

IELTS Speaking

The Most Comprehensive Guide

All in One



Kite Boy Series

Michael C. Thorp

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Preface

As an IELTS examiner and teacher for over 20 years, I feel that most of the IELTS speaking test study materials are woefully inadequate. They don't prepare students with enough useful vocabulary, vocabulary exercises, speaking practice, and detailed practice structures and examples that can best enable them to attain a band score 6 or 7 or higher. The Kite Boy IELTS speaking series of books (Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced, and All in One) aims to rectify all that by providing the most comprehensive guide to the IELTS speaking test.

The All in One guide includes:

- 72 different topics and key vocabulary
- 1600+ vocabulary exercises
- 700+ practice questions, with model answers and suggested structures
- 14 different types of questions, and 40 different ways of answering them.

Specific aims of the book

It is to provide useful vocabulary, highlight ways of answering the different questions, with model answers and lots of practice questions, so students can feel confident about how to do well in the IELTS speaking test.

How Teachers Could Use this Book

As per the attached example lesson, here is how I have a great 3-hour lesson using this book for one topic for an advanced class.

1. Play a TED talk video (~5 minutes long) related to the topic.

2. Back to the board (key word vocabulary)

The teacher puts the students into 4 teams, who stand in front of the whiteboard with one each team member facing them, seated on a chair – back to the board. The teacher writes a word from the key vocabulary on the board, and the students who are standing have to describe the word to their team member seated, without saying the word or using body language or the root word. If one of the people seated know the answer, they raise their hand, and their team gets one point if it's correct.

3. Pronunciation Practice (key word vocabulary)

Once back to the board is over, the teacher can then model the more difficult words, and get the students to practice. The teacher can also ask the students questions about themselves related to the words to provide meaningful context.

4. Vocabulary Exercises

Project the exercises onto a whiteboard and number the students 1-10 and have them come up and complete the first and then the second 10-question vocabulary exercises. Afterwards, the teacher can again get them practice pronouncing any difficult words and ask questions about them to reinforce meaning and usage.

5. Part 1 Practice Questions

Project the part 1 practice gap-fill questions on the whiteboard and select different students to complete the gaps in the model answers. Then, the students can practice answering them in pairs, following the structures given, but with answers that are true for themselves.

Afterwards, the teacher could select different students to stand up and answer the questions to the class and provide feedback.

6. Speaking - Part 2

Students complete the one-minute preparation for topic in the spaces provided. Before the students do their two-minute speeches in pairs, the teacher could go around the class and ask each student to very briefly tell them what their story (problem) is.

7. Speaking - Part 3

For the part 3 questions, the teacher can work through the model answers provided and then brainstorm ways of answering the practice questions. Then, the students can practice answering them in pairs, following the structures given.

Afterwards, the teacher could select different students to stand up and answer the questions to the class and provide feedback.

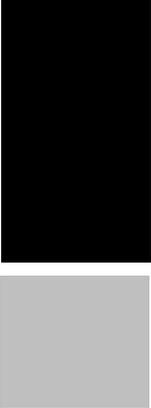
8. Different Types of Part 1 or 3 Questions

For the different types of part 1 or 3 questions, the teacher could brainstorm ways of answering one type of part 1 or 3 question, and then the students could practice them in pairs.

Afterwards, the teacher could select different students to stand up and answer the questions to the class and provide feedback.

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IELTS Test Overview

There are two IELTS tests: Academic and General, which are graded in the same way. Each has four sections, which are completed in the following order: listening, reading, and writing on one day, with no break between the tests, and then speaking on either that day or within seven days before or after it.

A score between 1 and 9 is awarded for each section, and the final IELTS score is the average of the four.

A. Listening Test (~40 minutes)

Listen to four recordings of native English speakers (~30 minutes) and answer 40 questions, and then you have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

B. Reading Test (60 minutes)

Read three texts and answer 40 questions:

- Academic: three long texts taken from books, journals, magazines, or newspapers
- General: three texts taken from books, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, or company handbooks and guidelines.

C. Writing Test (60 minutes)

Complete two writing tasks:

- Academic: Task 1: a report (150+ words/20 minutes) based on a graph, table, chart, or diagram, and Task 2: an essay (250+ words/40 minutes)
- General: Task 1: a letter (150+ words/20 minutes), and Task 2: an essay (250+ words/40 minutes)

D. Speaking Test (11-14 minutes)

Answers questions in Parts 1 & 3, and speak for 1-2 minutes in Part 2

- Part 1: (4-5 minutes)
Answer up to 12 questions based on three different everyday topics
- Part 2: (3-4 minutes)
1-2 minute talk, with one minute to prepare before speaking
- Part 3: (4-5 minutes)
Answer up to 6 questions based on two topics similar to Part 2.

Marking System & Guidelines

The speaking test is marked on four criteria: fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammar, and pronunciation. Each area is given a score between 1 and 9, which is the highest, and the final speaking score is the average of all four.

A. Fluency & Coherence - Guidelines

- speak without noticeable hesitations, repetition, or self-correction (fluency)
- give well explained answers, not short ones (fluency)
- connect your thoughts with a range of linking words (don't overuse them) (fluency)
- answer the questions clearly and logically (coherence)

IELTS Public Band Descriptors (full list, page 417)

Band	Fluency and coherence
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; • any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar • speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features • develops topics fully and appropriately
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language • develops topics coherently and appropriately
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence • may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately

B. Lexical Resource - Guidelines

- use a range of uncommon vocabulary (accurately)
- use a range of idiomatic expressions (correctly and appropriately)
- don't repeat the questions (use pronouns or sometimes synonyms)

IELTS Public Band Descriptors (full list, page 417)

Band	Lexical resource
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics • uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning • uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies • uses paraphrase effectively as required
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics • uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices • uses paraphrase effectively
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inaccuracies • generally paraphrases successfully

C. Grammar - Guidelines

- make as few grammatical errors as possible (use the correct verb tense, subject-verb agreement; see Appendix A, page 405)
- use a range of complex sentences (see Appendix B, page 406)

IELTS Public Band Descriptors (full list, page 417)

Band	Grammatical range and accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately• produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a wide range of structures flexibly• produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility• frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility• may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems

D. Pronunciation - Guidelines

- group words within sentences (chunking)
- highlight the important words (stress)
- raise and lower the pitch of your voice (intonation)
- produce the correct sounds

IELTS Public Band Descriptors (full list, page 410)

Band	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety• sustains flexible use of features throughout• is effortless to understand
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a wide range of pronunciation features• sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses• is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control• shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained• can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times

Speaking - Part 1

Format (~12 questions, 4-5 minutes)

You are asked around 12 questions on three different everyday topics. The first topic is about either where you live or what you do.

To answer each question, you have on average about 20 seconds, which is roughly two long sentences.

General Approach for Answering All Questions

Short answer + reason + possibly, an example

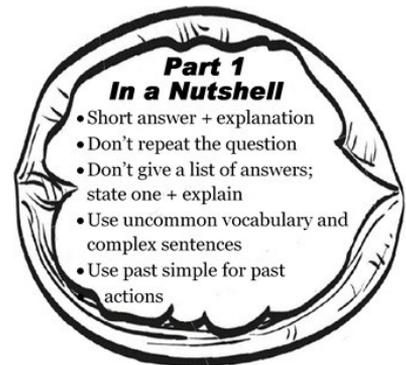
Starting phrase	+ Answer	+ Reason	+ Example
I think	_____	because	like
I believe	_____	since	such as
I guess	_____	as	For example,
I suppose	_____	for	For instance,
I'd say	_____	given	as was seen
As I see it	_____	owing to	A good example
Probably	_____	due to	A good case in point
Possibly/Maybe	_____		
Well/Actually	_____		

Agree

Yes/I agree/For sure
Absolutely/Of course
I guess so/I suppose so
No question

Disagree

No/Not at all/I disagree
I'm not so sure/I don't think so
I wouldn't say so



Do's

1. Use a range of uncommon vocabulary correctly
2. Use a range of complex sentences (see Appendix B, page 406)
3. Use a range of linking words
4. Use the correct verb tense, particularly, past simple for past actions (see Appendix A, page 405).
5. If you don't understand a question or word, immediately ask the examiner to clarify, and do so very simply and quickly:
 - Sorry, what was that?
 - What does "X" mean?
 - Could you paraphrase the question?

