

IELTS Speaking

The Most Comprehensive Guide

- 72 different topics & key vocabulary
- 1600+ vocabulary exercises
- 700+ IELTS speaking questions & model answers
- 40 structures & examples for 14 different types of questions

Kite Boy Series



Michael C. Thorp

IELTS Speaking

The Most Comprehensive Guide



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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. This book aims to rectify all that by providing the most comprehensive guide to the IELTS speaking test.

It 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 to use this book

Speaking Test - Part 1

- A. Look at the 8 different types of questions, 22 ways of answering them, and model answers, and then practice the questions provided with another student.
- B. For each of the 57 topics, work through the vocabulary exercises, complete the gaps in the model answers to the IELTS questions provided, and then answer them, ideally, with another student, following the structures given, but with answers that are true for the students.

Afterwards, in the classroom, some students could stand up and answer one of the questions to the class, or, if outside the classroom, students could pair up and practice answering them aloud.

Speaking Test - Part 2

Complete the one-minute preparation for each of the 57 topics in the spaces provided, utilizing the key vocabulary provided, and then practice the two-minute speeches with another student.

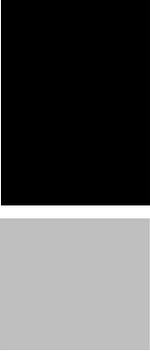
Speaking Test - Part 3

- A. Look at the 6 different types of questions, 18 ways of answering them, and model answers, and then practice the questions provided with another student.
- B. For each of the 56 topics, look at the model answer and structure used to answer each question, and then answer the question below it, following the same structure.



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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 410)

| 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 410)

| 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 398)
- use a range of complex sentences (see Appendix B, page 399)

IELTS Public Band Descriptors (full list, page 410)

| 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 appropriately and correctly
2. Use a range of complex sentences (see Appendix B, page 399)
3. Use a range of linking words
4. Use the correct verb tense, particularly, past simple for talking about the past (see Appendix B, page 398).

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. Like/Dislike/Favourite/Types of/Popular/Important/Would like
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 striking” + 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.

Speaking - Part 1 Topics

A. Where you live

- 1. Apartments/Houses.....32
- 2. Hometown/Neighbourhood.....35

B. What you do

- 3. School/Education..... 38
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C. People

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D. Places

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- 15. Books.....74
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Apartments/Houses

Key Vocabulary

- reside**/currently living
- born and raised** there/resided/lived there since I was
- rent**<>**own**
- two-bedroom **multi-storied house/single-storey house**
- two-bedroom **apartment complex/high-rise apartment**
- located/situated in
- inner city**/central location<>**suburbs/outskirts**
- back garden/yard
- balcony/veranda**
- nicely/simplely **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/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

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.

General Approach

You could:

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

Starting phrases:

Introducing 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 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.

How to Tell a Story

Describe in detail the main events of something that happened from the beginning to end, concentrating on the problems/difficulties/obstacles, and then how you overcame them and the final outcome/result.

Three parts of a story:

A. Introducing 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

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

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.

One Minute Preparation

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Setting (where/when) - When I started my second year in high school... | Description - curriculum - commanded attention - indelibly etched - authoritative figure - diminutive - empowered | Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• earliest memory?• important events from beginning to end + problems, conflicts, obstacles, challenges?• highlights?• disappointments?• why particularly liked it?• what didn't appeal?• final outcome? |
| Outcome - new found love - self belief - confidence | Story - wiping laboratory tables - engaged - touching | |

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

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

Setting (where/when)

- I think it was around 20 years ago...

Story 1

- search engine
- university professor
- pertinent
- game changer
- sold me

Story 2

- storage space
- flexible
- enhancing
- hacking/phishing
- industry gold standard
- plethora of sites
- identity theft
- fraudulent

Ideas

- earliest memory?
- important events from beginning to end + problems, conflicts, obstacles, challenges?
- highlights?
- disappointments?
- why particularly like it
- what may not appeal?
- expected outcome?

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

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

Setting (where/when)

- As far back as I can remember...

Future events

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

Description

- ancient sites
- world renown
- incredible architecture

Story 1

- Gladiator
- romantic
- scenic countryside
- vineyards

Ideas

- earliest memory?
- important events from beginning to end + problems, conflicts, obstacles, challenges?
- highlights?
- disappointments?
- why particularly like it
- what may not appeal?
- expected outcome?

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 tasted **first hand**.

