

IELTS SPEAKING Module: an Introduction

The IELTS SPEAKING Test takes about 10 - 15 minutes to carry out. Sometimes it takes less time and there are times it may last longer than 15 minutes. The duration of this examination depends on Examinee's Fluency and the Assessment by your Examiner.

IELTS Speaking Test: Key Facts

Participants: Candidates interviewed individually. The test is recorded. Test is taken by One examiner and hence it is a One-on-One Session.

Format: The test consists of three parts.

Part 1 (Basic Questions)

Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking test lasts between 4 and 5 minutes. The examiner will ask some simple 'getting-to-know-you' questions which will help the examiner find out a little about you and help put you at ease. These will be general questions, such as about your family, your studies, where you come from or what your interests are.

Example Questions

- Q:** Where are you from?
- Q:** Why are you studying English?
- Q:** Have you visited any English speaking countries?
- Q:** Do you play any sports?

Tips!

Giving full, relevant answers to the examiner's questions will help get the interview off to a good start. The Examiner's job here will be to evaluate you through your ability to answer the questions and explain where necessary. Answers must of course be relevant to the subject of questioning.

The number of Questions in this part of the Speaking test will, in general, vary between 10-15.

Keep in mind that each answer to each Basic Question must be in **FULL SENTENCES**.

For example:

- Q.** What is your hobby?
- A.** Collecting Stamps. (WRONG!)
- A.** My hobby is to collect stamps of different countries; I have had this hobby since my childhood. (CORRECT!)

1) Avoid giving short, uncommunicative replies.

- Q:** Where are you from?
- A:** I'm from Hoorn in the Netherlands. (Don't stop there!) It's about 35 kilometers north of Amsterdam. It's a modern city but with a lot of history and a lovely place to live.

2) Avoid short, 'yes', 'no' answers to closed questions. (These are questions beginning 'Have you ...', 'Do you ...', 'Is it ...' etc which can be answered simply with a yes or no answer).

- Q:** Have you visited any English speaking countries?
- A:** Yes. (Don't stop there!) I went to England last year and spent two weeks seeing the sights. A couple of years ago I went to New York with my parents and had a great time.

Q: Do you play any sports?

A: No. (Don't stop there!) I'm not really interested in playing sports. I like watching sport on TV and I really enjoyed keeping up with the Olympics recently.

3) Offer examples to help you explain a statement.

Q: Why are you preparing for the IELTS exam?

A: Because I need it for my studies. (Don't stop there!) I've been offered a place at a university in England to study on an MBA but I need to show my level of English is good enough.

Part 2 (Cue Card/Task Card)

Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking test lasts between 3 and 4 minutes (including 1 minute preparation time). The examiner gives you a task card and you have to speak about the subject without interruption for between 1 and 2 minutes.

Example Task

Example 1) Describe a place you have visited that you have fond memories of.

You should say:

- where was this?
- why did you go there?
- what did you do there?
- what it was about the place that makes it so memorable?

Example 2) Describe your favorite personal possession.

You should say:

- what this possession is
- when you first got it
- when you use it
- why it's so important to you.

Tips!

1. Use your 1 minute preparation time wisely and make notes of the points you'd like to make.
2. The question will help you with the structure of your talk. The introduction can include the item itself and maybe a brief description. The main body of your talk could describe the situation when you acquired the object and go on to explain when you use it. You can then end with an explanation of why the object is so important.
3. Try to avoid giving a very dry, unimaginative introduction such as 'The object I'm going to describe is ...'. Get your talk off to a memorable start with something on the lines of: 'If I was about to lose everything and could only save one thing it would be my ...', or 'I've got several things that mean a lot to me but the one that really stands out is my ...'
4. If you're concerned about not having enough to talk about for 1 to 2 minutes or running out of time before you've finished, the answer is to practice as often as possible. Time yourself and ask a friend for feedback.