Don'ts

1. Don't repeat the question or key words in it

You get no points for repeating the question. Give a short direct answer, using pronouns, and then explain it as clearly as you can.

Example: *"Do you come from a small or large family?"*

Poor answer: *"I come from a small family."*

(Why poor? It repeats all the key words in the question.)

Good answer: *"I'd say, it's probably an average-sized one, comprised of my parents, two siblings, and our dog, Fifi, which is a fox terrier with the most adorable eyes."*

(Why good? Short answer, using pronouns, and an explanation using a complex sentence and uncommon vocabulary.)

2. Don't overuse linking words

Don't use lots of linking words or phrases to introduce your answer. You only have on average around 20 seconds to answer each question, so the majority of time should be spent giving a short clear answer and explaining it.

Example: *Why do young ones like to play games on smartphones?*

Poor answer: *"That's an interesting question. I guess there are a number of possible reasons, and if I had to give one off the top of my head, I would probably say..."*

(Why poor? After nearly 10 seconds, there is still no answer, and, unless you are a politician, it's not a natural way of speaking.)

3. Don't give a list of answers

A list usually has no complex structures and shows no ability to explain something clearly in detail.

Example: *"What do you like about the area you live in?"*

Poor answer: *"It has some nice parks and swimming pools, a great shopping mall and markets, and a nice neighborhood."*

(Why poor? No complex sentences or detailed explanation.)

Good answer: *"What I really enjoy is Central Park given it's terrific for doing exercise, like jogging or walking the dog, as it has an enormous walking track, and huge trees and beautiful flower beds, which make it a pleasant place to relax and enjoy nature."*

(Why good? Short answer, well explained, using complex sentences and uncommon vocabulary.)

4. Don't repeat keywords or phrases

Repetition shows a lack of vocabulary. Use pronouns or synonyms where possible.

Example: *“What are some problems in your city?”*

Poor answer: *“The biggest problem is air pollution, as the increasing number of cars on the road are worsening the air pollution in my city, and more and more factories are adding to the air pollution.”*

(Why poor? Should use pronouns to avoid repetition of “problem” and “air pollution.”)

Good answer: *The main one is air pollution due to the increasing number of factories and cars on the road and the lack of an effective public transport system, which are causing dangerously high levels of toxins in the air.”*

(Why good? Used the pronoun “one” for “problem” and the synonym “high levels of toxins in the air” for “air pollution.”)

5. Try to avoid memorized answers

Answers that are obviously memorized get a band score of 1. Answer each question as clearly and accurately as you can without giving memorized ones.

6. Don't overuse idioms

Using idioms inappropriately or unnaturally will negatively affect your lexical resource score. There is no need to artificially insert idiomatic expressions like “knee high to a grasshopper,” or “escape the hustle and bustle of city life,” unless they are clearly suitable as there are over 10,000 phrasal verbs in English, most of which are idiomatic expressions, such as “grow up,” “take off,” and “look after.”

Example: *“What was the best holiday you ever had in your country?”*

Poor answer: *“I remember when I was knee high to a grasshopper, to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and let our hair down, we went to Ocean Beach, which had a picture perfect white sandy beach with crystal clear waters.”*

(Why poor? Unnatural and inappropriate use of idioms.)

7. Don't give short answers

To get a band score 7 in fluency, you need to be able to give well explained answers easily.

Example: *“What is the area like that you live in?”*

Poor answer: *“It's quite nice and peaceful, with nice neighbors.”*

(Why poor? Too short, no complex sentences and explanation.)

Good answer: *“Probably the best way to describe it is suburban middle-class since it essentially a working-class residential area, with two main shopping malls and a few sports facilities.”*

(Why good? Short answer, well explained, with a complex sentence and uncommon vocabulary.)

Eight Types of Part 1 Questions

1. Describe
2. Types of/Like/Dislike/Favourite/Popular/Important
3. How to
4. Yes/No
5. Would (hypothetical/future)
6. Frequency/Time
7. Compare
8. Past

1. Describe questions

These ask you to describe someone or something.

Examples

- Tell me about an email that made you happy.
- What is your idea of a perfect home?
- What was it like growing up in your hometown?
- Tell me about a teacher you admired at school.

Four Ways of Answering

- A. Short answer + explanation + reason + example
- B. “The best way to describe it” + answer + reason
- C. “What’s really great” + answer + reason + example
- D. Contrast two different answers + reasons + examples

A. Short answer + explanation + reason + example

Starting phrase	+ Answer	+ Explanation	+ Reason	+ Example
I think	_____	which	because	like
I believe	_____	that	since	such as
I guess	_____	where	as	For example,
I suppose	_____	when	for	For instance,
I'd say	_____	who	given	
As I see it	_____	whose	owing to	
Probably	_____		due to the fact	
Possibly	_____			
Maybe	_____			
Well	_____			
Actually	_____			

Question 1: Do you work or are you a student?

Answer: I'm currently **working for a gaming company as a 3D graphics designer**, which is quite stimulating and challenging since you're always working on many different projects.

Question 2: *Tell me about an email that made you happy.*

Answer: When I was studying at university, I got **one from my mother, telling me that she'd be flying to Australia to see me, which** was *wonderful* news since I hadn't seen her for over a year and was missing her terribly.

Practice

1. Tell me about your hometown. It's Auckland, New Zealand, which...
2. Tell me about a hobby you have. I'm really into gaming, particularly, League of Legend, which...
3. Tell me about an important festival in your country. The most popular one is the Lunar New Year celebration, which...
4. Tell me about the music you listen to. I'm a big fan of BTS, which...

B. "The best way to describe it" + answer + reason

Starting phrase	+ Answer	+ Reason
I think	the best way to characterize it is _____	because
I believe	the best way to describe it is _____	since
I guess	I'd describe it as _____	as
I suppose	I'd characterize it as _____	for
I'd say	a good way to describe it is _____	given
Well/Actually	_____	owing to
Probably	_____	due to the fact
Possibly	_____	

Question 1: *What is your neighbourhood like?*

Answer: Probably the best way to describe it is **suburban middle-class** since although it is not far from the city center, it's quite undeveloped in terms of sporting facilities and other infrastructure, and it's essentially a residential working-class area.

Question 2: *What are your neighbours like?*

Answer: I guess the best way to characterize them would be **quiet and elusive** since I hardly ever hear them or cross their paths as we're living in an apartment and they seem to be coming and going at completely different times.

Practice

1. What is your workplace/school like? Probably, the best way to describe it is..
2. What is your home like? I guess, a good way to describe it is...
3. What is your hometown like? I'd characterize it as...
4. What was your favourite teacher like?

C. "What's really great" + answer + reason + example

Starting phrase	+ Answer	+ Explanation	+ Reason	+ Example
I think	what's particularly notable is _____	which	because	like
I believe	what's really striking is _____	that	since	such as
I guess	what's most noteworthy is _____		as	For example,
I suppose	what's most outstanding _____		for	For instance,
I'd say	what's most/really impressive _____		given	as is the case
As I see it,	what's really great/common _____		owing to	
Probably/Possibly	_____		due to the fact	
Well/Actually	_____			
(Nothing)	_____			

Question 1: What is interesting about the area where you live?

Answer: What's particularly noteworthy is that it has some **rather pleasant parks**, which are *terrific* for doing exercise, like jogging or running the dog, since they are quite *spacious and scenic* with plenty of trees and lush vegetation.

Question 2: Tell me about your hometown?

Answer: Sure, I was **born and bred in Ho Chi Minh City**, and one of the most notable things about it would have to be the **traffic congestion**, particularly the concentration of motorbikes, which would have to be one of the greatest in the world.

Question 3: What do people do to celebrate the New Year in your country?

Answer: What's really impressive is the **annual fireworks show**, which is usually put on by the river as a way of ushering in the New Year with a *spectacular array* of pyrotechnics that attracts so many people, we were standing there packed in like a can of sardines.

Practice

1. What is interesting about workplace/school? What I really like about it is...
2. What is interesting about your home? What I really like is...
3. What do people do to celebrate birthdays in your country? What's most impressive is...
4. What do people do to celebrate festivals in your country? What's really common is...