B. Story

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. Future Event 1

But what I'd find even more **enticing** about going there is that I see it as a wonderfully **romantic** place to visit given the huge number of **historic** cities and **beautifully scenic countryside** lined with **vineyards**, which **ooze of charm** and would be amazing to **stroll** through and enjoy with someone special by your side.

D. Future Event 2

One **must-see destination** 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

Speaking - Part 2

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Education/Studying

Approach

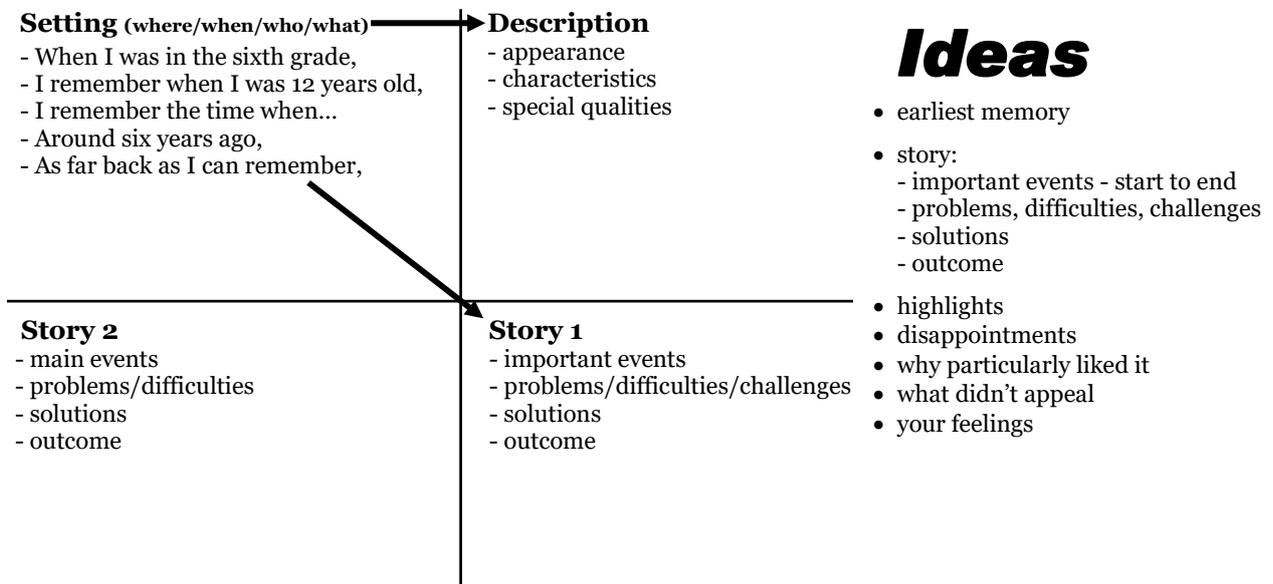
State setting, describe topic, and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

One Minute Preparation

Write down:

1. main verb tense
2. uncommon words and ideas to describe the topic and tell 1-2 stories related to it.

Describe a subject that you enjoyed studying at school.



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

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 + possibly, an example.

Do's

1. Use a range of uncommon vocabulary appropriately and correctly
2. Use a range of complex sentences (see appendix)
3. Use a range of linking words
4. Use the correct verb tense, particularly, past simple for talking about the past

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: Talk about the differences between two things
3. Advantage/Disadvantage
4. Why
5. Problem/solution
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

- A. Short answer + reason + example
- B. Short answer + because if + example/explanation
- C. While + contrast two different answers + reasons + examples
- D. Depends on “criteria” + 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 + explanation/example

| Answer | + Reason + if | + reason | + example |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Agree | | | |
| Yes/I agree, | because if | because | such as |
| For sure/Definitely, | since if | since | like |
| Absolutely/Of course, | as if | as | For example, |
| I guess/suppose so, | for if | given | For instance, |
| No question | | for | as was the case with |
| Disagree | | | |
| No/Not at all/I disagree, | | owing to | A good case in point |
| I'm not so sure/I don't think so | | due to the fact | |
| 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

- Do you think businesses can learn much from customer complaints?
(Yes, because if they do, they can...)
- Do you think that people help others in the community more now than they did in the past?
(For sure, since if they didn't, there may be...)
- 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...)
- 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. While + contrast two different answers + reasons + examples

| Contrast | + Answer 1 | + Reason | + Answer 2 | + Reason | + Example |
|-------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| While | _____ | because | _____ | because | such as |
| Although | _____ | since | _____ | since | like |
| Even though | _____ | as | _____ | as | For example, |
| Apart from | _____ | for | _____ | for | For instance, |
| In spite of | _____ | given | _____ | given | as was the case with |
| | _____ | owing to | _____ | 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

- 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.)
- 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.)
- 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?
- Do you think there will be more environmental disasters caused by humans in the future?

