.

Prepare some model answers

In addition to preparing language about the common topic areas of people, places, things, activities, experiences; a good way to prepare for Part Two is to prepare a model answer for each of these common topic areas for a couple of reasons:

1. If you prepare for a question about a person, let's say your best friend, you could apply this answer to other questions about people. For instance, if you are asked to describe an adventurous person you could talk about your best friend and explain why he or she is adventurous in some way. And, let's say you get asked to describe a good teacher; if you are good at telling stories, you could even pretend your best friend was your teacher!

2. No matter what the topic, you should be able to say something about people, places, and things. By preparing some vocabulary and ideas about these topic areas you will essentially be preparing for any question.

NOTE A COUPLE OF THINGS:

1. You should not prepare too many model answers. The idea is to just prepare a few for each of the common categories [people, places, things, activities, experiences].

2. Before you take your test you should practice using your model answers to respond to different questions. Look at different Part Two questions and think which of your model answers could best fit it. And, if none of them perfectly fit it you might have to start off your answer by directly answering the specific topic, and then moving onto one of your prepared topics, or even use parts of different prepared answers.

3. You may need to customize the answer to fit the specific question. For instance, if you have prepared the topic about your best friend and the question is about your neighbor then at the start of your talk you either need to say that your best friend is your neighbor, or else just pretend that your best friend is your neighbor without actually saying it.

4. With practice you should be able to answer almost any question with just a few model answers that you can customize to answer specific questions. Note that this is an excellent way to increase your score because you will be familiar with the topic which will enable you to speak fluently and if you prepare the topic well it will have high-level vocabulary and grammar in it.

How many words are needed for a model answer?

You should ideally speak for 2 minutes. A native speaker speaks at about 145-160 words per minute and then there are pauses between ideas. A non-native high-level speaker may speak a bit slower perhaps 110 words per minute. A lower level speaker may speak at fewer than 100 words. You might want to work out your speaking speed, to get an idea of how many words you will need to speak. If you plan your model answer to be 250 words, that will be more than enough.

Tell a Story

Stories are useful to extend a talk in Part Two of the speaking exam. They often come out very fluently, are interesting, and result in the expression of a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. The following explains these benefits in more detail:

1. It is often easy to speak fluently as ideas can often come out more quickly. This is because stories are often clear in our mind and we have told people certain stories many times and so they come out fluently in the exam.
2. Stories can also be helpful to speak for 2 minutes because there are often different parts to them such as a beginning, middle, and end; or a cause, effect, and solution.
3. Stories can be really interesting and can help the examiner to be interested in what you are saying.

4. Stories can also allow you to make things up which can help you to extend your talk and also use higher-level language. For instance, in the real story there might have been a white dress... but in the IELTS story you might change it to a magenta dress with a dark blue ribbon.

5. The story may not take up the whole of your response. You may start by focusing more on the topic card and then later move onto the story. Because of this aspect stories can be particularly useful with topics that you find difficult to talk about. Essentially, start by talking about the topic and then shift to a story that is somewhat related to the topic. Imagine you have been asked to talk about "*your favorite wild animal*". Maybe, after half a minute, you have said all you know about pandas! Now you can tell a story about going to the zoo and seeing a panda!

Time sequencing words

To make clear the sequence of events in a story use time words such as:

In the beginning

After that...

Subsequently...

In the end...

Tenses for stories

Stories occurred in the past so when we are describing what happened in the story we need to use the past tense.

"I went to my best friend's birthday"

However, we need to use the present tense if we are describing facts and opinions about these past events.

"She is a kind woman"

[Note that if we use the past tense then it suggests that she is no longer kind!]

4.4 ANSWERING ROUNDING-OFF QUESTIONS.

You may be asked a follow-up question at the end of your 2-minute speech. You just want to give a short single sentence answer to this, unless you didn't speak for very long [under 2 minutes]. This is because the examiner needs to move onto Part Three of the test quickly. You can use this technique to answer a follow-up question:

1. Brief answer, repeating the auxiliary verb [have and do in the examples below]
2. Use the same tense

EXAMINER: *"Have you done this type of work before?"*

CANDIDATE: *"No, I haven't."*

EXAMINER: *"Do you know anyone who has"*

CANDIDATE: *"Yes, I do, my cousin does this job."*

4.5 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

The purpose of this section is to help you prepare for the common categories of topics that get asked in this part of the test. Most of the questions in Part Two of the test are about: PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS, ACTIVITIES, and EXPERIENCES.

This section includes the following information:

1. sample questions for each category
2. model answers for each category
3. aspects you can consider when dealing with each category
4. structures that can be used to answer questions in each category
5. language related to these common topics

4.6 PEOPLE

Many of the questions in this part of the test are about people. As well as this you can often discuss a person when you are answering other types of questions. For instance, if you are describing a place, you might describe the person you go there with.

GRAMMAR

Tenses

If the question asks you to describe someone you know now. e.g. *Describe a person who is interesting*, you should describe the person using the present tense. If you are asked to describe someone you know from the past you should still describe the person using the present tense, unless the person is now dead. In this case you will use the past tense. Illustrative examples:

My neighbor Brian is a senior citizen. [present tense is used because he is still alive]

Audrey Hepburn was a petite woman. [past tense is used because she is dead]

For all types of people, describe any actions they have already done using the past tense. For example, "*He learnt how to fly a plane last year.*"

Use relative pronouns [who, whose]

Use who to add information about the subject.

My neighbor, who is really old, seldom goes outside.

Use whose as a possessive relative pronoun.

He is a rich man whose house is very large.

VOCABULARY

To make your answer more interesting use lots of descriptive vocabulary, e.g. extrovert, slender, and so on. You could talk about the following aspects:

1. appearance
2. personality
3. relationship to you
4. their lifestyle

1. APPEARANCE:

Height: petite [short], lofty [tall]

Build: slender [thin], overweight [fat], well-built [muscular]

Age: toddler [young child], adolescent [young adult], senior citizen

Facial features: clean shaven, full beard, goatee beard, moustache

Hair: short cropped hair, long thick hair, ponytail, bald

Audrey Hepburn was a petite woman with short cropped hair. Hepburn was boyish, and yet feminine simultaneously. She was famous for wearing little black dresses that had a way of making her look glamorous.
[past tense is used because she is dead]



Brian is a senior citizen, with a goatee beard, a moustache, and a short grey ponytail. He always wears sunglasses because he has eyes that are sensitive to sunlight. [Present tense is used because he is still alive].



Sarah, who is in her early forties, is quite tall and has a medium build. She has thick black hair that is plaited into a waist length ponytail. She usually wears jeans and a red sweater.



2: PERSONALITY

You can talk about positive and negative features of a person's personality.

Positive: warm, fun loving, intelligent, charming, kind-hearted, extrovert [outgoing]

Emma is quite an extrovert. She is always the life of the party because of her warm-hearted and fun loving nature.

Negative: mean, selfish, cruel, arrogant, introverted, a pain in the neck [annoying]

Steven is rather introverted, he usually sits quietly in the corner at parties. He is also a pain in the neck because he always bothers me when he needs help with his computer.

3. RELATIONSHIP: pal, soul-mate, classmate, colleague, family member, mentor

I have been pals with Peter since high school. I guess you can say that now he is my soul-mate. As well as this his father has always been somewhat of a mentor to me, as he is my soccer coach.

4. LIFESTYLE: hobbies, interests, work

My sister is a college student and a part-time assistant in an office, so she has little time to socialize at the weekend or play badminton.

Some advice about vocabulary:

1. Have short lists; you only need 2 or 3 words for each category
2. Focus on high-level language = language to impress the examiner and increase your score
3. The truth doesn't matter, use language to describe a person even if that is not true. For instance you might say your uncle is an extrovert even though he isn't! This is to increase your score for vocabulary.

Model answer

Describe a famous celebrity from your country who you admire

You should say:

who the person is

what kind of celebrity this person is

describe why this person has become successful

and explain why you admire this person.

Alright then, I'm going to talk about Faye Wang, who's the most famous female singer in China.

I'd like to begin by highlighting that Faye is considered as the all-time diva among the young generation. She was born in Beijing, but became famous in Hong Kong as a pop singer. Her fame is due to her career as a highly successful and influential singer, songwriter and actress; and she's also known as an icon of fashion due to her amazing and impressive makeup and clothing styles.

Now let's move on to the point of why I hold Faye in high regards. What I have to mention here is the admiration I have for her dedication to help others. Her daughter was born with a cleft lip, and she took her to California for surgery. Once she realized how much money is required for cleft lip surgeries, she decided to establish a foundation to help people receive proper treatment.

Apart from this, what I'd like to mention is that Faye is a highly family-oriented person. She is a traditional Chinese woman and in the mid-1990s she left Hong Kong at the peak of her career and moved to Beijing to live with her husband, who was a successful rock star. Although her marriage failed, everyone took pity on her and respected the career sacrifice she made for her family.

Practice questions

Describe one of your neighbors.

You should say:

what sort of person your neighbor is

why you like/dislike this neighbor

when you usually meet this neighbor

and explain if this person is a good neighbor.

Describe an old person you admire.

You should say:

who this person is

how long you have known him/her

what qualities he/she has

and explain why you admire him/her.

Describe someone you know who is a good teacher.

You should say:

who this person is

how you know him/her

what kinds of subjects he/she teaches

and explain why this person is good at teaching.

Describe an interesting person who you know.

You should say:

what sort of person he/she is

where you first met him/her

why you met him/her

and explain why you think this person is interesting.

Describe a friend you remember from your childhood.

You should talk about:

who the person is

how you knew this person

what you used to do together

and explain what you remember most about this person.

4.7 PLACES

Many of the questions are about places. As well as this you can often discuss a place when you are answering other types of questions. For instance, if you are describing an activity, you might describe the place you do it.

CITIES/COUNTRIES:

Location: on the coast, in the mountains, in the heart of the country,

People: kind-hearted, hospitable, polite, rude, arrogant, cosmopolitan [mix of cultures]

Cityscape: picturesque, contemporary architecture, skyscrapers, classical architecture, polluted and contaminated

Entertainment: bustling and lively, a wide variety of entertainment facilities, dull and boring, touristy

San Diego is located on the west coast of America, near the border of Mexico. The thing which makes tourists enjoy visiting this city is the kind-hearted and hospitable nature of the people. It's a picturesque setting due to its location on the coast. The downtown has lots of skyscrapers which can make it seem a bit like a concrete jungle. However, within an easy drive there are a wide variety of entertainment facilities such as SeaWorld, the zoo, and for nature lovers Torrey Pines State Reserve, which is an excellent place to go hiking and see a wide range of fauna and flora*.

*fauna = animals; flora = plants



BUILDINGS

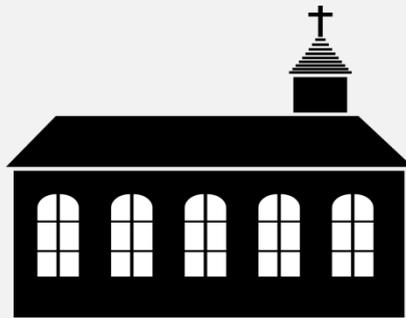
Location: downtown, at the corner of a hectic street, quiet cul-de-sac

Exterior: elegant, plain, contemporary designed, classical architecture

Interior: well lit, dark and dingy, lofty ceilings, compact, spacious

Atmosphere: cozy, comfortable, tranquil ambience, lively and upbeat

St Martin's church is located at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac. It was built using contemporary architecture; the back wall is plain brick, facing a private garden, which gives it a very tranquil ambience. The main entrance is well lit and when you step inside the main building it has giant windows all the way up to the lofty ceilings. During the day the building is well lit without the need for artificial lighting.