D. Contrast two different answers + reasons + examples

Contrast	+ Answer 1	+ Reason	+ Answer 2	+ Reason
While	_____	because	_____	because
Although	_____	since	_____	since
Even though	_____	as	_____	as
Apart from	_____	for	_____	for
In spite of	_____	given	_____	given
	_____	owing to	_____	owing to
	_____	due to the fact	_____	due to the fact

Question 1: What was it like growing up in your hometown?

Answer: While it could be a **tad boring** given it was such a small rural town, there were **many great things going for it**, such as its proximity to the beach, which was only a stone's throw away, and Black Mountain, a wonderful get away for picnics and barbeques.

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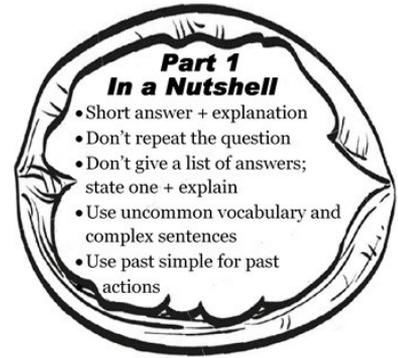
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Houses & Apartments



Key Vocabulary

- reside**/currently living
- located/situated in
- inner city**/central location
- suburbs/outskirts**
- rent**<>**own**
- born and raised** there/resided/lived there since I was
- two-bedroom **multi-storied house/single-storey house**
- two-bedroom **apartment complex/high-rise apartment**
- back garden/yard
- balcony/veranda**
- nicely/simply **decorated**
- nice/simple **décor**
- ostentatious**<>**modest**
- homely** (comfortable)/cozy
- spacious**<>**cramped**
- all the **mod cons** (modern appliances)
- redecorated/renovated**
- run down**/in disrepair
- cold and draughty** (cold air from outside)
- vicinity**/nearby

Vocabulary Builder

A. Match the words to a synonym, antonym, or idiom.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. single storey house | reside |
| 2. ostentatious | spacious |
| 3. roomy | bought |
| 4. inner-city | run-down |
| 5. staying | washing machine |
| 6. homely | veranda |
| 7. own | simple |
| 8. balcony | suburbs |
| 9. redecorated | cozy |
| 10. mod cons | high-rise apartment |

B. Circle the odd word/s out.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. live | born and raised | reside |
| 2. bought | rent | own |
| 3. apartment | multi-storied house | single-storey |
| 4. inner city | suburbs | commercial center |
| 5. noisy | limited space | good security |
| 6. all the mod cons | unique design | cold and draughty |
| 7. cramped | good facilities | power-cuts |
| 8. cut off from neighbours | panoramic views | close-knit community |
| 9. back garden | balcony | yard |
| 10. simple | luxurious | ostentatious |

C. Fill in the gaps with the correct word from the **key vocabulary above**, circle the correct word in **bold**, and then answer the questions, using the structure provided but with information that is true for you.

1. **Where do you live?**

I'm currently _____ with my parents **in/on** a two _____
_____, which is located **in/on** the _____ **of/at** London.
(short answer + explanation)

2. **How long have you lived there?**

I've been there 21 years as I was _____ there, and also since my
father works in the _____.
(short answer + reason + explanation)

3. **What do you like about your home?**

While it's not **a/the** flashy or _____ place, it's nice and
_____. Also, the interior is not **too/to** cramped - it's actually quite
_____, with three _____, each having their own en-suite.
(contrast two answers + reason + explanation)

4. **What do you like most about your home?**

What I really love is the _____, which overlooks the
_____, which has **a/the** small vegetable garden.
("What I particularly/especially/really/most enjoy" + reasons + examples)

5. **If you could change anything about your home, what would it be?**

Given the kitchen and bathroom are looking a bit run _____, showing
their age, it'd be nice if they could be _____.
(reason + short answer)

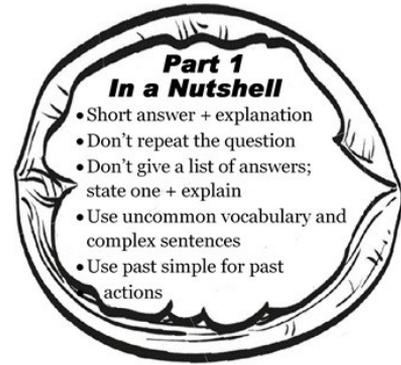
Additional Vocabulary

- isolated rural community
- detached house
- town-house
- condominium
- cottage
- single-story house
- old fashioned/tradition house
- unique design/architectural style
- garden/yard/vegetable garden
- sitting/living room
- en suite
- garage
- furnished-unfurnished

Apartments: Positives & Negatives

- noisy – hear neighbours
- limited space/cramped
- cut off from neighbours – less social
- can't make any structural changes
- + well-constructed
- + modern
- + all the mod cons (modern appliances)
- + good security
- + spacious/enormous
- + central
- + good facilities (swimming pool/tennis courts)
- + panoramic views
- + not cold and draughty like some old houses
- + not susceptible to power-cuts like houses

Hometown & Neighbourhood



Key Vocabulary

- born and raised/bred in**
- located/situated**
- in the southern/northern part**
- coastal city**<>**commercial center**
- small country town**<>**bustling metropolis**/metropolitan city/metropolis/**sprawling city**
- suburbs/residential areas**/outskirts<>city center/inner city multicultural city/culturally diverse/cosmopolitan city
- middle-class**/working class<>**affluent**
- famous for/**renown for**
- + good **atmosphere**
- + colourful/**vibrant** city
- + well-developed/good infrastructure
- + good amenities/**facilities**/sports facilities
- + parks/gardens
- + **lively markets**/bars/restaurants
- + great **nightlife**/entertainment
- + **nice sense of community**/friendly neighbours
- **air pollution**/vehicle emissions
- **traffic congestion**/gridlock traffic at rush hour (traffic stops moving)
- **densely populated**/overcrowded

Vocabulary Builder

A. Match the words to a synonym, antonym, or idiom.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. colourful | middle-class |
| 2. famous for | sprawling city |
| 3. suburbs | overcrowded |
| 4. affluent | vibrant |
| 5. small country town | gridlock |
| 6. air pollution | renown for |
| 7. metropolis | vehicle emissions |
| 8. densely populated | bustling metropolis |
| 9. nightlife | inner city |
| 10. traffic congestion | entertainment |

B. Circle the odd word/s out

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. suburbs | residential area | inner city |
| 2. colourful | overcrowded | vibrant |
| 3. parks | outskirts | sports facilities |
| 4. metropolis | sprawling city | small country town |
| 5. northern part | located | coastal city |
| 6. amenities | equipment | facilities |
| 7. parks | gardens | yard |
| 8. markets | bars | restaurants |
| 9. sense of community | great nightlife | friendly neighbours |
| 10. traffic congestion | air pollution | gridlock |

C. Fill in the gaps with the correct word from the **key vocabulary above**, circle the correct word in **bold**, and then answer the questions, using the structure provided but with information that is true for you.

1. **Where is your hometown?**

It's _____ in the _____ part of the country **in/on** the coast, and we live **in/on** the _____ on the outskirts of the town.
(short answer + explanation)

2. **What do you like about your hometown?**

Well, while it's nothing special, it's quite well developed with good sports _____ and a peaceful _____ with lots of beautiful trees and flowers that is nice for walking **a/the** dog.
(contrast two answers + reason + explanation)

3. **Has it changed much since you were a child?**

The most noticeable difference is the amount of traffic, which causes a lot of _____ and _____ during the rush hours.
(main difference + explanation)

D. Fill in the gaps with the correct **form** of the word in brackets, and then answer the questions, using the structure provided but with information that is true for you.

1. **Can you tell me about your hometown?**

Sure, I was born and _____ (breed) in Manila, and one of the most notable things about it would have to be the traffic _____ (congest), which is often in a state of gridlock during the rush hours.
(short answer + most notable thing)

2. What is the area like that you live in?

Probably the best way to describe it is _____ (suburb) middle-class since even though it's not far from the city center, it's quite undeveloped in terms of modern architecture and facilities. It's essentially a _____ (resident) working-class area.