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Education

Answer the questions, using the structures indicated below.

Study habits

1. *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)
2. *Why do you think some school teachers use competitions as class activities?*
(while + two different answers + reasons + examples)
3. *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)
4. *How important is it for a teacher to make a class interesting for students?*
(short answer + reason + example)
5. *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)
6. *Is it important that children are given homework?*
(short answer + because if + whereas if)

Different ways of studying

1. *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)
2. *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)

Appendices

- A. Common grammatical errors
- B. Complex sentences
- C. Advice for low level speakers
- D. Answer key – Speaking Parts 1 & 2 (gap-fill answers)
- E. IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors

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*

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

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.

B

Complex Sentences

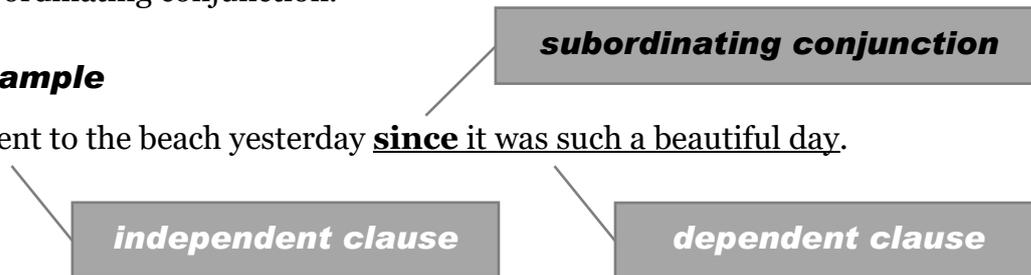
To get a band score 7 in grammar, in both speaking and writing, candidates need to use a range of complex sentences.

What are complex sentences?

They are two clauses, a dependent and an independent clause, joined by a subordinating conjunction.

Example

I went to the beach yesterday since it was such a beautiful day.



Why are complex sentences rated highly in IELTS?

It is for two key reasons:

1. The clauses can be switched around, depending on which clause you want to emphasize by placing it at the front of the sentence.

Example

I went to the beach yesterday since it was such a beautiful day.

Since it was such a beautiful day, I went to the beach yesterday.

2. Given there are many subordinating conjunctions, you can express a lot using complex sentences.

Subordinating conjunctions

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| before | by the time | though | providing |
| after | till | whereas | unless |
| as | until | while | as long as |
| since | as soon as | as a result of | so long as |
| because | ever since | because | at the same time |
| given | following | due to | whether or not |
| every time | later | in order to | that |
| the first time | once | resulting from | where |
| second time | although | resulting in | who |
| next time | despite the fact | even if | whose |
| last time | even though | if | whom |
| when | in spite of | in case | what |
| whenever | instead of | provided that | which |

Advice for Low Level Speakers

If your English level is low, what can you do to get a band score 6 or higher?

At home (free)

There are many things you can do at home to significantly improve your English language ability if you are motivated.

1. Read easy interesting **story books** aloud for 10-15 minutes every day. It will help you to become familiar with the word order of English (grammar) and widen your vocabulary.
2. Watch **English movies or TV shows with English subtitles** regularly. Hearing and seeing people speaking English, will teach you good pronunciation.
3. Watch or listen to the **BBC World news TV or radio** daily (download the BBC app). The range of different English accents can improve your listening ability, and the different news topics can be valuable for some Part 3 speaking topics.
4. If you can't afford to study at an English language center, then get your own English learning **text book and study at home or with a friend**, and look at some of the thousands of English learning **YouTube videos** on the internet and websites that can help any aspect of your English.
5. Don't spend money **studying IELTS** at a language center until your English level is around at least band score 5. Why? Because studying IELTS usually just teaches you how to do well in the test, not how to improve your general English ability.
6. Look at this Ted Talk YouTube video on how to learn a language in six months.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doyGdNEWdno>

How to choose a suitable English language center

1. It's important to have an instructor who can pronounce English correctly. Many places have non-native speakers whose pronunciation and grammatical understanding are often sub-standard.
2. Avoid any language center that promises to dramatically improve your English ability in a few months. Many promise the Earth, so that they can grab your money, and their courses are often as empty as their promises.
3. Choose a language center that has an excellent reputation (good word of mouth - check Facebook reviews), native speaking instructors, and texts books that you think are good.