Positive expressions:

awe-inspiring, breathtaking, delightful, eye-catching, majestic, picturesque, tranquil,

The castle, standing at the top of the mountain has majestic views over the city that are quite eye-catching and picturesque.

Negative expressions:

bleak, dilapidated, inhospitable, squalid

The bleak concrete building was in a dilapidated state, inside it was squalid, and it was located in an inhospitable neighborhood.

PLACES OF NATURAL BEAUTY:

Location: remote, just outside the city, along the coast, in a mountainous area,

Visitors: visitors flocked to, seldom visited, deserted

Activities: go sightseeing, hiking, doing extreme sports like bungee jumping and abseiling, experiencing indigenous species

Contents: fauna [animals], flora [plants], lake, waterfall

Opinions: amazing, breathtaking, spectacular

Golden Gate park is located in the west of San Francisco city and due to its spectacular scenery, many local residents and tourists flock to it. Many residents of San Francisco feel this spacious public park is similar to Central Park, in New York City. Undoubtedly, the feature that will disappoint many tourists is the lack of opportunities to see native fauna and flora there. Really this is an inner-city park, it doesn't have a lot of wide-open spaces, but there are lots of activities to do here. One of the interesting activities that you can do in the park is horse-shoe throwing.



Model answer

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.

Practice questions

Describe a house you have visited which you particularly liked.

You should say:

what kind of house it is

why you visited the house

how it is different to other houses you have visited

and explain why you particularly liked it.

Describe a cafe you know that about you would recommend to others.

You should say:

where this cafe is

what type of food and drinks the cafe serves

how often you go to this cafe

and explain why you would recommend this cafe.

Describe a city that you would like to travel to.

You should say:

where this city is?

how you would travel there?

who you would go there with?

and explain what you like about this city.

Describe a place you have visited where you learned something.

You should say:

where this place is

when you went there

why you went there

and explain what you learned there.

Describe a room you like that you spend a lot of time in.

You should say:

where this room is

what this room looks like

what you do in this room

and explain why you like to spend so much time in this room.

4.8 OBJECTS

Many questions ask you to describe an object. As well as this, when you answer other types of questions it may be useful to describe an object. For instance, if you are describing a sport, you might describe some of the objects that are required to play this sport. Some of the aspects you can think of when discussing an object are as follows:

1. size
2. color
3. texture
4. weight
5. material
6. age
7. shape
8. reason for being special

1. size

Small: tiny, miniscule, microscopic

Big: enormous, huge, gigantic

2. color

Magenta = a bright pinkish purple

Turquoise = bluish-green

3. texture

Coarse = rough

Smooth = flat

4. weight

Heavy: weighs a ton [idiomatic expression]

Light: lightweight, feather light

5. material

Wooden

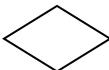
Metallic

6. age

Contemporary = modern

Classical = old and following tradition

7. shape

oval 	diamond 	cube 
crescent 	rectangle 	hexagon 
arc 	heart 	donut 

8. Reason for being special:

family heirloom, birthday present, Christmas gift, from a soul mate

MODEL ANSWER

Describe something expensive that you bought recently [not a computer].

You should say:

what it was

what it looks like

how much it cost

and explain why you bought it.



Well, the expensive item that I would like to talk about is my smart phone. It is made by Apple and it's a sixth generation iPhone.

The first thing I'd like to mention is that the color of the phone is magenta, which is extremely rare for an iPhone. I believe that Apple only released about 1,000 of these in my country. Other than that, there's nothing too special about my iPhone. Like other iPhones, it has a tiny camera just above the screen, on the front of the phone for taking selfies. On the back of the phone, there is a slightly larger camera, for taking high resolution photos of things like scenery.

Going on to the price of the phone, what I'd like to highlight here is that I got an excellent deal. I was able to buy the phone at a 20% discount, and that included a free pair of lightweight ear-bud headphones.

Finally, I'd like to mention the reason why I bought the phone. I'm going abroad to study in Australia and I want to be able to keep in touch with friends and family and also show photos of some of the spectacular scenery.

Practice questions

Describe a purchase you were dissatisfied with.

You should say:

what you bought

when you bought it

where you bought it

and explain why you were dissatisfied with it.

Describe something old you have kept for a long time.

You should say:

what the object is

explain why you have kept it

discuss how long you have kept it

and explain what you like about it the most.

Describe an important letter or email that you received.

You should say:

who wrote it

what the letter or email was about

how you felt about it

and explain why it was important.

Describe a book you have read that you think is interesting

You should say:

how you know about this book

where you got this book from

what it is about

and explain what you find most interesting about this book.

Describe a toy that was special to you when you were a child.

You should say:

what it looked like

where you played with it

who gave it to you

and explain what was most special about the toy.

4.9 ACTIVITIES

I recommend students to focus on people, places, and objects first. This is because these aspects can also be used when you discuss activities. Activities often occur with other people, in particular places, and involve objects such as equipment. Therefore, there are lots of ideas and language from the three previous sections that can be used here:

Who: get ideas from the previous section on people

Where: get ideas from the previous section on places

What you need: get ideas from the previous section on objects

ADDITIONAL ASPECTS

When: on weekends, in the winter, at dawn [daybreak], at dusk [sundown]

Why: unwind, relax, have a lot of fun

Preparations: planning and equipment needed

What happens: before the activity, during the activity, after the activity

Your feeling: excited, bored, scared

STRUCTURE

A good way to structure an activity is like a story. Talk about what happened before the activity, during the activity, and after the activity.

Before the activity: give the activity name, time/date, place, and reason for celebrating the event, describe the preparations for the event, explain any of the equipment that was needed.

During the activity: describe the event itself; what happened at the start, middle and end of the event; discuss the people involved, describe the location

After the activity: describe your feelings about the event, say something that happened after the event

Model answer

Describe an outdoor activity you would like to try for the first time.

You should say:

what the activity is

where you would do it

what preparations and equipment you would need

and explain why you would like to do this activity.

Well, the outdoor activity I'd like to talk about is bungee jumping because I have seen that on TV and it really looks like a lot of fun.

In terms of where I would most like to do it, the answer is definitely New Zealand. This is because the sport was invented by a New Zealander and I also heard that New Zealand has some of the best bungee jumps in the world. You know ...you can jump off a bridge and fall about 100m before you start your ascent up again. Another choice is off the Auckland Sky Tower, but I think it would be more dangerous... I'm not sure if I'm brave enough for that!

Now concerning the question of the equipment that I would need to do this, I think that most of the equipment would be provided by the bungee jumping company. I think it goes without saying that I would need to wear extremely comfortable clothes. I can imagine that it would be uncomfortable wearing a tight pair of jeans, so I would probably wear something like a tracksuit and sneakers.

Finally if there is still enough time I would like to tell you why I would really like to do this. **I guess the main reason is because** it's a kind of challenge to overcome. I think it is a physically and mentally demanding activity, so I want to try it. You know... It's a kind of a once-in-a-lifetime experience... something to brag about with friends!

Practice questions

Describe an activity you enjoy doing in your free time.

You should say:

What this activity is

who you do this with

where you do it

and explain why you like to spend your free time this way.

Describe a practical skill you have.

You should say:

what the skill is

how often you use it

who taught it to you

and explain why the skill is practical.

Describe a sport you have enjoyed playing or watching.

You should say:

what this sport is

where this sport is played

how the sport is played

and explain what you like most about this sport.

Describe a foreign language you would like to learn (not English).

You should say:

what the language is

how you would learn it

what difficulties you might have when learning this language

and explain why you would like to learn this language.

Describe an activity that you do to stay healthy.

You should say:

what activity you do

when you started doing this

how much time you spend doing this

and explain what benefits you get from this activity.

4.10 EXPERIENCES

I recommend students to focus on people, places, and objects first. This is because these aspects can be used when you discuss experiences. Experiences often occur with other people, in particular places, and involve objects such as equipment. Therefore, there are lots of ideas and language from the three previous sections on people, places, and objects that can be used here:

Who: get ideas from the previous section on people

Where: get ideas from the previous section on places

What you need: get ideas from the previous section on objects

ADDITIONAL ASPECTS

When: during my childhood, when I was an adolescent, in my twenties

Why: chill-out, necessary in order to..., unavoidable

What happened: before the experience, during the experience, after the experience

Your feeling: nervous, bored to death, terrified

Model answer

Describe a challenge that you faced at high school

You should say:

what the problem was

how it happened

how you felt about this problem

and explain how you felt when you solved the problem

I'm going to talk about the challenge I faced to pass the exams I had to take for university entrance. In my country every student has to take exams in order to get into a university.

I'd like to begin by highlighting the fact that whilst my grades were always high, I had always been terrible at mathematics and always struggled to get passing grades. Unfortunately for me, this was one of the most critical subjects that I needed to pass in order to get into a tertiary institution.

Going on to how I overcame this problem, I knew that in order to pass this subject I would have to work flat out, and I even hired a tutor to assist me. Although I'm not an early bird, I got up at 6 AM every morning to start studying.

Moving on to the question of my feelings regarding this challenge, I was really stressed-out and felt down in the dumps every day. You know... I really felt depressed. To be honest, I never would have made it through this difficult time without the words of encouragement from my soul mate.

And if there is still time, I'd also like to mention that after I passed this test I really felt over the moon, so I invited all my friends over for a party to celebrate my success!

Practice questions

Describe a class you remember taking at high school.

You should talk about:

what the class was

what the class was about

who taught the class

and explain what you remember most about attending this class.

Describe an important challenge that you had to overcome in the past.

You should say:

what the challenge was

why you had this challenge

who helped you face this challenge

and explain how you overcame this challenge.

Describe an important decision you might have to make in the future.

You should say:

what the decision is

how you will make your decision

what the results of the decision are likely to be

and explain why this decision is so important.

Describe an educational trip that you went on when you were in school.

You should say:

where you went

what you did there

who went with you

and explain what you learned on this trip.

Describe an interesting talk or speech you heard recently.

You should say:

who the speaker was

where and when you heard it

what it was about

and explain why you found it interesting.

5. PART THREE: THE DISCUSSION

Part Three	Requirement	Suggestions
<p>4-5 minutes</p> <p>Discussion</p>	<p>Respond to the examiner's questions related to your topic in Part Two for 4-5 Minutes.</p> <p>You are allowed to ask the examiner to repeat or rephrase the question.</p> <p>You can ask a checking question: <i>"Are you asking me about..."</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give extended responses. Ideally your responses should be twice as long as in Part One of the test. So you want answers that are about 4 to 6 sentences. 2. Try to support your main points, by adding details, giving explanations, or giving examples 3. If you are really stuck about how to answer a question, do not sit there in silence! Say it: <i>"Gosh that's a tricky question I've never thought about that before."</i> Then try to give some sort of answer. If you can't then just tell the examiner. Of course this is not ideal, but the worst thing is to sit there in silence.