(“The best way to describe/characterize it” + answer + reason)

3. What don't you like about the area you live in?

What's not really great is the level of air pollution and traffic congestion, particularly around the rush hour periods, since the city lacks a decent public transport system as in a subway.

(short answer + explanation)

4. What do you like most about living there?

While it can be a tad _____ (bore) given it is such a small rural town, there are many great things _____ (go) for it, such as its proximity to the beach, which is only a stone's throw away, and Black Mountain, which is a wonderful get away for picnics and barbeques.

(contrast two answers + reason + explanation)

Additional Vocabulary

- industrial/commercial area
- inner city
- working-class area/city
- neighbourhood/local community
- suburban area/residential area
- industrial city/major industries/industrialised
- immigrants
- affluent/low socio-economic area/neighbourhood
- locality
- upmarket shops
- fashionable boutiques
- public spaces/parks
- tourist attractions
- main tourist/scenic attraction
- local delicacy
- historical buildings

Cities: Positives & Negatives

- a lot of commuters
- vandalism
- homelessness
- unemployment
- run down
- high cost of living/high property prices
- homelessness and poverty
- concrete jungle
- population explosion
- densely populated
- a lot of litter/rubbish
- crime/dangerous at night
- + good pace of life
- + away from the hustle and bustle
- + woodlands/green spaces
- + good living conditions/well developed
- + good amenities/facilities/infrastructure
- + good public transportation
- + nice sense of community
- + sports facilities
- + parks/gardens
- + touristy
- + job opportunities

Speaking - Part 2

Format (1 minute preparation, 1-2 minute talk)

You are asked up talk for 1-2 minutes. Before doing so, you are given paper, a pencil and a topic, and one minute to prepare.

Note: you must talk about the topic on the card, but you don't have to discuss the points under the "You should say" section below it. They are only suggestions. I recommend introducing the topic and telling a personal story relating to it, rather than just mechanically going through the suggestions.

Example

Describe a subject that you enjoyed studying at school.

You should say:

*what it was
when you studied it
who taught you*

and you should also say why you enjoyed it.

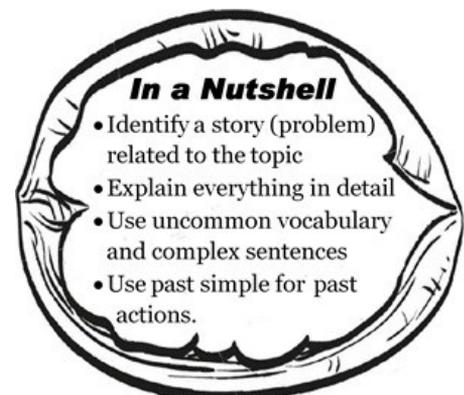
General Approach of the Two Minute Talk

1. Introduce topic + tell a personal story relating to it
or
2. Introduce topic + describe it + tell a personal story relating to it.

To tell a story, identify some experience you had relating to the topic that involved a problem. A problem is the heart of any story. Then, describe the story in detail: the main events, focusing on the problem, how you solved it, and the final outcome.

Examples

1. *Describe a piece of technology.*
Topic: my smartphone
Problem: screen broken in motorbike accident
2. *Describe a foreign culture you like.*
Topic: Korean culture
Problem: addicted to Korean boy bands



Starting phrases:

Introducing the topic (try to start with a complex sentence)

- Last week,
- Around two months ago,
- When I was 11 years old,
- When I started my second year in high school,
- As far back as I can remember,
- My earliest memory of...

Describing the topic

- In terms of her/his/its appearance,
- What I'll never forget about her/him/it was
- What was most striking/unforgettable/special/unique about her/him/it, was...

Telling a story

- I remember when I was in grade 6,
- I remember one time when I was on holiday in...
- For example, when I was 9 years old,
- One time, I went to...

Telling a personal story is the easiest way to talk for two minutes as you are simply repeating things that you have seen or experienced. Most candidates who get a band score 8 or 9 do this.

From my experience, it is great if teachers ask the students to tell the class what topic and problem will they talk about before they do their two minute talks as it inspires the students to hear the stories that others will be discussing.

How to Tell a Story and Do the One Minute Preparation

The heart of any story is a problem. Therefore, for the one minute preparation, students should think of some experience they had relating to the topic that involved a problem. Then, they should note down ideas and uncommon words to describe the topic, the main events of what happened in their story, focusing on the problem, how they overcame it, and the final result.

Three parts of a story

A. Introduce the topic (setting): where, when, who, and goal (creates mood + expectations).

Example: "Base camp, Mount Everest, Nepal, May 11-12, 1996, a group of climbers plan to take clients to the top of Mount Everest."

B. Main events and problems/difficulties/obstacles (creates interest)

Describe what happened - the main events - in detail from the beginning to end, focusing on the problems, difficulties and obstacles, and how you overcome them (no problem = no story). Also, describe your feelings, smells, sounds, and how things felt.

Example 1 (no problems=no story): "We climbed Mt. Everest without an issue."
Example 2 (problems=story): "We tried to climb Mt. Everest and were suddenly hit with an unexpected storm, causing our team to become separated, with zero visibility and a lack of oxygen."

C. Final Outcome: what happened in the end? How did you feel? What did you learn?
Example: "The storm ultimately led to the death of 13 people."

Do's

1. Talk for the full two minutes until the examiner says, "Thank you," so you can utilize every second to show the examiner your language ability
2. Use a range of uncommon vocabulary appropriately and correctly
3. Use a range of complex sentences (see appendix)
4. Use a range of linking words
5. Use the correct verb tense, particularly, past simple for talking about the past
6. If you don't understand the topic or a word, immediately ask the examiner to clarify, and do so very simply and quickly:
 - Sorry, what does "X" mean?
 - Could you paraphrase the topic?

Don'ts

1. Don't start off reading the topic from the topic card

You get no points for repeating what is written on it.

Example: "Describe a subject that you enjoyed studying at school."

Poor starting phrase: "A subject that I enjoyed studying at school was science"

Good starting phrase: "When I started my second year in high school, science wasn't one of my favourite subjects in the curriculum, but then I got a teacher who changed that."

2. Don't state things without explaining them

If you say something, explain it in detail, using reasons or examples, to make it clear. If you don't, it may be difficult to talk for the whole two minutes.

3. Don't repeat keywords or phrases

Repetition shows a lack of vocabulary. Use pronouns or accurate synonyms where possible.

4. Don't give a memorized talk

Memorized talks get a band score of 1.

5. Don't overuse idioms

Using idioms inappropriately or unnaturally will negatively affect your vocabulary score. There are over 10,000 phrasal verbs in English, most of which are idioms, so there is no need to artificially insert idiomatic expressions like "knee high to a grasshopper," or "escape the hustle and bustle of city life," unless they are clearly appropriate.

Example

Poor use of idioms: "I remember when I was knee high to a grasshopper, to escape the hustle and bustle of city life, we went, once in a blue moon to let our hair down, to Ocean Beach, which was picture perfect."

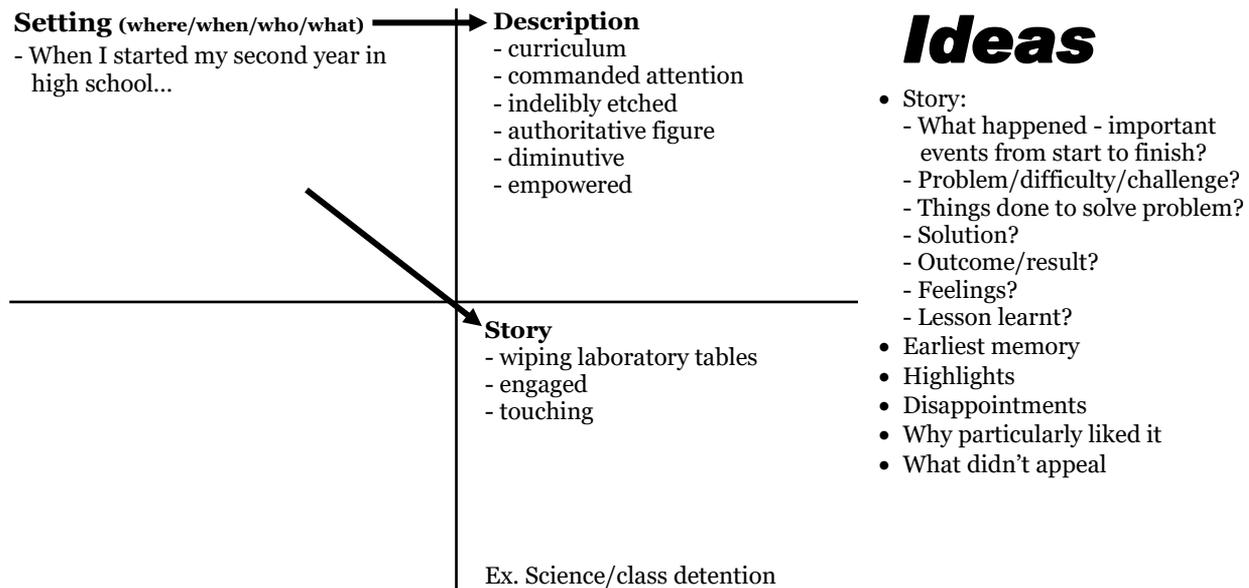
Example 1

Topic: Describe a subject that you liked at school.