Part 3: (Two-Way Discussion/Follow-up)

In Part 3 of the test, which lasts between 4 to 5 minutes, the examiner will ask you questions linked to the topic in Part 2. Sometimes, the questions in Part 3 may also branch out to different topics surrounding the topic of your Cue Card in Part 2.

Example Questions (Based on example topics in Part 2 above)

- Q:** It is sometimes argued that local cultures are being destroyed by tourism. Why do think people might feel this?
- Q:** What benefits do people get from travelling to other countries?
- Q:** Do you think people are becoming too materialistic?
- Q:** To what extent are people's buying habits affected by advertising?

Tips!

1. If you need time to collect your thoughts use expressions (sparingly) like: 'That's a good question.', 'Well, let me think ...'.
2. Don't forget to avoid short, 'yes', 'no' answers. Try to offer examples to back up a statement.
3. Help make your contributions memorable. Try explaining a point using a short, personal anecdote.
4. If the examiner asks a question that you don't understand, take control of the situation with questions such as those that appear below. Responding like this will show evidence of your communication skills.

A) If the examiner uses a word or phrase that you don't understand, say something like:

"Sorry but could you explain what you mean by" or

"I haven't come across that word/expression before. Could you explain what you mean?"

B) If you simply didn't hear something that was asked, respond with:

"Excuse me, I didn't quite catch that. Could you say that again?"

"I'm sorry, but would you mind repeating that?"

C) If you want to make sure you've understood what the examiner has asked you could say:

"Do you mean"

"When you say, do you mean/are you asking"?

IELTS Speaking Evaluation

Candidates will be assessed according to the following criteria-

1. Coherence + Fluency

Coherence is the Relevance to the topic of questioning.

For example-

When asked "Do you like travelling?", the correct answer would be "Yes, most definitely, I like travelling very much and I visit places around my country with family or friends, whenever I get the chance. " NOT "Cox's Bazar is my favorite tourism spot."

Fluency refers to the CLARITY of your speech and your tone. You do not necessarily need to speak FAST.

Speaking clearly and at a steady pace is the key aspect to this category of scoring.

2. Grammatical Range and Accuracy

The IELTS Speaking module marking will involve an overall score of your GRAMMAR. This means your sentences will be broken down word by word to assess your Grammar Skills.

Key points - Parts of Speech | Correct usage of Tenses | Appropriate uses of Prepositions, Conjunctions and Linkers and so on

For an instance-

Q. What is your future plan?

A. My future plan involves going to abroad for completing my higher education.

Note that "abroad" is not a specific place or destination. Here the use of "to" is highly wrong. Therefore the correct answers is "My future plan involves going abroad for completing my higher education."

3. Lexical Resource

Lexical Resource is simply your VOCABULARY or Knowledge of Words in English Language. To gain an average band score of 6-6.5 in IELTS, it is essential to know enough words to be able to express your thoughts and to advocate your opinions. However if you have a higher aim, it is necessary to use complex words in your sentences.

Here IDIOMS and METAPHORIC EXPRESSIONS also contribute to positive marking when used appropriately

4. Pronunciation + Presentation

It is extremely crucial to be able to pronounce words correctly in the IELTS Speaking part. A lot of people have difficulty in this area due to first language dialects but with sufficient practice sessions this weakness can be overcome.

Hint - Search online (google) about pronunciation of words, listen to audio and try to mimic the voices

OTHER TIPS AND HINT FOR POSITIVE MARKING IN IELTS SPEAKING

- Try to relax- confidence is essential while Speaking in any language. In contrast, over-confidence can lead to negative marking.
- You must be careful when expressing yourself- use words carefully.
- **Informal English is strictly DISCOURAGED** and must not be used while giving the IELTS SPEAKING INTERVIEW
- Words like "Yeah, Nope, Wanna, Gonna, Obviously, Awesome!" must not be uttered. Instead, you can say "Yes, No, Want to, Going to, Certainly, Magnificent!"
- You must do your best to establish a positive academic relation with your Examiner since this can lead to an overall positive marking.
- Presentation involves Good Conversational Eye Contact and Proper Posture and Body Language.