Requirement

This part of the test lasts from 4 to 5 minutes and consists of questions roughly based on the topic area of the Part Two: Long Turn. Usually you will be asked two to three questions on two different topics. The major difference with this part of the exam is that you are asked questions about people in general rather than about yourself. This can be more challenging. Essentially, it's more difficult to talk about other people than it is about ourselves. Another key difference is that the examiners are able to ask their own questions, and they are not limited to the questions written in their book like in other parts of the exam. In this part the examiner may push you hard to see the boundaries of your ability. You may feel this part is the most difficult! It is called the discussion section because the examiner follows some of your answers with a follow-up question that is based on the answer you just gave.

Procedure

1. The examiner will introduce Part Three saying:

"We've been talking about [topic from Part Two], now I'd like to ask you a few general questions about that."

2. The examiner will introduce the topic more specifically.

"Let's talk about [specific topic]". For example: "Let's talk about shopping in your country."

3. The examiner will then ask you two or three questions related to this specific topic:

What are some of the different types of places where people can go shopping in your country?

Do you think people spend more time shopping these days than they did in the past?

Do you think this is a positive trend or negative trend?

4. The examiner will move onto the second specific topic and ask two or three questions about this.

Let's move on and talk about[introduce topic]

5. After 4 to 5 minutes the examiner will end the exam saying:

Thank you, this is the end of the speaking exam.

6. You should thank the examiner and leave the exam room. You could say something like:

Thank you, I appreciate your time.

7. Try to smile at the examiner and then leave the room.

8. Do not do any of the following:

Have any further conversation with the examiner unless the examiner initiates it.

Apologize for your poor English!

Ask the examiner what your score is.

Try to explain any mistakes that you made.

9. After you leave the exam room, don't forget to collect any of your belongings if you have left items outside the exam room.

5.1 STRATEGIES

Buy time to think

One of the biggest problems in this part of the test is that the questions can be quite challenging. You may struggle to think of what you want to say, let alone how you are going to say it. There are some strategies you can use to deal with this situation.

Start with a memorized set phrase

Use some memorized set phrases to buy time to think about what you are going to say:

1. Off the top of my head I would say...
2. Well, it's difficult to say, but ...
3. That's an interesting question and I think I would have to say that...
4. Mmm ... I'm not really sure, but...
5. Actually, that's not something I've really thought about, but...
6. I don't really know much about that, but...

[Lots of set phrases for different types of questions are explained in the next section.]

Ask for the question to be rephrased

Another way to buy time is to pretend you didn't understand the question and ask the examiner to rephrase it. While the examiner is doing this, you can think about what you want to say. This won't lower your grade unless you do it repeatedly in which case it's going to start to lower your score for vocabulary. You could say something like:

"I'm sorry I didn't quite catch that, could you please rephrase it"

Focus on language and not ideas

In this section it is very important that you don't waste time trying to think of your real opinion, that doesn't matter; what is important is that you give an opinion and then support it. In addition, it is a language test so it's more important that you use higher-level language than have clever ideas.

Speak at length

This part of the test is designed for you to give responses that are twice as long as Part One. If you are looking for a higher score you should try to show the examiner you have the ability to talk at length. Also, this part of the test is limited to 4 to 5 minutes and the questions are designed to increase in difficulty. Therefore, if you give longer answers you are going to get fewer questions and then there is less chance of you getting a question that you are unable to respond to or lack the language to give a strong reply. Ideally you want answers that are about 4 to 6 sentences, and if you really feel comfortable with a question you could even speak longer!

You should use the strategies outlined in Chapter 2 to enable yourself to produce longer answers. To summarize these are:

1. Divide your response into two or three parts
2. Describe from general to specific (maybe give an example)
3. Depends: describe different situations
4. Concession: make a main argument and then give a concession for it
5. Avoidance: do not directly answer the question at first, and then answer it.

Produce language

You need to say something. If you are unable to say anything at all in response to a question this will have a severely negative impact on your score. Especially your score for fluency and coherence! Say something even if it doesn't have any real meaning. You can think of politicians here and the way they answer questions that they don't like. Let's say you're asked your opinion about something, and you really don't know what to say...you could say something like:

"Well, I think that's a really interesting question, but I never thought about it before. I guess I'd have to say that I agree"

Think about past writing tasks you have completed

Some Part Three questions are very similar to, or even exactly the same as some Task Two Writing test questions. The Writing test questions are asking questions that are related to many of the same functions as Part Three of the speaking test such as your opinion, the advantages and disadvantages of something, and problems and solutions. If you are lucky you may get a question that you have already written an essay about. You should be able to use some of the language you used in that essay!

Likewise, if you have prepared for the academic test report writing then you should have language related to comparing things, describing trends, and making predictions. This language could be used in Part Three of the speaking test for functions such as comparing and making predictions.

Getting out of trouble

Sometimes you will find yourself in an uncomfortable situation in this part of the exam. It is important to stay calm and manage this as best as you can. The following advice relates to some of the typical situations that might occur.

YOU JUST GAVE AN UNCLEAR POINT

Due to the difficulty of this section, sometimes you may finish a sentence and realize that you haven't really made the point clearly. I suggest you can rephrase the point you just made more clearly beginning with one of the following phrases:

In other words...

Well let me clarify that by pointing out that...

How can I put this better ... Oh yes, what I mean to say is that...

Another way to put it is...

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO FINISH A SENTENCE

Another common problem is you may end up starting a sentence and not quite knowing how to finish it. I suggest the following solutions:

Restart your sentence

What I mean to say is...

Sorry I have lost my train of thought what I'm trying to say is...

Oh, I seem to have lost my train of thought a bit, let me see, oh yes, that's right, what I mean to say is...

Move onto your next point

A long period of silence is the worst situation, especially for your score for Fluency and Coherence. If you can't finish an idea fairly quickly, it is sometimes best to just move onto the next point. If you're lucky the examiner might not even notice! Say something quickly like:

Oh and I would also like to mention...

Which reminds me that...

Pretend you forgot the question!

This strategy can really only be used once! Just pretend you forgot what the original question was and say something like:

Oh... Gosh... Sorry what was the question again?

[My feeling is that this doesn't really have a negative effect on your score if you do it only one time. It is definitely much better than a long silence. With the examiner unsure whether you are going to speak any more or whether they should move onto the next question].

5.2 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

It's difficult to predict exactly what questions you will get asked in the third part of the exam, but usually they will have a close connection to the topic that was discussed in Part Two of the exam. The questions are based on the following functions, which will be discussed further in this section:

1. **Different kinds of**
2. **Comparing (time/objects/concepts)**
3. **Predicting**
4. **Advantages**
5. **Disadvantages**
6. **Problems**
7. **Solutions**
8. **Opinion (why)**

1. Different kinds of

This is a very common first question in this part of the test. It is a question like:

What are some of the different kinds of shops in your country?

Note carefully:

Avoid just repeating the information or language that you used in Part Two. This is because it will not show the examiner anything new and not give them any new rateable language. In addition, another common mistake that people make is to just give one kind of shop, but the question clearly asks for more than one kind of shop. I suggest the following approach:

MODEL ANSWER:

What are some of the different kinds of shops in your country?

Well, there are a wide range of places to go shopping.

One of the most popular types is department stores. **I think this is because** they stock high-quality products and always offer a money back warrantee if you are unsatisfied with your purchase.

Another, trendy place that people in my country enjoy shopping at is night markets. **I guess this might be because** it's a lot of fun and the prices are usually cheaper than in the stores.

Steps to answer the question:

1. Paraphrase the question:

Well, there are a wide range of places to go shopping.

2. Introduce the first type and perhaps a reason:

One of the most popular types is...[type of shop]. I think this is because...[reason]

3. Introduce the second type and perhaps a reason:

Another, popular place that people in my country enjoy shopping at is [type of shop]. I guess this might be because... [reason].

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Introduction

Well, there are a wide range of...

Actually, there is quite an array of...

There are many options to choose from.

First type

One of the most popular types is...

Probably the most common is...

Second type

Another, trendy option is

Many people are also keen on...

Giving reasons

I think this is because

I guess this might be because

OTHER STRUCTURES

We can also use different strategies here to structure our answer. For instance, you could use the **depends strategy** that was introduced earlier. In this case your answer will be something like:

MODEL ANSWER: based on depends strategy

What are some of the different kinds of shops in your country?

Well, I think it depends on the age of the person.

One of the most popular types for young people is night markets. I guess this might be because it's a lot of fun and the prices are usually cheaper than in the stores.

However, older people seem to enjoy shopping in department stores. I guess this might be because they are looking for famous brands and high-quality products.

Steps to answer the question:

1. State that it depends:

Well, I think it depends on the age of the person.

2. Introduce the first type and perhaps a reason:

One of the most popular types for young people is....[type of shop]. I think this is because...[reason]

3. Introduce the second type and perhaps a reason:.

However, older people seem to enjoy shopping at [type of shop]. I guess this might be because... [reason].

language used in the depends model

Well, I think it depends... [first situation] However, [second situation]

Practice Questions

1. What are the different types of leisure activities that are popular in your country?
2. What types of sports do young people like to play?
3. What types of people are famous in your country?
4. What are some of the different types of restaurants in your country?
5. What types of products are more popular these days?

2. Comparing

Another common type of question in this part of the exam is for you to compare two different things. This type of question can be asked in different ways, but usually you are asked to compare different **time periods** [now and the past]; **things** [such as houses and apartments]; or different types of **people** [older/younger, and different genders]. For all these types of questions you could use language of comparison (cheaper, more expensive, X is more/less than Y) .

Comparing time periods

What are the differences in the topics that people talk about these days and the topics they talked about in the past?

Well, I think they are like chalk and cheese. I feel the most fundamental would be that people these days prefer to talk about technology and the economy, **whereas** people in the past used to talk about politics more. **Moreover, a further distinction might be that** these days people like to talk a lot about their interactions on social network sites. **While on the other hand,** people in the past talked more about their face-to-face interactions with their friends.

Comparing things

What are some of the differences in the types of homes that people live in these days compared to the past?

Well, obviously there are a number of clear differences. Perhaps the most significant difference is that most people used to live in houses; whereas these days it is becoming increasingly common to live in high-rise condominiums. **In addition,** a subsequent contrast could be that in the past many houses used to be made out of wood. **Conversely, these days** most houses are made out of concrete.

Comparing people

What differences are there in the topics that men and women discuss?

Well, obviously there are a number of clear differences. Perhaps the most significant one would be that men tend to talk more about sports such as baseball or basketball. **Whereas,** women have a preference to chat about things like going shopping or what sort of clothes they like to wear. **In addition, a subsequent contrast could be that** women like to gossip a lot. **Conversely,** men prefer to talk more about politics and business.

[language of comparison is underlined]

Step-By-Step Approach [based on the answer above for comparing people]

1. opening phrase:

Well, obviously there are a number of clear differences.

2. introduce and describe the first difference:

Perhaps the most significant one would be that men tend to talk more about sports

4. develop this first difference with a linking word:

such as baseball or basketball.

5. use a comparative linking structure and add a contrasting idea:

whereas, women prefer to chat about things like going shopping or what sort of clothes they like to wear.

6. introduce and describe the second difference.

In addition, a subsequent contrast could be that women like to gossip a lot

7. Signal a contrast and state the difference

Conversely, men prefer to talk more about politics and business.