One Minute Preparation - identify a story (problem) related to the topic

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic + story related to it.



Model Two Minute Talk

A. Introduce Topic - Setting

When I started my second year in high school, science wasn't one of my favourite subjects in the **curriculum**, but then I got a teacher who changed that.

B. Describe Topic

While I can't remember her name, her face is **indelibly etched** on my mind since in spite of her rather **diminutive** size, she **commanded** your attention as if you were in the **presence** of some real **authoritative figure** whose voice you **dreaded** to feel the **wrath** of. If you **dared** speak or even touched your pencil while she was talking, she'd immediately **bellow out** your full name and **demand** you stop talking or put it down. However, once she had your attention, the way she could explain and enable you to understand the different **aspects** of science was **remarkable**. You left her class feeling like you had really understood what she was **discussing**, and it left you feeling **empowered** as if you had really learned something.

C. Story Related To Topic

I remember one time when she held me back after class as I had done something wrong, and she made me wipe down the **laboratory tables**. It was something I never have forgotten because most of the time I was doing so, she was **engaging** me in **conversation**, discussing my family and what I wanted to do in the future. It was very **touching**. And after a year of studying under her, I had **developed** a **new found love** of science, which gave me the **confidence** and **self-belief** that I could do well at it.

bold = uncommon vocabulary
underlined = complex sentences

Example 2

Topic: Describe a website that you often use.

One Minute Preparation - identify a story (problem) related to the topic

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic + story related to it.

Setting (where/when/who/what) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- When I was in the sixth grade,- I remember when I was 12 years old,- I remember the time when...- Around six years ago,- As far back as I can remember,	Story 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- search engine- university professor- pertinent- game changer- sold me <p>Ex. Google search/research film</p>	Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Story:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What happened - important events from start to finish?- Problem/difficulty/challenge?- Things done to solve problem?- Solution?- Outcome/result?- Feelings?- Lesson learnt?• Earliest memory• Highlights• Disappointments• Why particularly liked it• What didn't appeal
	Story 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- storage space- flexible- hacking/phishing- industry gold standard- plethora of sites- identity theft- fraudulent <p>Ex. Gmail/protection from phishing</p>	

Model Two Minute Talk

A. Introduce Topic - Setting

I think it was around 20 years ago that I first heard of Google while I was doing some **research** for a film project I was working on.

B. Story 1

A **university professor** I went to for help opened up this **search engine** I'd never seen before called Google, a name that I thought was a little unusual, but it certainly brought up a huge number of sites and plenty of **pertinent** information, which **sold me** on it immediately. A few years later, they introduced Gmail, which to me was a **real game changer** since it not only allowed to you to have a huge amount of **storage space**, but it was really **flexible** in terms of how you could organise all your mail into different folders.

C. Story 2

Then, as time went by, they kept **enhancing** the service, providing excellent protective measure against **hacking** and **phishing** with things like Google Authenticator, which makes it **extremely difficult** for anyone to hack your account, which is really the **industry gold standard** in terms of email protection. Another great benefit of Gmail is that it can be used to log into a whole **plethora** of websites at the **click of a button**, thereby, it's not necessary to **upload** your **personal information** onto them, which can put you at risk to things like **identity theft** and other **fraudulent** activities that come from people **stealing** your personal information, such as credit card fraud.

bold = uncommon vocabulary
underlined = complex sentences

Example 3

Topic: Describe a country that you would like to go to.

One Minute Preparation - identify a story (problem) related to the topic

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic + story related to it.

Setting (where/when/who/what)

- If I could, I'd love to...
- If I had the chance, I'd love to...
- When I was in the sixth grade,
- Around six years ago,
- As far back as I can remember,

Description

- ancient sites
- world renown
- incredible architecture

Ideas

- Story:
 - What happened - important events from start to finish?
 - Problem/difficulty/challenge?
 - Things done to solve problem?
 - Solution?
 - Outcome/result?
 - Feelings?
 - Lesson learnt?
- Earliest memory
- Highlights
- Disappointments
- Why particularly liked it
- What didn't appeal

Future events

- **Rome** – former world empire
- history lesson
- **Venice** - must-see destination
- floating city
- canals/gondolas
- historic architecture

Story 1

- Gladiator/brought to life in film
- romantic
- scenic countryside
- vineyards

Ex. Italy/need to take someone special

Model Two Minute Talk

A. Introduce Topic - Setting

As far back as I can remember, Italy has always **conjured up** in my mind a **fascinating variety** of images from **ancient sites** like the coliseum in Rome to fashion houses such as Gucci and Prada, its sport cars like Ferrari, and of course its **world renown** pasta and pizza dishes, which all **cry out** to be seen and tried **first hand**.

B. Story 1

I remembering seeing the film, Gladiator, which **brought to life** ancient Rome in all its glory though the **marvels** of digital computer graphics, highlighting the **incredible architecture** of the time, which can still be seen today.

C. Story 2

But I didn't want to visit Italy on my own as it seems like a **wonderfully romantic** place to travel through and share with someone special given the **beautifully scenic countryside** lined with **vineyards** and the huge number of **historic** cities, which **ooze** of **charm** and would be amazing to **stroll** through and enjoy with someone you are **romantically involved with** by your side.

Another **must-see destination** I would love to take that person to would have to be Venice, which is located in the north and is a **floating city** where people get around both on foot and by boat around the **canals** in their **world-famous gondolas**. It'd be great just to **wander** around the city **admiring** the **historic architecture** and **chilling out** in the many cafes. As well as this, I imagine **sightseeing** around the cities like Rome would be like a huge **history lesson** given its rich history both as a **former world empire** and **technological leader** of its time.

bold = uncommon vocabulary

underlined = complex sentences

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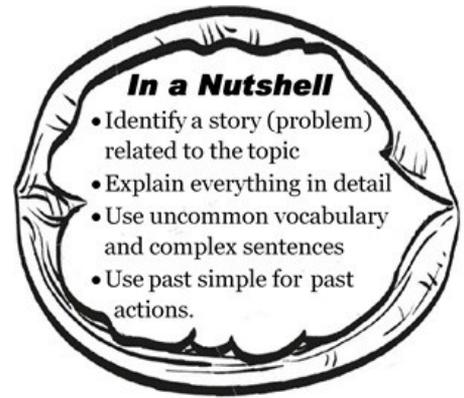
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School & Education



Approach

State setting, describe topic, and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

One Minute Preparation - identify a story (problem) related to the topic

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic + story related to it.

Describe a subject that you enjoyed studying at school.