Complete model answer [repeated from above about comparing people]

Well, obviously there are a number of clear differences. Perhaps the most significant one would be that men tend to talk more about sports such as baseball or basketball. **Whereas, women prefer** to chat about things like going shopping or what sort of clothes they like to wear. **In addition, a subsequent contrast could be that** women like to gossip a lot. **Conversely, men would rather** talk more about politics and business.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Opening:

Well, I think they are like chalk and cheese. [An idiom for really big differences]

Well obviously there are a number of clear differences.

The first difference:

Perhaps the most significant difference is ...; whereas...

I feel the most fundamental would be that ... On the contrary, ...

The second difference:

In addition, a subsequent contrast could be that ... Conversely,...

Moreover, a further distinction might be that ... While on the other hand,...

To show similarity: [essentially you are giving a concession to the question]

However, one thing that seems the same is....

On the other hand, I think they are both similar with regards to...

Practice Questions

1. Do men and women prefer to buy different types of products?
2. Do young people prefer to do different activities than older people?
3. What differences are there in the activities people do these days compared to the past?
4. How are shops today different to the shops when you were younger?
5. What changes have occurred in the buildings in your country?
6. Nowadays do families spend more time together or less?

3. Predicting

Another common type of question in this part of the exam is about the future. This type of question often occurs after a question that asks you to compare the past to the present. Essentially, you are now being asked to compare the current situation to a future one. In many cases you will need to use the future tense:

will + verb

The buildings will be much taller

going to + verb

People are going to live much longer

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Opening:

I am sure that in years to come we will see some major developments.

It is difficult to predict the future, but I think there are going to be some major changes with regard to...

The first prediction:

It's hard to predict the future, but I suppose...

I'm not sure exactly what will happen, but one possibility is...

The second prediction:

As well as this, we will probably start to see...

Furthermore, this might sound a bit crazy, but I think one day...

Future idioms

on the cards = probably will

Yes, doing some study is on the cards tomorrow

bank on = almost certainly will happen

You can bank on the Internet being more popular in the future.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

How do you think housing will change in the future?

It is difficult to predict the future, but I think there are going to be some major changes with regard to residential buildings.

I'm not sure exactly what will happen, but one possibility is the rising demand for housing and the scarcity of land may lead to people only living in apartment buildings and so I think the disappearance of detached houses is **on the cards**.

Furthermore, this might sound a bit crazy, but I think one day, we may even have to start building houses on the ocean. There just doesn't seem to be enough land left in many metropolitan areas like Shanghai to build anywhere else.

Step-By-Step Approach

1. opening phrase:

It is difficult to predict the future, but I think there are going to be some major changes with regard to residential buildings.

2. introduce and describe the first prediction:

I'm not sure exactly what might happen, but one possibility is the rising demand for housing and the scarcity of land may lead to people only living in apartment buildings and the disappearance of detached houses.

3. Use a linking phrase and introduce and describe the second difference:

Furthermore, this might sound a bit crazy, but I think one day, we may even have to start building houses on the ocean. There just doesn't seem to be enough land left in many metropolitan areas like Shanghai to build anywhere else.

Practice Questions

1. What will schools be like in the future?
2. What will cars be like in the future?
3. Do you think people will have more free time in the future?
4. Do you think we will get the news in different ways in the future?
5. What will your country be like in 20 years?
6. Do you think the climate will be hotter in the future?

4. Advantages (merits, benefits, rewards)

Another common type of question in this part of the test is a question about the merits of the topic you are discussing:

MODEL ANSWER

What are some of the advantages of being famous?

Clearly, there are a number of obvious merits.

But I would probably say that the one thing that really stands out is that it is easy to make money. **This is obviously favorable because** we can see the lavish* lifestyles that celebrities lead. You know they always seem to have cool cars and luxurious houses. [* lavish = luxurious]

Besides this, a second positive point could be that famous people receive a lot of respect in society. **This can be seen in the way that** celebrities often receive special attention at hotels and restaurants.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Opening:

Clearly, there are a number of obvious merits.

Obviously, there are a number of positive features.

The main advantage:

But I would probably say that the one thing that really stands out is.... This is obviously favorable because...

However, I guess that the greatest benefit would be that...This is surely a positive feature as...

The second advantage:

Besides this, a second positive point could be that... This is undoubtedly favorable because...

As well as this, a second merit might be that.... This can be seen

Practice Questions

1. What are the advantages of living in high-rise apartments?
2. What are the merits of living in big cities?
3. What are the benefits of owning an up-to-date mobile phone?
4. What benefits do companies get from advertising?
5. What are the rewards of studying abroad?
6. How does public transport benefit society?

5. Disadvantages (drawbacks, shortcomings)

Another common type of question in this part of the exam is to ask you about the disadvantages of a topic. Let's stick with the topic of being famous and see how we can answer the question regarding this topic.

MODEL ANSWER

Do you think there are any disadvantages of being famous?

For sure there are some drawbacks.

I suppose the most difficult aspect might be that famous people enjoy less privacy, because the paparazzi* try to follow them to find out everything about them including their relationships and anything that may be interesting to the public. **And this can be irritating because** they can't enjoy any quiet time alone with their loved ones and there is always a feeling of being in the public eye

At the same time, another stumbling block with fame might be that these celebrities always seem larger than life. **And the trouble with this is that** they must have a lot of pressure to meet people's expectations. **For instance**, at a party a comedian would be expected to be funny and this might be a kind of hassle when someone is just trying to relax and enjoy themselves.

[paparazzi* = aggressive media and reporters]

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Opening:

For sure there are some drawbacks.

Of course, there are a couple of shortcomings.

The main disadvantage:

I suppose the most difficult aspect might be that... And this can be irritating because...

I guess the most disadvantageous characteristic would be that.... This is a clear limitation because...

The second disadvantage:

At the same time, another stumbling block with fame might be that ... And the trouble with this is that

Correspondingly, an additional drawback may be that ... This is obviously a problem as...

Practice Questions

1. What are the disadvantages of living in high-rise apartments?
2. What are the drawbacks of living in big cities?
3. What are the downsides of owning an up-to-date mobile phone?
4. What risks do companies get from spending a lot on advertising?
5. What are the pitfalls of studying abroad?
6. What are the drawbacks of today's fast-paced lifestyle?

6. Problems

Another common type of question in this part of the test is to ask you about problems that occur with the topic you are discussing. For this question you can think back to problem-solution essays. And if you're lucky, you might even get to discuss some of the points you wrote an essay about. You can also use language from problem and solution essays.

MODEL ANSWER

What do you think the consequences of global warming will be?

Obviously, we can see there are quite a few hazards with regard to this issue.

The most obvious effects are that many animals and plants are having trouble coping with the changing temperature. In some cases global warming may even lead to the extinction of some species.

The second detrimental effect is that the ocean levels are rising. **This is a major concern because** many cities around the world are already starting to flood due to their coastal locations and this is causing particular hardship for those who have built their houses by the sea.

Opening:

Obviously, we can see there are quite a few hazards with regard to this issue.

It seems likely that [topic] causes a number of issues.

The main problem:

The most obvious effects are that...In some cases [issue] even leads to...

Essentially, a fundamental issue is that ... This is clearly alarming as...

The second problem:

The second detrimental effect is that...This is a major concern because...

Equally worrying is the suggestion that... And the underlying repercussions of this are that.

Practice Questions

1. What problems are associated with eating fast food?
2. What issues are caused by a lack of physical exercise?
3. What problems does traffic congestion in big cities cause?
4. What problems are being caused by racial intolerance?
5. What problems does violence in the media cause?
6. What issues are caused by an over-dependence on technology?

7. Solutions:

If the examiner asks a question about a problem, they are likely to follow this up with a question about how the problem could be solved. Try to give an answer that clearly addresses the problem or problems that you identified. It is also worth remembering that education and action by the government can be used to solve almost every problem.

MODEL ANSWER

Are there any ways to prevent global warming?

I believe there are a few ways to tackle this problem.

Perhaps the most effective solution is for governments to more quickly implement clean sources of energy. **Consequently,** carbon emissions would be drastically reduced which will solve the greenhouse effect and return the Earth back to its normal climate.

In addition, if schools were to educate young people about the need to preserve our environment **it would result in** an increased awareness of the need to take action at the grassroots level* to protect the environment. You know people should recycle things more and teachers should increase awareness amongst their students about this.

[* action at the grassroots level is action at the local level by ordinary citizens]

Opening:

I believe there are a few ways to tackle this problem.

I think that a few measures are available.

The first solution:

Perhaps the most effective solution is ... Consequently, ...

When dealing with [problem], the easiest way to solve it is to ... This will result in....

The second solution:

In addition, if [schools/the government] were to... it would result in...

I also think that we could ...This would enable...

Practice Questions

1. How could we prevent people from eating too much fast food?
2. How can we encourage people to do more physical exercise?
3. What are some measures to reduce traffic congestion in big cities?
4. What steps could be taken to tackle racial intolerance?
5. How could children be prevented from seeing violence on TV?
6. How can we avoid becoming over-dependent on technology?

8. Opinion (why) questions

It is highly likely that you'll be asked for your opinion on a topic in this section of the test. As with previous questions, don't ignore what you have learnt from studying IELTS writing. One of the common types of essays asks for your opinion. And, if you're lucky you might get asked a question in the speaking test that you have already written an essay on. In this case it should be easy to have ideas! As well as this, you may have learnt language that can be used in the speaking test. If you have learnt how to write concessions [counter arguments], then you can also use these in the speaking test.

MODEL ANSWER

Should schools focus on preparing students for their future careers?

Well, that's quite a controversial question, but I guess my opinion is that this should be the focal point of education.

The main reason I feel this way is because a person's career is so important for their life in terms of not only money but also experiencing job satisfaction.

As well as this, from a societal standpoint we need to have people who have the relevant skills to fill the jobs that are required. Like for instance, we need to have enough medical personnel to help out the sick and injured, and we need to have enough teachers to educate our adolescents.

However, it is sometimes argued that schools should fulfill some additional roles in addition to preparing youngsters for their working lives. The main argument here seem to be that young people should learn general life skills such as the ability to communicate and cooperate with others.

Opening:

Well, that's quite a controversial question, but I guess my opinion is...

As far as I'm concerned...

It seems to me that...

I tend to think that...

The first reason:

The main reason I feel this way is because...

The key basis for my opinion is...

The second reason:

As well as this, from a [societal/educational/environmental] standpoint...

At the same time, as far as I'm concerned...

Making a concession [counter-argument]

However, it is sometimes argued that...

Admittedly, in some circumstances it may not be the...

OTHER USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

Reckon: usually to express an opinion about what is likely to happen

I reckon students will learn social skills even if the focus is on preparing them for work.

If you ask me: to emphasize your own personal opinion

If you ask me, it's much better for teachers to prepare their students for their careers.

To be honest with you: to express a personal feeling

To be honest with you, I really think a person's career is the biggest part of their lives.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Do you think most people like travelling to foreign countries?
2. Why do so many people move from the countryside to cities?
3. Have people in your country become too dependent on technology?
4. Do you think young people spend too much time on the Internet?
5. Do you think there should be stricter controls on the advertising industry?
6. Do you support capital punishment [the death penalty]?

6.1 ASKING THE EXAMINER QUESTIONS

You can ask the IELTS examiner questions in the IELTS speaking exam. There are numerous ways to deal with problems by asking questions and it is a good idea to learn how to ask these before taking an exam.

FUNCTION	PHRASE
<p>Repeat the question (Part 1 -3)</p>	<p>Could you please repeat that? Sorry, I didn't quite catch what you said?</p>
<p>Checking the meaning of a word (Part 1 -3)</p>	<p>Sorry, what does X mean? Could you please explain the meaning of X?</p>
<p>Checking the question (Part 3 only. You can try in Part 1 but the examiner may not respond. Look for body language, like nodding of the head)</p>	<p>Are you asking me....? Do you mean....?</p>

6.2 USEFUL FUNCTIONAL PHRASES

FUNCTION	PHRASE
buying time	<p>Let me see now, that really is quite a tricky question. Well, I suppose I would have to say that...</p> <p>Oh gosh! I'm really not sure about that, but probably...</p>
getting to the key point	<p>Let me cut to the chase, the key point is...</p> <p>Anyway, the thing I really want to say is...</p> <p>What I'm trying to say is...</p>
repeating	<p>Let me put it another way</p> <p>Or, in other words...</p> <p>To put it more succinctly...</p>
restarting	<p>Let me put it this way...</p> <p>Let me start over...</p> <p>Oh, I seem to have lost my train of thought a bit, let me see, oh yes, that's right, what I mean to say is...</p>
conversation repair [when you realize that you've made a mistake in your response]	<p>What I mean to say is...</p> <p>What I'm trying to say is...</p> <p>Another way to put it is...</p>

Useful linking words and phrases

Linking words help increase your score for fluency and coherence because they help the examiner to see how ideas are sequenced and to catch the main ideas. They also help you to structure and extend your ideas.

SEQUENCING IDEAS

sequencing the first idea	adding supporting ideas	adding a contrasting idea
The main reason is... First of all, The most important consideration is...	Another reason is... Furthermore, In the same vein,	On the other hand, Nevertheless, Although,

GIVING OPINIONS

starting your opinion	giving your opinion	clarifying an opinion
From my perspective, From my point of view, In my opinion,	totally agree/disagree somewhat agree/disagree agree/disagree to a certain degree	To be more precise... More specifically... By this I mean...

GIVING EXPLANATIONS AND EXAMPLES

giving an explanation	giving examples
The reason for this is...	This is clearly illustrated by...
This is because...	A clear example of this is...
This is due to...	

EXPLAINING CAUSES AND EFFECTS

to express cause	to express effect	drawing a conclusion
Owing to...	As a consequence,	All things considered, I firmly believe...
Due to the fact that...	As a result...	Taking everything into account I am inclined to believe that...
For the reason that...	For this reason...	

EXPLAINING ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

to give advantages	to give disadvantages
A major advantage of this is...	One major drawback is...
Another important merit is...	Another disadvantage is...
The final benefit is...	The final limitation is that...

6.3 IDIOMATIC LANGUAGE

Using idiomatic expressions is a way to show the examiner your talent with vocabulary and increase your score in the speaking exam. Using a few of the phrases below is a good way to get a score of 7 or higher. A 7 requires that you use advanced language such as idiomatic language.

Idiomatic Expressions	
1.	on the go = busy <i>I've been on the go all day and I'm really tired.</i>
2.	work flat out = work very hard <i>I have to work flat out all day to meet the deadline at 5 PM.</i>
3.	up-market = fashionable <i>She lives in an up-market neighborhood with lots of expensive houses.</i>
4.	chill out = relax <i>My favorite way to chill out is to put on some music and lie down on the sofa.</i>
5.	the in thing = fashionable, popular <i>Doing yoga has become the in thing as trying to be healthy is really popular now.</i>
6.	at the height of fashion = fashionable <i>Televisions were at the height of fashion in the 1980s.</i>
7.	up-to-the-minute = the most recent <i>Nowadays, the Internet includes up-to-the-minute news stories.</i>
8.	off the top of my head = without thinking <i>Off the top of my head, I will probably go shopping at the weekend.</i>

9.	run of the mill = average, typical <i>This is not your run of the mill computer. It has many advanced functions.</i>
10.	mouth-watering = delicious , appetizing <i>The pizza was so mouth-watering, I ate it as soon as I got home.</i>
11.	eye-opening experience = enlightening or unexpected experience <i>It was an eye-opening experience to see an actual robbery take place.</i>
12.	in high spirits = happy <i>When I passed the exam, I felt in high spirits.</i>
13.	bump into = meet <i>I usually bump into my old friends once a month at Starbucks.</i>
14.	once in a blue moon = not very often <i>You only get an opportunity this good once in a blue moon.</i>
15.	over the moon = really happy <i>I felt over the moon when I opened the door to my surprise birthday party.</i>
16.	have a chin-wag = have a chat <i>Every Friday, I like to meet my mates at Starbucks for a chin-wag.</i>
17.	give a hand = help <i>The nurses are ready to give a hand to all those people who are sick.</i>
18.	the wee hours = after midnight, very early in the morning <i>My assignment was due at 9AM the next day, so I had to work until the wee hours.</i>
19.	make a fuss over = overly care for someone/something <i>Don't make a fuss over this, it is really quite trivial.</i>
20.	early bird = someone who gets up early <i>My father is an early bird. He gets up at 6AM every morning to go jogging.</i>

Using Idioms

I suggest you don't try to learn too many idiomatic phrases. The key point is to use them and also to use them correctly. Focus on learning a few well. Also you should try to avoid very common idioms and especially clichés. A cliché is an overused expression. These can be considered as "ugly" English. These do not help your score, and may possibly lower it.

Examples:

In this day and age,

At the end of the day,

Raining cats and dogs.

Just like every coin has two sides,

7. TOPICS FOR PARTS 1-3

You can use this section to build vocabulary and to practice doing complete IELTS speaking tests. It includes language for different topics and questions for PARTS 1-3 of the speaking test.

7.1 CLOTHING

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
accessory	something added to an outfit such as a belt or piece of jewelry
boutique	small shop that sells fashionable clothes
garment	item of clothing
fabric	the type of cloth used to make a piece of clothing
fitting room	a room in a clothes store to try on clothes
outfit	a complete set of clothing

VERBS	MEANING
accessorize	to add something to an outfit like a belt or jewelry
dress up	to make an effort to put on stylish clothes
flaunt	show off, especially to seek admiration
go out of style	to become unfashionable
try on clothes	to check whether clothing fits
in vogue	to become fashionable

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
casual	clothing suitable for relaxing in
formal	clothing suitable for formal social events or work
elegant	stylish
gorgeous	beautiful
outrageous	unusual and rather shocking
trendy	popular

IDIOMS

all dressed up = dressed in one's best clothes

We got all dressed up to attend the party.

dressed to kill = wearing stylish clothes that will attract attention

Nicole Kidman turned up at the Oscars dressed to kill.

fit like a glove = to fit perfectly

My new jeans fit like a glove.

the in thing = fashionable

This summer, baggy jeans are the in thing.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Let's talk about clothing...

What types of clothes do you like wearing?

What color clothing do you prefer?

Did you wear a school uniform when you were younger?

Do you prefer clothes that are comfortable or stylish?

Let's talk about shoes...

What sort of shoes do you usually like to wear?

Do you have a favorite pair shoes?

How often do you buy shoes?

When was the last time you bought a pair of shoes?

Let move on to discuss shopping for clothes...

Where do you go shopping for clothes?

Do you try on clothes before you buy them?

Do you prefer to shop alone or with another person?

Have you ever bought clothing on the Internet?

PART 2

Describe an item of clothing you purchased that you didn't like

You should say:

what the clothing is

where and why you bought it

what color and style it is

and explain why you didn't like it.

PART 3

Let's talk about clothes...

What kind of clothes do people in your country usually wear?

How important is it to wear fashionable clothes in your country?

Do older people and younger people wear different colored clothes?

Now let's talk about spending money on clothes...

Are clothes expensive in your country?

Do people wear more expensive clothes to work in your country?

Do you think people spend too much money on clothes nowadays?

7.2 EDUCATION

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
the curriculum	the entire school program including course materials and testing of students. Everything that a school aims to teach students.
a graduate	a person who has graduated from a school
literacy	the ability to read and write
pedagogy	the way of teaching including the instructional methods that are used
qualification	what someone gets when they graduate from school. For instance, a diploma is a qualification.
student centered education	a philosophy of education where the student is the central focus
tuition	the fees for studying a course

VERBS	MEANING
graduate	to pass a course or level of study
concentrate	to focus attention towards a particular activity, subject or problem
revise	to review materials that have already been taught
enroll	to join a class
indoctrinate	to teach following a biased belief or point of view. For example: Hitler indoctrinated young Germans with a hatred for other races.
persevere	to not give up. To keep doing something until success is achieved.

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
academic	relating to education especially universities
co-educational	when male and female students are taught together in the same school
single sex	when only male or female students are taught in the same school
hands-on	to learn by actually doing. We can get hands-on experience by actually doing things
multi-disciplinary	involving several different subjects or areas of study
pedagogical	relating to teaching methods and principles
primary education	an elementary school or the first years of formal schooling
secondary education	high school
tertiary education	university or vocational school
vocational	concerning the skills necessary for a particular job. This includes trade schools. So if you are studying cooking or hairdressing then you are going to a vocational school

IDIOMS

bookworm = someone who reads a lot

My brother is a bit of a bookworm; he's always reading a book.

drop out of school = to stop attending school

I dropped out of school and began to work for the family business.

hit the books = study hard

I have to hit the books because I have a 5,000 word essay due tomorrow.

pass with flying colors = to pass something with a high score

I got the highest score in the science test ...I passed with flying colors!

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Now let's talk about schools

How many schools have you been to?

Which school was your favorite?

Did your parents choose your schools for you?

Would you send your children to the same schools?

Let move on to discuss high school

What was your favorite subject?

Did you like any of the teachers?

What sports or hobbies did you do at school?

Which were more important to you the teachers or your classmates?

Let's talk about handwriting and writing by hand

When did you last handwrite something?

Is your handwriting easy to read?

Do you like writing cards and letters by hand?

Do you receive many handwritten letters or cards?

PART 2

Describe a time when you learnt a useful skill

You should say:

what skill you learnt?

why you learnt it?

where you did it?

and explain how the skill is useful in your life.

PART 3

Let's talk about skills...

What kinds of skills are most important for young people to learn?

Do you think children learn more skills from their parents or their teachers?

What skills might become more important in the future?

Now let's talk about learning...

Why do you think some people enjoy learning new things?

Do you think people were more intelligent in the past?

Do you think people will be more knowledgeable in the future?

7.3 ENVIRONMENT

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
biodegradable	something that is able to decay naturally and harmlessly
biodiversity	refers to the variety of plant and animal species that exist in a particular environmental area or in the world generally
climate	the weather conditions of a region
climate change	the concept that change is occurring to the earth's climate. [Especially based on the influence of people].
fossil fuels	a natural fuel such as coal, gas, or oil formed over long periods of time from the remains of living organisms
extinction	the complete dying out of a species
habitat	a place where animals and plants live
natural resources	resources derived from the environment. For example, wood and oil.
renewable energy	describes a form of energy that can be produced as quickly as it is used, such as solar energy

VERBS	MEANING
conserve	to not waste something
deplete	to reduce the amount of something
discharge	to release something
contaminate	to make something become polluted
endanger	to put something or someone in danger
preserve	to keep something safe

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
critical	extremely important
disposable	something that can be thrown away
environmentally friendly	something that is good or not harmful to the environment
hazardous	something dangerous
renewable	able to be renewed or replenished
toxic	something poisonous

IDIOMS

a race against time = a need to finish something quickly

We are in a race against time to reverse the effects of global warming.

no quick fix = no simple solution.