Setting (where/when/who/what)

- When I was in the sixth grade,
- I remember when I was 12 years old,
- I remember the time when...
- Around six years ago,
- As far back as I can remember,

Description

- appearance
- characteristics
- special qualities

Ideas

- Story:
 - What happened - important events from start to finish?
 - Problem/difficulty/challenge?
 - Things done to solve problem?
 - Solution?
 - Outcome/result?
 - Feelings?
 - Lesson learnt?
- Earliest memory
- Highlights
- Disappointments
- Why particularly liked it
- What didn't appeal

Story 2

- important events?
- problem/difficulty/challenge?
- solution?
- outcome/result?
- feelings

Story 1

- important events?
- problem/difficulty/challenge?
- solution?
- outcome/result?
- feelings

Ex. Science/explosion in class

Vocabulary

- **second/final year** high school student
- **undergraduate**<>graduate
- **attending**/studying at
- **bachelor/master's degree**
- **curriculum**/syllabus
- **compulsory** subjects/core subjects
- **extra-curricular activities**/school club/sports
- learn a lot of **theoretical**<>**practical knowledge**
- highly/**well qualified teacher**/ professors
- inspiring/**stimulating learning environment**
- high standard of education/**high academic standards**
- **heavy**<>**light workload**
- outdated<>**modern academic and sports facilities**/grounds
- **after school classes**/intensive classes
- homework/**assignments**
- local university//higher/tertiary education
- semester/term
- **practical experience**/skills
- develop interpersonal/**social skills**
- **broaden students' horizons**/expand knowledge
- develop **critical thinking skills**
- **science lab**/school facilities
- **studious**/conscientious
- well-disciplined/**diligent**/hard-working
- self-driven/self-starter
- **qualification**/degree
- **ultimate goal**/realise my dream of
- **job prospects**/market
- Positives & Negatives**
- + high standard of education/**high academic standards**
- + **curriculum** provides a good balance of **theoretical and practical skills**
- **deadlines**
- disruptive students
- commit suicide
- **parental pressure**
- **busy**/long **schedule**/timetable

Acquiring Skills & Knowledge

Key Vocabulary

- **learning: assimilating**, retaining, and using knowledge
- **develop cognitive skills**: reasoning + problem solving ability
- **intelligence**: applying knowledge and skills
- **emotional/interpersonal intelligence**: managing emotions/handling different/stressful situations and dealing with people appropriately
- **logical intelligence**: reasoning + problem solving ability
- participating in **extra-curricular activities** can encourage **teamwork**/social skills/ interpersonal skills
- develop critical thinking skills
- **intellectual/mental development**
- **early formative years**
- **practical experience**/skills/knowledge<>theoretical knowledge
- **prerequisite**/requirement
- scholarship/grant
- **talented/gifted at**
- natural **talent for**
- has a **predilection towards**
- **renowned**/famous
- took classes<>**self-taught**

Learn by:

- + **challenge oneself**
- + seek **new ideas**
- + think **creatively**
- + work hard/**diligently**
- + take part in **physical activities** (strengthen the mind, concentration, decision-making)
- + **positive learning atmosphere**
- + **balance** of **theoretical** and **practical skills**
- too much theoretical knowledge

Vocabulary Builder

A. Match the words to a synonym, antonym, or idiom.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. learning | mental |
| 2. cognitive skills | theoretical |
| 3. intelligence | grant |
| 4. emotional intelligence | famous |
| 5. extra-curricular activities | gifted |

6. intellectual	assimilating knowledge
7. practical	reasoning ability
8. scholarship	applying knowledge
9. talented	non-study activities
10. renowned	handle stress

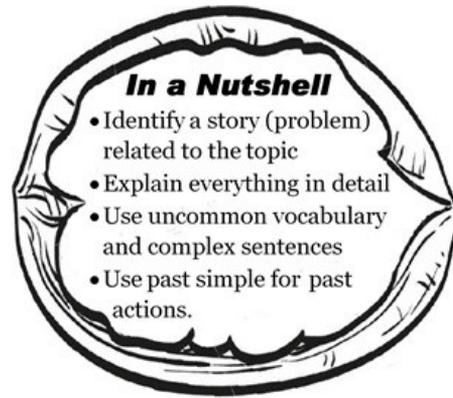
B. Circle the odd word/s out.

1. learning	assimilating knowledge	problem solving ability
2. intelligence	applying knowledge	studying
3. extra-curricular activities	science experiments	football
4. challenge oneself	teamwork	social skills
5. intellectual	physical	mental
6. theoretical	practical	experience
7. scholarship	grant	loan
8. talented at	awful at	gifted at
9. obscure	renowned	famous
10. seek new ideas	think creatively	work hard

C. Fill in the gaps with the correct word from the **key vocabulary** above, or with the correct **form** of the word in brackets, and circle the correct word in **bold**.

- While teachers can help us to _____ knowledge and develop a logical _____, parents really must take **a/the** lead in developing their children's _____ intelligence, particularly in their early _____ (form) years.
- To make classes more interesting and facilitate real understanding, teachers need to have a good balance between **a/the** _____ knowledge taken from books and _____ real world knowledge.
- I think a good teacher is one who can create a positive learning _____ that is not only _____ (challenge) but stimulating since if **a/the** class is _____ (bore) and too _____ (theory), students may lose interest and switch off.
- When I was around eight years old, I learnt to swim, but I can't remember taking **any/no** _____, I was pretty much self-_____.

Acquiring Skills & Knowledge



Approach

State setting, describe topic, and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

One Minute Preparation - identify a story (problem) related to the topic

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic + story related to it.

Describe an important skill you would like to learn.

Setting (where/when/who/what)

- If I could, I'd love to...
- If I had the chance, I'd love to...
- When I was in the sixth grade,
- Around six years ago,
- As far back as I can remember,

Description

- appearance
- characteristics
- special qualities

Ideas

- Story:
 - What happened - important events from start to finish?
 - Problem/difficulty/challenge?
 - Things done to solve problem?
 - Solution?
 - Outcome/result?
 - Feelings?
 - Lesson learnt?
- Earliest memory
- Highlights
- Disappointments
- Why particularly liked it
- What didn't appeal

Story 2

- important events?
- problem/difficulty/challenge?
- solution?
- outcome/result?
- feelings

Story 1

- important events?
- problem/difficulty/challenge?
- solution?
- outcome/result?
- feelings

Ex. Film editing/lack of time

Vocabulary

- learning: **assimilating**, retaining, and using knowledge
- develop cognitive skills: reasoning + **problem solving ability**
- logical intelligence: reasoning + problem solving ability
- **participating in extra-curricular activities** can encourage teamwork/social skills/ interpersonal skills
- develop critical thinking skills
- **early formative years**
- **practical experience/skills/knowledge**<> **theoretical knowledge**
- scholarship/grant

- **talented/gifted at**
- **natural talent for**
- has a predilection towards
- renowned/famous
- **took classes**<>**self-taught**

Learn by:

- **challenge oneself**
- **seek new ideas**
- think **creatively**
- **work hard/diligently**
- take part in physical activities (strengthen the mind, concentration, decision-making)
- **positive learning atmosphere**
- **balance of theoretical and practical skills**

Speaking - Part 3

Format (4.5-5.0 minutes, 6 questions)

You are asked up to six questions and follow up questions, which are designed to make it a discussion to fully test your actual English speaking ability.

Some questions can be very difficult to answer even in your own native tongue, such as:

- What is the impact of globalization on local producers in your country?
- What factors are important when you think of motivating someone?
- What do you think is the greatest threat of pollution?

However, remember IELTS is a test of your language ability. If you don't know the answer, say what you think might be generally true and explain why. To do this, you can use generalizing phrases such as:

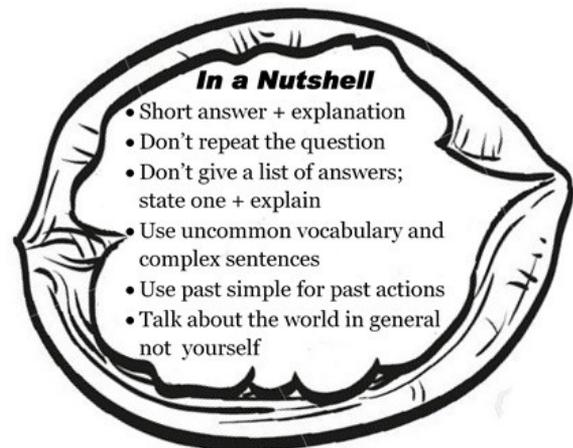
- By and large/Mainly,
- Mostly/For the most part,
- Generally speaking/In general,
- Usually/Typically,
- On the whole/As a rule,
- Nine times out of ten,

General approach

Short answer + reason + example.

Do's

1. Use a range of uncommon vocabulary appropriately and correctly
2. Use a range of complex sentences (see Appendix B, page 319)
3. Use a range of linking words
4. Use the correct verb tense, particularly, past simple for talking about the past
5. If you don't understand a question or word, immediately ask the examiner to clarify, and do so very simply and quickly:
 - Sorry, what was that?
 - What does "X" mean?
 - Could you paraphrase the question?