There seems to be no quick fix to solve our needs for energy consumption from fossil fuels.

sweep under the carpet – to ignore or hide something

It seems politicians would rather sweep the problem of climate change under the carpet than deal with it.

the tip of the iceberg = a small part of something much bigger

Rising oceans are only the tip of the iceberg of the problems being caused by climate change.

PART 1

Let's talk about natural places

How often do you visit natural places?

Do you prefer to visit the ocean or mountains?

Have you ever gone camping?

Would you like to live in the countryside?

Now let's talk about the weather

What's the weather like in your country?

What kind of weather do you like the most?

Do you pay attention to weather forecasts?

Is the weather changing in your country?

Let move on to discuss parks

Do you like going to parks or, public gardens?

Who do you usually go there with?

When was the last time you went to a park?

Do you prefer to relax with your friends in a park or an indoor place?

PART 2

Describe a park you remember visiting

You should say:

where it is

what it looks like

what activities people do there

and explain why you still remember it.

PART 3

Let's talk about parks and green spaces...

Are there a lot of public parks in your country?

What are some of the different reasons people go to parks?

What sort of facilities do public parks need to have?

Now let's talk about the natural environment ...

Do you think the natural environment is getting worse?

What problems do you think this might cause?

What are some potential solutions to improve the environment?

7.4 FOOD

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
additives	substances added to food to preserve it or enhance its taste
chef	the chief cook
cuisine	a style of cooking; for example, Italian cuisine
fusion cuisine	mixing two or more styles of cooking together
ingredients	the different types of food that go into a recipe
obese	being extremely overweight
nutrition	the health value of food
recipe	a set of instructions for making a food dish

VERBS	MEANING
chop	to cut with a knife
diet	to attempt to lose weight by eating more carefully
mix	to combine ingredients together
garnish	add something to food to give it flavor, or decorative color
peel	to remove the skin from something.

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
aromatic	good smell
malodorous	bad smell
pungent	powerful smell
nutritious	used to describe food that is healthy. For example, fruit and vegetables are very <u>nutritious</u> .
delicious	good taste
unappetizing	bad taste

FLAVORS	EXAMPLE
sweet	candy
sour	lemons
salty	chips, bacon
bitter	medicine, coffee
fatty	deep fried food

IDIOMS
<p><i>mouthwatering</i> = food that is delicious and appetizing</p> <p>Look at all the food! It is so <u>mouthwatering</u>. I can't wait to start eating it.</p>
<p><i>not my cup of tea</i> = something you do not enjoy</p> <p>Steaks are simply <u>not my cup of tea</u>, I prefer chicken.</p>

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Cooking

Do you know how to cook?

Do you think all children should learn how to cook?

Is there anything you would like to learn how to cook?

Do you prefer to eat at home or to eat out?

Food

What types of food do you like to eat?

What kind of food is popular in your country?

What did you like to eat when you were a child?

Would you like to try any new type of food?

Healthy eating

Do you eat anything healthy?

Is there anything unhealthy you like to eat?

Did you eat a lot of vegetables when you were a child?

Is there any type of healthy food you would like to start eating in the future?

PART 2

Describe a restaurant you like

You should say:

where it is

how often you go there

what food it has

and explain why you like it.

PART 3

Let's talk about restaurants...

What types of restaurants are popular in your country?

Do people care more about the food or the service?

Do you think it's healthier to eat at home or at restaurants?

Now let's talk about cafes...

Are cafes popular in your country?

Do you think there will be more cafes in the future?

Is it better to have a business meeting at a cafe or a restaurant?

7.5 FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
acquaintance	someone you know, but not as well as a friend
companion	friend, buddy
sibling	brother or sister
soul mate	very dear and close friend who you share your secrets and emotions with
social skills	the ability to communicate and interact well with others
spouse	husband or wife

VERBS	MEANING
admire	respect and think highly of
befriend	make friends with someone
help out	help [phrasal verb]
gossip	to talk idly, especially about the affairs of others
socialize	to be social or friendly towards others

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
amiable	friendly
casual	relaxed and not following strict rules
extrovert	out-going
introvert	shy
inspirational	motivating
passionate	intense or strong emotional feeling about something [positive]

IDIOMS

a chin wag = have a chat

Last night I met my best pal and had a bit of a chin wag.

own flesh and blood = family member or relative.

We must always take good care of our own flesh and blood.

sounding board = a good person to talk to and seek advice from

My soul mate is an excellent sounding board whenever I have a problem.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Let's talk about friends and friendship

How much time do you spend with your friends?

What do you usually do with your friends?

Is friendship important to you?

Do you prefer to have many friends or a few close ones?

Now let's talk about family

Do you have a large or small family?

How much time do you spend with your family?

Do you usually eat dinner with your family?

Are people in your country generally close to their family members?

Let's discuss politeness and being polite

Do you think you are a polite person?

Who taught you to be polite?

Do you think people should always be polite?

Is it more important to be polite to friends or family?

PART 2

Describe a friend that you often spend time with.

You should say:

when and how you met your friend

how often you see this friend

what kind of interests you share with your friend

and say why you like spending time with your friend.

PART 3

Let's talk about friends and friendships

How important is it to have friends?

Do you think teenagers rely more on their friends or family?

As people get older do they rely more on their friends or family?

Now let's talk about neighbors

Why is it important to have a good relationship with neighbors?

What do you think might cause neighbors to have arguments?

Why do neighbors often have difficulty getting to know each other?

7.6 HEALTH

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
addiction	the condition of not being able to stop doing something. Especially something harmful like drinking alcohol or playing video games.
allergy	a strong reaction to something. For instance, an <u>allergy</u> to a certain food.
anxiety	stress
diagnosis	an opinion of a patient's health condition or illness
diet	1. everything that we eat 2. a plan to eat carefully to reduce weight
insomnia	inability or difficulty to get to sleep
physician	a doctor
treatment	a way of curing an illness or medical condition

VERBS	MEANING
cure	healing or restoring to health; provide a remedy
diagnose	to work-out what is wrong with a patient
eliminate	to get rid of something
prescribe	to recommend the use of a drug or other remedy
prevent	to stop something happening
remedy	cure
trigger	to cause something to happen. For example, certain foods may <u>trigger</u> an allergy

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
acute	very serious
chronic	long-lasting
hazardous	very dangerous
nutritious	used to describe food that is healthy such as fruit
vital	very important

IDIOMS

back on one's feet = physically healthy again

My brother is back on his feet after being sick for two days.

burned out = to become very tired and almost sick from doing something for a long time or from working too hard

After working long hours for many years the man finally burned himself out.

feel on top of the world = to feel very healthy

I have been feeling on top of the world since I started exercising.

under the weather = not feeling well

My brother has been under the weather all day and has not gone to work.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Now let's talk about health

What do you do to keep in good health?

Do you have any unhealthy habits?

What could you do to be healthier?

Do you think you will be healthier in the future?

Let's move on to relaxation

What do you do to relax?

Do you do any healthy activities to help you relax?

Do you feel you have enough time to relax?

What did you do to relax when you were a child?

Now let's talk about bicycles

How popular are bicycles in your home town?

How often do you ride a bicycle?

Do you think that bicycles are suitable for all ages?

What are the advantages of a bicycle compared to a car?

PART 2

Describe something you did as a child to be healthier.

You should say:

what you did

why you did it

where you did it

and explain how it made you healthier

PART 3

Let's talk about healthy lifestyles...

Why do you think some people live unhealthy lifestyles?

Do you think people were healthier in the past?

Do you think people will be healthier in the future?

Now let's talk about fast food...

Why do you think fast food has become so popular?

What problems do you think fast food causes?

What are some ways to reduce the consumption of fast food?

7.7 HOBBIES

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
amusement	an enjoyable activity
hobby	frequent leisure activity
pastime	recreational activity
spare time	free time for recreation
tournament	competition

VERBS	MEANING
go sightseeing	visit tourist sites
nurture	to help grow or develop
take up	start doing an activity
take part in	participate in
unwind	relax

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
appealing	pleasing
fascinating	interesting
leisurely	unhurried
time-consuming	requiring a lot of time
thrilling	exciting

Idioms
<p>get into = enjoy</p> <p><i>Recently I've been <u>getting into</u> surfing.</i></p>
<p>get a kick out of = really enjoy something</p> <p><i>I really get a kick out of camping because it is so much fun to experience nature.</i></p>
<p>kill time = spend time to avoid boredom</p> <p><i>I like to kill time by surfing the Internet</i></p>

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Let's talk about your hobbies and interests

Do you have any hobbies or interests?

Did you have any hobbies or interests when you were a child?

What free-time activities are popular in your country?

Are there any outdoor activities you would like to try in the future?

Let move on to discuss free time

What do you do in your free time?

Do you have enough free time?

When do you usually get free time?

What free-time activities would you like to try if you had more free time?

Now let's talk about photos

Is it popular for people in your country to take photos?

Do you like to take photos?

What kind of photos do you like to take?

Will you take lots of photos in the future?

PART 2

Describe an outdoor activity you would like to do for the first time.

You should say:

what the activity would be

where you would do it

what preparations and equipment you would need

and explain why you would like to do this activity.

PART 3

Let's talk about outdoor activities...

What types of outdoor activities are most popular in your country?

Do people of different ages do different types of activities?

Do people spend more time outdoors than in the past?

Now let's talk about indoor activities...

What types of indoor activities are popular with children?

Do you think children spend too much time indoors?

What are some ways to encourage children to do outdoor activities?

7.8 MEDIA

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
a medium	a medium is the singular form of media [plural].
censorship	when certain types of messages are blocked. For instance, the government often uses <u>censorship</u> for movies that are violent or have sexual content.
genre	a style or category of art, music, movie, or literature.
mass media	mass media refers collectively to all the forms of media we have such as television, on-line services, magazines and newspapers.
paparazzi	aggressive media [negative]
scandal	dishonorable news story
social media	websites that enable people to create and share content with others

VERBS	MEANING
broadcast	to send messages. For instance, the TV broadcasts shows every night.
censor	to block or restrict information or content, especially when it includes violence or inappropriate content
exaggerate	when the truth is stretched or enlarged
manipulate	control or influence a person
publicize	to make public.

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
cultural	relating to culture. For example, <u>cultural</u> awareness is being aware of someone's culture.
eclectic	getting ideas, style, or taste from a wide range of sources
inspirational	motivating
monotonous	boring
passionate	intense or strong emotional feeling about something
vivid	clear and bright

IDIOMS

figure out = to try to understand someone or something

I can't figure out why the stock markets went down today as all the news seemed to be positive.

word of mouth = information passed on through conversations

Before the scandal had hit newspapers the news had already spread by word of mouth.

up-to-the-minute = the most recent

Nowadays, the Internet includes up-to-the-minute news stories.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Let's talk about the news

How do you find out about the news?

What type of news stories do you like to follow?

Do you think it's important to follow the news?

Do people in your country prefer to follow international news or local news?

Let's discuss the Internet

When did you first use the Internet?

What do you do on the Internet?

Have you ever brought anything online?

Do you always believe the information people post on their websites?

Now let's talk about reading...

How often do you read a book or magazine?

What types of books or magazines do you like to read?

Are there any types of things that you don't like to read?

What types of books or magazines did you like to read when you were a child?

PART 2

Describe a recent news story that interested you.

You should say:

how you heard about this news story

what the news was about

is this news positive or negative

and explain why this news story was interesting to you.

PART 3

Let's talk about how people find out about the news ...

How do most people in your country find out about the news?

Are people more interested in local news or international news?

Are people these days more interested in the news than people were in the past?

Now let's talk about celebrities...

Why do people seem to be so fascinated to follow gossip about celebrities?

Do you think that most of the stories about celebrities' lives are true?

Do you think the media should respect celebrities' rights to privacy more?

7.9 SHOPPING

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
chain store	a store that has multiple locations such as Starbucks
family business	a shop that is run and managed by a family
luxury	an expensive and extravagant item
an essential	a necessary product like soap
market vendor	someone who sells products at a street market
street market	a street with outdoor stalls instead of shops
shopping complex	mall or places with multiple stores and maybe entertainment

VERBS	MEANING
browse	to look around for products of interest
discount	to sell for less than the usual price
haggle	to bargain over the price
pick out	to choose a product
window shopping	just looking at products without necessarily looking to buy something

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
exclusive	special and limited availability
extravagant	excessive and beyond what is necessary
fake	not real
genuine	real
sophisticated	stylish and complicated

IDIOMS

golden opportunity = an excellent opportunity

An internship at Google would be a golden opportunity.

the in thing = fashionable, popular

Doing yoga has become the in thing as trying to be healthy is really popular now.

up-market = fashionable

She lives in an up-market neighborhood with lots of expensive houses.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Let's talk about shopping.

Do you like to go shopping?

How often do you go shopping?

What kind of shops are there where you live?

What's the worst thing about going shopping?

Street Markets

Do you like visiting street markets?

Are street markets very common in your country?

Do you like to buy anything in particular at street markets?

Does your country have street markets open at night?

Let's talk about shopping on the Internet

Have you ever bought anything on the Internet?

Is it popular for people to shop on the Internet in your country?

Will you buy anything on the Internet in the future?

What are some disadvantages with buying products on the Internet?

PART 2

Describe a place that you like to visit for shopping.

You should say:

where this place is

what it looks like

what people buy there

and explain why you like shopping in this place.

PART 3

Let's talk about places to go shopping...

What are some of the different types of places people shop in your country?

Do men and women prefer different types of shops?

Do you think people spend more time shopping these days?

Now let's talk about shopping on the Internet ...

What types of products are most suitable to buy on the Internet?

What are the advantages of shopping online?

What are some potential drawbacks of shopping online?

7.10 TECHNOLOGY

Language

NOUNS	MEANING
cyberspace	Internet
gadget	any small piece of equipment
revolution	major change in the way of doing something
social media	this usually refers to online tools for communication such as Facebook and Twitter
technophobe	someone who has a fear of using technology
technophile	someone who embraces technology and uses it often

VERBS	MEANING
develop	to make or create
engage in	get involved in
envisage	to conceive or imagine an idea
revolutionize	to make dramatic changes
surpass	to exceed or overtake. For example, technology is developing so fast that it will one day <u>surpass</u> our ability to use it.

ADJECTIVES	MEANING
computer literate	able to understand and communicate about how to use computers and computer applications
obsolete	something that is no longer used. For example, typewriters are now <u>obsolete</u> .
up-to-date	something that is still in fashion
virtual	almost, especially as in almost real. For example, when we play games using <u>virtual</u> reality they seem like they are almost real.

IDIOMS

state-of-the-art = the latest and most recently available version of a product

The latest smartphones incorporate the most state-of-the-art technology.

user-friendly = easy to use

My new tablet is so user-friendly even my grandmother can use it.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

PART 1

Let's talk about computers

How often do you use a computer?

What do you use it for?

Do you play computer games?

Will you use a computer more in the future?

Now let's talk about cell phones

How often do you use a mobile phone?

Do you prefer to text people or call them?

In what situation is a mobile phone most useful?

Have you ever lost a cell phone?

Let's move on to discuss email and letters

Do you still write letters?

Do you think email will ever totally replace letters?

How do you feel if you receive a handwritten letter or card?

When did you last write a handwritten letter or card?

PART 2

Describe a website that you often use.

You should say:

what type of website it is

how you found out about it

when you use it

and why you find it useful.

PART 3

Let's talk about websites...

What types of websites are most popular in your country?

Is the Internet becoming more popular in your country?

Do you think most of the information on the net is reliable?

Now let's talk about social media...

Why has social media become so popular?

What are the benefits of social media?

What are some potential drawbacks of social media?

8. GRAMMAR

Grammar is a huge area with tons of books dedicated to it. If you are taking an IELTS exam in the near future you may not have a lot of time to work on grammar. The best ways to improve your grammar score are to reduce the number of errors you make and also use a variety of sentence types. Looking below at the grading criteria for grammar makes this clear.

Criteria for grammar

7	8
flexibly uses a range of complex structures frequently produces error-free sentences,	uses a wide range of structures most sentences are error-free with only very occasional inappropriacies that are not repeated

This section focuses on some ways to use complex sentence structures and then on explaining a few of the types of grammatical errors that commonly occur when people speak.

8.1 DEVELOP WAYS OF USING COMPLEX SENTENCES

Complex sentences are sentences that include an independent and dependent clause. Two excellent ways to form these are to use conditionals [phrases] and relative clauses [who, which, that, where]. To read about the rules and do some quizzes go here:

<http://www.ieltsanswers.com/IELTS-Grammar.html>

Conditional sentences

A conditional sentence is a complex sentence structure used to talk about something that occurs only if something else happens. The condition may be something real or imagined, and the result could be a definite result, or just a possible result.

Conditionals are a useful way of forming complex sentences, which can boost your grammar score. Another reason why I teach candidates to use them is because they can be easily noticed by an examiner, due to the word *if*. *If* sends a signal to the examiner that a conditional is being used.

There are two clauses to a conditional sentence:

One part is the **if** clause. This is the event that needs to occur. It is a dependent clause because it is not a complete sentence and is dependent on the other part of the sentence.

The second part is the **result** or main clause, or what happens when the event in the **if** clause occurs. The result clause is an independent clause because it can stand on its own as a sentence. The dependent and independent clauses can be spoken in any order, as shown below:

If I have holidays, I go to Australia. [A comma as needed when the dependent clause comes first]

I go to Australia if I have holidays. [No comma]

Summary of conditions

	Usage	Example
0	facts and opinions	If I <u>have</u> holidays, present tense, I <u>go</u> to the UK. present tense
1	likely outcomes	If I <u>have</u> enough days off, present tense I <u>will</u> go to the UK. future tense
2	unlikely outcomes or imagined situations	If I <u>won the lottery</u> , past tense I <u>would</u> go to the UK. would
3	past situations that didn't occur	If I <u>had had</u> enough time, past perfect tense I <u>would have</u> gone to the UK. would have

Note: To read more about the rules about conditionals and do some quizzes go here:

<http://www.ieltsanswers.com/IELTS-Grammar.html>

Relative clauses

Another good way to increase your grammar score by using complex sentences, is to add relative clauses to your sentences. Relative clauses use relative pronouns (that, which, who,) and are dependent clauses, which means that they cannot stand on their own as a complete sentence.

Summary of relative pronouns

Relative pronoun	Use	Example
who	people	I like students <u>who</u> study hard.
which	things	I live in a flat, <u>which</u> is in a high-rise building.
where	places	I like shopping at places <u>where</u> there is lots of parking.
whose	possession	Do you know the boy <u>whose</u> mother is a nurse?
that	for a specific person or thing	I don't like the table <u>that</u> is in the kitchen.

Note: To read more about the rules about relative clauses and do some quizzes go here: <http://www.ieltsanswers.com/IELTS-Grammar.html>

Passive Form

The passive begins with the object (receiver of the action) and is followed by an auxiliary verb and a main verb in the past participle form. The table below compares the passive to the active tense. When speaking, the passive tense is used when we want to emphasize the object of the sentence.

Tense	Receiver	Verb	Object
Present Active	Mike	writes	a book.
Present Passive	A book	is written	by Mike.
Past Active	Mike	wrote	a book.
Past Passive	A book	was written	by Mike

8.2 REDUCE ERRORS

The second way to increase your score is to reduce errors. To get to grade 7 and above you need to have frequent error-free sentences. If you do not have this you cannot get to 7 and above. If you want to get to 8 or 9 you need to decrease errors to a similar frequency as a native speaker. In order to achieve this, you need to identify your areas of weakness and work on these by learning the rules, doing quizzes, and getting feedback on your speaking from a teacher.

Articles (a, an, the)

An article is a word that is used with a noun to indicate to the reader whether the noun is a particular and specific noun, or an instance of a noun in general., There are two types of articles the indefinite (a/an), which refers to the general usage of a noun; and the definite article (the) which refers to a specific noun.

An **indefinite** article indicates that its noun is not a specific one that can be identified by the listener. It may be something that the speaker is mentioning for the first time, or the speaker may be making a general statement about something. The indefinite articles are **a** and **an**. The word **a** is used before words that begin with a consonant sound (even if the word starts with a vowel, as in a unicorn). **An** is used before words that begin with a vowel sound (even if the word starts with a consonant, as in an hour).

Example: She had a house so large that an elephant would get lost.

A **definite** article is used with a noun that refers to something specific the reader should be aware of. It may be used to refer back to something that the speaker has already mentioned, or it may be used with a noun that has only one possible instance such as the Internet.

Summary of the usage of articles

	Indefinite (<i>a</i> or <i>an</i>)	Definite (<i>the</i>)
Singular	<u>a</u> cat (any cat) <u>an</u> orange (any orange)	<u>the</u> dirtiest cat <u>the</u> orange on the table
	[None used]	Definite (<i>the</i>)
Plural	Plurals, languages, sports, subjects, cities, countries... with a few exceptions!	<u>the</u> best cats <u>the</u> sweetest oranges

Note the following:

1. First versus subsequent mention of a noun

A or an is used to introduce a noun when it is used for the first time.

“Please give me a pen.”

The is used afterward each time you mention that same noun.

“Where is the pen?”

There was a cat in my room. When my dog came in, the cat ran away.

2. Zero articles:

Some common types of nouns that don't take an article are:

- a. Plurals usually have no articles: "please give me some apples," "I like apples.;" unless they are definite "these are the best apples.
- b. Names of languages and nationalities: "I am Chinese."
- c. Names of sports: "I like playing soccer."
- d. Names of academic subjects: "I studied math for three years."

3. Places usually have no article:

Do not use *the* before names of streets, countries, lakes, and mountains.

There are a few exceptions such as: the USA, the UK, the EU [note that these are all areas that are made up of different regions]; likewise with groups of lakes like the Great Lakes, and ranges of mountains like the Himalayas.

Note: To read more about the rules about articles and do some quizzes go here:

<http://www.ieltsanswers.com/IELTS-Grammar.html>

Errors with word endings and forms

"S" endings of words

Almost every non-native speaker makes this mistake. The speaker puts an "S" where it's not needed or else forgets to put one where it is needed. Examples below:

Student ~~are~~ always studying hard. ["s" is needed for students]

Students ~~goes~~ home tired every day. [The verb should be *go*]

The Internet ~~are~~ developing rapidly. [The Internet is uncountable, so it should be: The Internet *is* developing rapidly]

Other common errors are errors with word endings such as "ed" for past tense, and errors with word forms such as when a verb is incorrectly used as a noun. A couple of examples:

Last year my uncle ~~work~~ in America.