Don'ts

1. Never repeat the question or key words within

You get no points for repeating the question. Give a short direct answer, using pronouns if need be, and then explain it as clearly as you can, using a reason, example, or explanation.

Example: *What are some ways adults can be encouraged to play more sport?*

Poor answer: *“I think one way adults can be encouraged to play more sport is by the government running advertising for adults, encouraging adults to play more sport.”*
(Why poor? It repeats all the key words in the question)

Good answer: *“I think if the government runs educational advertising that highlights the health benefits of doing so, in terms of helping them to live longer and stay healthy, it could motivate them to get out and do more exercise.”*
(Why good? Short answer, using pronouns, and an explanation, using a complex sentence and uncommon vocabulary)

2. Never talk about yourself, family, or friends in Part 3

Part 3 is asking you to talk about the outside world not yourself. Say what you think is generally true about the world at large and use examples of well-known people, not of yourself, family or friends.

Example: *“What problems can people have when they try new activities for the first time?”*

Poor answer: *“The main problem can people have when they try new activities for the first time is a lack of skill. For example, when I tried playing tennis for the first time, it was not easy.”*

(Why poor? The speaker is repeating the question and talking about himself, not the outside world)

Good answer: *The main one would have to be a lack of skill given they have little experience needed to perform reasonably well. For example, if someone has never played tennis before, it can be quite challenging and takes a while to develop some rhythm and play well.*

(Why good? The speaker is talking about the outside world, not himself)

3. Don't overuse linking words

Don't overuse linking words/phrases to introduce your answer. You only have on average around 25 seconds to answer each question, so the majority of time should be spent giving a short clear answer and explaining it.

Example: *Why should people set goals for themselves?*

Poor answer: *“That's an interesting question. I guess there are a number of possible reasons, and if I had to give one off the top of my head, I would probably say...”*

(Why poor? After nearly 10 seconds, there is still no answer)

4. Don't give a list of answers

A list usually has no complex structures and shows no ability to explain something clearly in detail.

Example: *“What are some environmental issues affecting your country?”*

Poor answer: *“The biggest one is air pollution, and then there’s water pollution, and deforestation, not to mention global warming and getting fresh water can be an issue, too*

(Why poor? No complex sentences or detailed explanation)

Good answer: *The main one in the major cities is air pollution since there’s no effective public transport system, like a subway, and the result is chronic traffic congestion and air pollution levels that are dangerously high; in fact, amongst the highest in the world.”*

(Why good? Short answer, well explained, using complex sentences and uncommon vocabulary)

5. Don't repeat keywords or phrases

Repetition shows a lack of vocabulary. Use pronouns or synonyms where possible.

Example: *“What are some environmental issues affecting your country?”*

Poor answer: *“The biggest issue is air pollution, as the increasing number of cars on the road are worsening the air pollution in my city, and more and more factories are adding to the air pollution.*

(Why poor? Should use pronouns to avoid repetition of “issue” and “air pollution”)

Good answer: *The main one is air pollution due to the increasing number of factories and cars on the road and the lack of an effective public transport system, which are causing dangerously high levels of toxins in the air.”*

(Why good? Used the pronoun “one” and synonym “toxins in the air” to avoid repetition of “air pollution”)

6. Don't overuse idioms

Using idioms inappropriately or unnaturally will negatively affect your vocabulary score. There is no need to artificially insert idiomatic expressions like “knee high to a grasshopper,” or “escape the hustle and bustle of city life,” unless they are clearly suitable as there are over 10,000 phrasal verbs in English, most of which are idiomatic expressions, such as “grow up.”

Example: *“What was the best holiday you ever had in your country?”*

Poor answer: *“I remember when I was knee high to a grasshopper, to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and let our hair down, we went to Ocean Beach, which had a picture perfect white sandy beach with crystal clear waters.”*

(Why poor? Unnatural and inappropriate use of idioms)

7. Try to avoid using memorized phrases or answers

Answers that are obviously memorized get a band score of 1. Answer each question as clearly and accurately as you can without giving memorized answers.

8. Don't give short answers

To get a band score 7 in fluency, you need to be able to give well explained answers with no noticeable effort.

Example: *“Have there been any changes in the places where people buy furniture nowadays?”*

Poor answer: *“Yes, many people are now buying online.”*
(Why poor? Too short, no complex sentences and explanation)

Good answer: *“Definitely. The biggest development is in online furniture retailers, which offer more choice and cheaper prices, and, as well as this, there has been an increase in dedicated furniture stores, which are really big showrooms as opposed to regular department stores like Kmart.”*
(Why good? Short answer, well explained, with a complex sentence and uncommon vocabulary)

Six Types of Part 3 Questions

1. Opinion: Your opinion on some issue
2. Compare: Discuss the differences between two things
3. Advantage/Disadvantage
4. Problem/solution
5. Why
6. Future: What you think will happen in the future.

General Approach

Short answer + reason + example

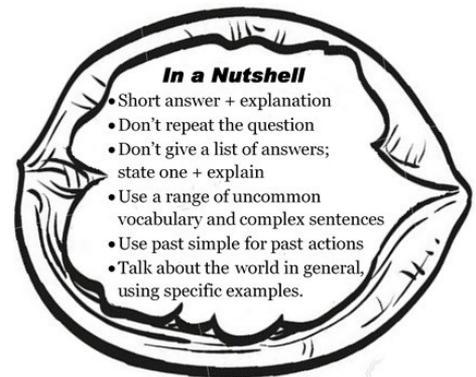
Starting phrase	+ Answer	+ Reason	+ example
I think	_____	because	like
I believe	_____	since	such as
I guess	_____	as	For example,
I suppose	_____	for	For instance,
I'd say	_____	given	as was the case with
As I see it	_____	owing to	A good example...
Probably	_____	due to	A good case in point...
Possibly/Maybe	_____		
Well/Actually	_____		

Agree

Yes/I agree
For sure
Absolutely/Of course
I guess so/I suppose so/No question

Disagree

No/Not at all/I disagree
I'm not so sure/I'm not sure about that.
I don't think so/Not necessarily



1. Opinion Questions

These ask for your opinion on a variety of different questions (not included in the five other question types mentioned above).

Examples

- How can language classes be made more interesting?
- Is family important in your country?
- Do you think we meet different kinds of friends at different stages of our lives?
- What kinds of things do children learn to do when they are very young?

Four Ways of Answering

- Short answer + reason + example
- Short answer + because if + example
- Contrast two different answers + reason + example
- Contrast two different situations, using if + whereas if

A. Short answer + reason + example

Starting phrase	+ Answer	+ Reason	+ Example
I think	_____	because	like
I believe	_____	since	such as
I guess	_____	as	For example,
I suppose	_____	for	For instance,
I'd say	_____	given	as was the case with
As I see it	_____	owing to	A good example...
Probably	_____	due to	A good case in point...
Possibly/Maybe	_____		
Well/Actually	_____		

Agree

Yes/I agree
 For sure/Definitely
 Absolutely/Of course
 I guess so/I suppose so/No question

Disagree

No/Not at all/I disagree
 I'm not so sure/I'm not sure about that
 I don't think so/Not necessarily

Question 1: *Is family important in your country?*

Answer: **Most definitely**, since around the world many families often rely on each other to survive and live together in extended families, supporting each other financially by, for example, sharing accommodation costs and other things like education.

Practice

- How can language classes be made more interesting? I'd say the best thing is to incorporate different media that can...
- Is family important in your country? Absolutely, since...
- Do you think we meet different kinds of friends at different stages of our lives?
- What kinds of things do children learn to do when they are very young?

B. Short answer + because if (reason) + example

Answer	+ Because if (reason)	+ Example
Agree		
Yes/I agree	because if (they do/don't)	such as
For sure/Definitely	since if (they did/didn't)	like
Absolutely/Of course	as if (there was/wasn't)	For example,
I guess/suppose so	for if	For instance,
No question		as was the case with
Disagree		
No/Not at all/I disagree		A good case in point
I'm not so sure/I don't think so		
Not necessarily		

Question 1: *Is family important in your country?*

Answer: **Yes, of course**, because if it wasn't, it'd be difficult for many families to survive given that they often rely on each other and live together in extended families, supporting each other financially, sharing accommodation costs and other things like education.