Last year my uncle worked in America

We need to ~~management~~ the environment better.

We need to manage the environment better

Prepositions

Prepositions are used to locate something in time and space, modify a noun; or tell when or where or under what conditions something happened. The following are guidelines for using prepositions correctly. This covers many common situations.

However, you need to refer to my website or other sources for an exhaustive list:

<http://www.ieltsanswers.com/IELTS-Grammar.html>

Prepositions of Time: at, in, on

Preposition	Usage	Example
at	at is for specific times	The exam is <u>at</u> 12:15 PM
in	in is for nonspecific times during a day/month/year.	The exam is <u>in</u> the morning
on	on for days and dates	The exam is <u>on</u> Monday. The exam is <u>on</u> Christmas Day.

Prepositions of Place: at, in, on

Preposition	Usage	Example
at	We use at for specific addresses.	I live <u>at</u> 50 Pong Lai Road.
in	We use in for the names of areas (cities and countries).	I live <u>in</u> Taipei.
on	We use on for the names of streets, avenues, etc.	I live <u>on</u> Pong Lai Road.

Prepositions for describing our work:

Preposition	Usage	Example
at	<u>at</u> company's	I work <u>at</u> Comtrend
in	<u>in</u> departments	<u>in</u> the marketing department, as a technical writer.
on	<u>on</u> projects	I am working <u>on</u> a new manual

9. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What should I do if I didn't hear or understand the question?

In Part 1-3 you can ask the examiner to repeat the question (they can do this 1 time only for each question). It won't have a negative impact on your grade unless you do this often.

Can I ask the examiner what a word means?

In Part 1-3 you can ask the examiner the meaning of a WORD

In Part 3 you can ask the examiner to REPHRASE the entire question

What should I do if I don't know how to answer the question?

If you are really stuck about how to answer a question, do not sit there in silence! Say it: *"gosh that's a tricky question of never thought about that before."* Then try to give some sort of answer. If you can't, then tell the examiner. Of course, this is not ideal, but the worst thing is to sit there in silence. Additionally, even communicating that you don't understand the question is still producing language.

What should I do if I get an unfamiliar or difficult question in part two?

This is covered in the strategies section under Part Two of the speaking test.

Essentially, start by directly answering the question and then try to drift off onto some part of the question that you can talk about. If you have pre-prepared some responses you may drift off onto one of these. For instance, if the question is about the gift you bought, you may drift off onto talking about the actual event [maybe it was a birthday party] or describing the person you bought the gift for [maybe this is your best friend]. Note that you do not need to stick to the sub-questions on the topic card; as long as

you are talking about the topic you can say anything about it. You also do not need to cover ALL of the sub-questions.

What should I do when I first walk into the room for the speaking test?

Just politely greet the examiner. Say something like: *"Hello it's nice to meet you."* Smile if you can and do your best to not look nervous! If you are in Australia you could start with something colloquial like *"Giddy, how's it going."*

What should I do when the examiner tells me the test is finished?

Thank the examiner for their time. Say something like: *"Thanks, I appreciate your time."* Or you could say: *"Thanks have a great day."*

Does the examiner really hold no bias on the candidate's opinion? Is this true even if the candidate express an unpleasant idea, for example, some sort of racial or sexual discrimination?

In theory there should be no bias, but remember that the examiner is human, so it's best to avoid anything that may upset them. Some things are just not appropriate anyway, like sexual discrimination.

Is there any difference in the marking scheme between different countries?

The grading criteria are the same for every country and every testing centre, and every examiner.

What can I say if the examiner asks me if I am studying or working and I am doing neither?

The above situation can make for a messy start. One choice is to tell a white lie and just talk about your previous job/studies as though you are still doing it. This also allows you to use the present tense. Otherwise, if you say you are doing neither the examiner will ask you to talk about your most recent study/work and you will need to use the past tense to talk about it.

Is my speaking score affected by my accent?

Accent comes under the pronunciation criterion. If your accent makes you difficult to understand your score will be lowered. If the examiner can easily understand what you are saying, despite an accent, your score should not be lowered. However, the more native-like you sound, the more the examiner is likely to have a positive feeling about your pronunciation. If you have lots of time before your exam, one way to improve in this area is to pick an accent of a country or even a particular person, such as a famous actor or actress, and try to copy their accent.

What bothers me is that I can't come up with ideas quickly; so my question is how to cope with that problem?

My suggestion here is to look at lots of typical questions and think how you would answer them. Think about the ideas you have and also the language you would use to explain them.

Am I allowed to make notes in both the second and third part of the exam?

Only in the second part (you get one minute). Most examiners will take away the paper after part 2. As well as this and you don't have time to make notes in part 3, you must answer fairly quickly (no preparation time is given).

Can I ask the examiner about my performance at the end of the test?

No! You should not do this as the examiner is not allowed to tell you.

When will I get my results?

Usually, your results will be available two weeks after your test from your test centre.

Why is the test recorded?

The test is recorded because you are allowed to ask for a remark of your test. In this case a different examiner will listen to the recording and give your score. Note that you need to pay for a remark!

Which part of the test is the most important?

Your score is based off all three parts equally. However, for those needing to get to 7 and beyond I believe that part two and three are the most important. This is because in part two the examiner gets to listen to you without having to ask questions. This allows the examiner to start to form an opinion about the grade they are going to give to you. By the end of Part Two the examiner might have formed an opinion about your grade. Part Three is then used to confirm this opinion.

10. FULL SPEAKING TEST: MODEL ANSWERS

Full Speaking test: Native speaker

PRE-TEST: IDENTIFICATION CHECK

[This first section is to check identification. The test has not officially started. You should NOT try to give extended answers. Just answer the questions briefly and directly].

Good morning my name's Mike Smith. Can you tell me your full name, please?

My name is Wan Jie Shi.

Can you tell me where you're from?

I am from Taiwan.

Can I see your identification, please?

[Hand over your passport; you do not need to say anything]

Thank you that's fine. Now, I am going to ask you a few questions about yourself.

PART ONE: SPEAKING TEST

Let's talk about where you live:

Where are you from?

I am from Taipei city, which is the capital city of Taiwan.

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.

Now let's talk about Shopping:

When was the last time you went shopping?

Oh, actually I went shopping yesterday. I needed a couple of grocery items, so I popped into the local supermarket. Fortunately it is just down the road from my home, and so I wandered over there after dinner.

When do you usually go shopping?

Well, the weekend. During the week I am on the go, as I have a really hectic work schedule. I particularly like to shop early on Saturday morning to avoid the crowds of people that shop in the afternoon.

Do you prefer to go shopping in big shops or small shops?

I prefer large department stores. I think this is because they stock high-quality products and always offer a money back guarantee if you are unsatisfied with your purchase.

Do you ever buy anything on the internet?

No not really...well I suppose I might once in a blue moon. You know, if I spot a bargain I might buy it. On the whole I prefer to be able to see things with my own eyes before buying them, so I usually just stick to the brick-and-mortar stores.

Let's discuss clothes and clothing

What sort of clothes do you usually wear?

I prefer to wear smart casual clothes. It's really important to me to be comfortable, so I often wear clothes like jeans and a T-shirt. When the weather gets cooler I'm a big fan of big woolly jumpers.

Do you wear the same sort of clothes as you did when you were a child?

Not at all. When I was younger, I preferred to wear bright colored clothes. My favorite color was pink and I had lots of pretty pink dresses. I don't wear them anymore!

How often do you shop for clothes?

Well I don't shop for clothes too often. But when I do, I liked by lots of things all at once. I think it's better that way because you can make sure that you buy clothes that fit well and match each other. For instance, I like to buy a whole outfit at the same time.

When did you last shop for clothes?

That's a good question...umm... Oh yes it was about a month ago. I had a birthday party to go to and I wanted to wear something special. So, I splurged and brought a new dress and a pair of black leather shoes to go with it.

PART TWO: SPEAKING TEST

Now I am going to give you a topic and I would like you to talk about it for 1 to 2 minutes. I will give you a pencil and paper to make notes. Do you understand?

Yes.

Here is your pencil and paper for making notes....and here is your topic, I would like you to describe some good news that you received recently.

Describe some good news that you received recently

you should say:

- * When you heard the news
- * who told you the news
- * what the news was

and explain why this was good news.

[The examiner stays silent giving the candidate 1 minute to prepare the answer]

Remember you have 1 to 2 minutes for this, so don't worry if I stop you. Can you start speaking now please?

Well, last week I heard some fantastic news from my best friend. She told me that she had won two tickets to the cinema from a competition held on the radio. The reason why this is great news for me is because she has promised to take me with her!

Not only do we get to see a movie we also get to have a free meal at the mall that the cinema is in. It's an Italian restaurant, and I simply adore Italian cuisine.

We plan to go there this weekend. I'm really looking forward to it because recently my weekends have been kind of dull and monotonous..... You know I've really just stayed around the house and been a bit of a couch potato... Just watching TV and surfing the Internet.

So I'm really lucky to be able to hang out with my dearest friend, and at the same time enjoy a night out on the town eating great food, catching a movie, and not having to pay a cent!

PART TWO: FOLLOW UP QUESTION [Not always asked. Answer in a single sentence]

So do you often receive good news?

Oh, only once in a blue moon! I seldom get good news...unlucky I guess!

PART THREE: SPEAKING TEST

We've been talking about some good news you received recently, now I'd like to ask you a few general questions about that.

Let's talk about good news

What sort of good news do young people often receive?

Well off the top of my head I would say it is often news about their grades. You know study is such an important part of young people's lives and after working flat-out it is always great to get good grades. As well as this, getting a job is another important piece of news. The market is so competitive these days and landing a good job is critical to one's career.

Does good news make us feel happy for a long time?

No not really. We feel excited at first, but I think the feeling wears-off quickly! It's a pity really. Unless of course it is something that affects us for a long time...like ...I don't know...winning the lottery or something. I've never been that lucky!

Do you think young people will be happier in the future?

Well, I think it's difficult to say. Technology seems to be providing lots of exciting opportunities in terms of entertainment. However, at the same time lots of global problems seem to be brewing such as climate change and decreasing standards of living. I guess it's always hard to predict the future.

Now let's talk about the news in the media

How do most people find out about the news in your country?

Well I think depends on the person's age. Older people still prefer the traditional ways such as reading newspapers and watching the television to see what's going on, while younger people prefer to go online and surf around to find out what's happening.

Why do you think the internet is becoming a more popular source of news?

The main reason is that the Internet provides up-to-the-minute information. We can find out about the latest developments on breaking stories. As well as this, there is just so much more information there and people have more choice about what stories they want to follow, and whether they want to read it or watch it as a video on a website like Youtube.

Do you think the internet influences the types of news stories people hear about?

Oh definitely! There's so much gossip about celebrities on the Internet. It seems to be even worse than what is shown on TV. Also due to bloggers, we can get a lot of news and commentary about issues that don't make the mainstream media... you know... people can surf around and find out the news about whatever interests them the most. That's the greatest thing about the Internet people can choose what they're interested in.

Thank you this is the end of the speaking test.

Thank you, I appreciate your time. I hope you enjoy the rest of the day.

[Candidates leaves]

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