Practice

1. Do you think businesses can learn much from customer complaints? Yes, because if they do listen to them, they can...
2. Do you think parents should control the amount of time children spend watching television? For sure, since if they do, it could enable their children to...
3. Do you think globalization has made the world a better place? Yes, because if countries like China can sell their products around the world, it can...
4. Do you think that governments around the world are doing enough to tackle the problems? No, because if they did, we wouldn't be facing...

C. Contrast two different answers + reason + example

Contrast	+ Answer 1	+ Reason	+ Answer 2	+ Reason	+ Example
While	(general)	because	(specific)	because	such as
Although	(past)	since	(future)	since	like
Even though	(world)	as	(home country)	as	For example,
Apart from	(old)	for	(young)	for	For instance,
In spite of	(rich)	given	(poor)	given	as was the case with
	(men)	owing to	(women)	owing to	A good case in point
	_____	due to the fact	_____	due to the fact	

Question 1: *Is family important in your country?*

Answer: While it's **typically true** around the world, it's **particularly crucial here** to survive as many families often rely on each other and live together in extended families, supporting each other financially, sharing accommodation costs and other things like education.

Question 2: *What kinds of things do children learn to do when they are very young?*

Answer: While **learning their mother tongue**, both verbally and written, is a fundamental mental skill, **walking** is a basic motor skill, which leads young children on to higher level ones, such as kicking and throwing balls.

Practice

1. Do you agree the happiest time in people's lives is when they are at school? While it's certainly a memorable time given most people make many friends there, there are many other occasions that provide real joy, such as when people fall in love and get married, or have children.
2. What should someone do if something borrowed is not returned? While they could get upset and be angry, I think the best thing is to contact them and try and understand the reason for it and negotiate a date for its return.
3. Who do you think should pay for the services that are available to the people in a community? Should it be the government or individual people?
4. Do you think there will be more environmental disasters caused by humans in the future? While it's likely if...

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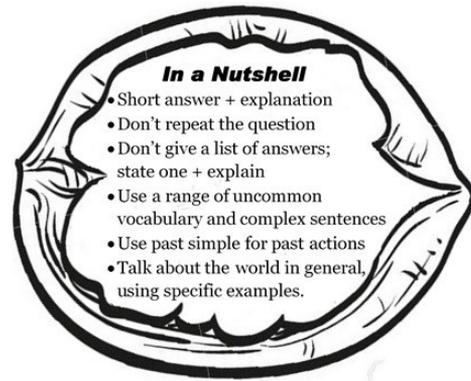
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School & Education



Answer the questions, using the structures indicated below.

Study habits

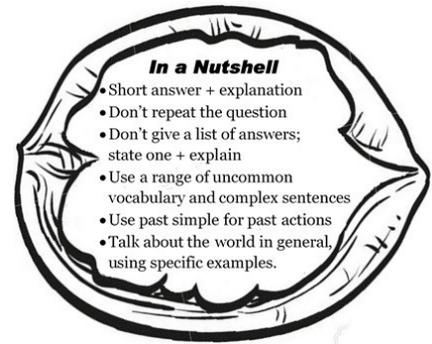
- Why can it be difficult for people to focus on studying?*
While there are many possible distractions, I'd say the main one is the **smartphone** since it presents people with so many things to look at, from social media sites like Facebook to the world of news and entertainment right at their fingertips.
 (while + two different answers + reasons + examples)
- Why do you think some school teachers use competitions as class activities?*
 (while + two different answers + reasons + examples)
- How important is it to take breaks while studying?*
 Ideally, it's good to have a **rest every couple of hours** as it can freshen up your mind and having a drink or something to eat can boost your energy levels.
 (short answer + reason + example)
- How important is it for a teacher to make a class interesting for students?*
 (short answer + reason + example)
- Is it important to have a regular time for studying?*
 By and large, **yes**, because if we set a clear time to do so, we will probably do it, whereas if we don't, we may never get around to doing it.
 (short answer + because if + whereas if)
- Is it important that children are given homework?*
 (short answer + because if + whereas if)

Different ways of studying

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying with other students?*
 I'd say the key benefit is it can enable one to have a **better understanding** of a subject as explaining to someone else is a great way to deepen your own understanding, while there's a danger that it could turn into a **social event** where very little study occurs if some don't take it seriously.
 (main advantage + reason + while + main disadvantage + reason)
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of going to university?*
 (main advantage + reason + while + main disadvantage + reason)

3. *How important is it for students to vary the way in which they study (books/practical work)?*
It's crucial because if they only learn by reading theory and don't have any real world practical knowledge, it can make it difficult for them to fully understand the theory they are studying.
(short answer + because if)
4. *How important is technology in the classroom?*
(short answer + because if)
5. *Do you think studying online is as effective as studying with a teacher in a classroom?*
No, since, although the **internet can provide a lot of knowledge** and understanding, it's the **teacher who focuses their minds** on what they specifically need to learn and hopefully enables them to fully comprehend what they're learning.
(short answer + since although + difference + contrasting difference)
6. *Do you think private universities are better than public universities?*
(short answer + since although + difference + contrasting difference)

Acquiring Skills & Knowledge



Answer the questions, using the structures indicated below.

Doing new things

- Why do you think some people like doing new things?*
I'd say the main reason is that it **makes life more interesting** because if we try different activities, it can be energizing, and teach us more about the world we live in, and maybe build new meaningful relationships.
(short answer + because if)
- Why do some people learn a practical skill as a hobby?*
(short answer + because if)
- What problems can people have when they try new activities for the first time?*
The main one would have to be a **lack of skill** given they have little experience needed to perform well. For example, if you try playing tennis for the first time, it's quite challenging and takes quite a while to play well.
(short answer + reason + example)
- What problems can children have when they are learning a new skill?*
(short answer + reason + example)
- Do you think it's best to do new things on your own or with other people?*
Probably in a group, since, although trying them by **yourself** can allow you to work at your own pace and under **less pressure**, doing them **in a group** can be **more encouraging**, and you can learn from the mistakes and advice of others.
(short answer + since although + difference + contrasting difference)
- Do you think technology has replaced the need for people with practical skills?*
(short answer + since although + difference + contrasting difference)

Learning new things

- What kinds of things do children learn to do when they are very young?*
While learning their **mother tongue**, both verbally and written, is a fundamental skill, physically, apart from **walking**, which almost comes naturally, **learning to play sports** is an important part of their all-round development as it involves so many cognitive and physical skills.
(while + two different answers + reasons)
- What types of jobs require practical skills?*
(while + two different answers + reasons)

3. *Do you think children and adults learn to do new things in the same way?*

By and large, I'd say, **yes**, since observing and learning by following the example of other people is a key fundamental aspect of the learning process.

(short answer + reason)

4. *Do people get more satisfaction from skills that take a long time to learn?*

(short answer + reason + example)

5. *Do you think it is more important to be able to learn new things now than it was in the past?*

Yes, because even though the **world has been constantly developing**, given the **much larger size** of the global population today, I'd say the **rate of change today is much faster**, so there is a lot **more to learn**, as seen in the IT industry.

(short answer + because even though + difference + contrasting difference)

6. *Do you think older people are generally more patient than young people?*

(short answer + because even though + difference + contrasting difference)

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Common Grammatical Errors

Frequent grammatical errors, will prevent you from getting a band score 7 in grammar.

The most common grammatical errors I have noticed conducting IELTS speaking tests are as follows:

1. **Verb tense**

Using present simple instead of past simple to describe events that happened at a specific time in the past is a very common grammatical error.

Mainly use past simple to describe past events.

Example: I went to the Italy last year.

2. **Subject-verb agreement**

Many candidates don't match the subject with the correct form of the verb.

He/She/It + plural form of verb. I/You/We/They + singular form of verb.

Example 1: He goes to the cinema once a month.

Example 2: They need to reduce vehicle emissions.

3. **Countable nouns**

Many candidates incorrectly use the singular form of countable nouns when referring to them in general.

Use the plural form of countable nouns when referring to them in general.

Example 1: The main benefit of electric cars is...

Example 2: Governments need to reduce the number of private vehicles on the roads.