Speaking Test: PART 1

SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Module consists of personal questions about you, your family, your work, your education or other familiar topics. A categorized list of such topics and questions is given below. You can use these sample questions to rehearse for this part of the oral interview. Make sure you can speak correctly, clearly, and with ease and confidence in response to each question. Remember to make your answer interesting by providing more than the most basic information. Some of these sample questions are highly likely to appear on your exam, so review them well.

Review these Q/A and take ideas on the SENTENCE FORMS and WAYS of responding to different Questions in PART 1.

YOU

- **Describe yourself.**

I am very simple, honest and a laid-back person. I am efficient where necessary, and I love holidays.

- **What's your name?**

My full name is Huzaifa Khan. You may call me by my first name.

- **How can I call you?**

You can call me Huzaifa.

- **What's the meaning of your name?**

Sorry, I actually do not know the meaning of my name but I would like to find out some time soon.

- **Who kept your name?**

My father suggested the name but my mother picked it.

- **Is name very important to you? Why?**

My name is of course important for me because it sets me apart from the world. It is my identity.

- **What do you do? Do you work or study?**

I am currently working as a Public Relations Executive at Mastermind School.

- **Do you think students should do part time jobs? Why?**

I don't see why not? Being related to the job sector can help students become more responsible.

- **Are you self dependent? If yes, how?**

Yes I am self-dependent. I have my own business of clothing line and also I have a part time teaching job at a school.

- **What do you study?**

I am studying to complete my major in the subject of Accounting.

- **Which one is your favorite subject?**

My favorite subject is Business Studies.

FAMILY

- **Describe your family?**
- My family consists of 4 members. We are a small family and indeed we are very close to one another.
- **Do you have a large or small family?**
- I have a small family.
- **How much time do you spend with your family?**
- I usually spend 2-3 hours with my family each day as I have a job from 9-5 every day.
- **What do you like to do together as a family?**
- My family members and I like to eat out, watch a movie and also chat.
- **Do you get along well with your family?**
- Yes I get along quite well with my family members
- **Are people in your country generally close to their families?**
- Indeed they are, I come from a family loving country.

WORK

- **What do you do?**
- I am a Public Relations Officer at my workplace.
- **What are your responsibilities?**
- My responsibilities involves dealing with clients, responding to complaints and threats and also to handle any public crisis.
- **How many hours do you work each day?**
- I work for about 6 to 7 hours each day.
- **Do you enjoy your work?**
- Yes I enjoy my work very much.
- **Is there some other kind of work you would rather do?**
- Well, in the long run I would like to switch to teaching.
- **If you could change your job or profession, what would you do?**
- If I could I would seek for a job as a professor in a well reputed university.
- **Describe the process of getting a job in your country.**
- The process of getting a job is quite simple in my country. All you need is a degree. However, the opportunities are far less than the number of people applying for a position.
- **Describe the company or organization you work for.**
- I work for an educational institute, it is basically a school starting from grade 1 to grade 12. It is contained on one campus.

- **What is your position?**
- I am a substitute teacher. I fill in for absent teachers while they are on a leave.
- **What do you like about your job?**
- I like the opportunity that it gives me to share my knowledge and experience with students who look up to me.
- **What do you dislike about your job?**
- I dislike the environment. There is a lot of office politics going on all the time.

EDUCATION

- **Describe your education.**
- I am a student. I have passed my Advanced Level of Education, and now I am preparing myself to go abroad for my graduation.
- **What kind of school did you go to as a child?**
- I went to a co-educational English Medium school.
- **Did you go to a co-educational school?**
- Yes I did.
- **What was your favorite subject as a child?**
- My favorite subject as a child was History.
- **Who was your favorite teacher?**
- Well since I liked History a lot, my History teacher happened to be my favorite teacher in school.
- **What is the education system like in your country?**
- The education system in my school is pretty old fashioned, however nowadays it is starting to improve.
- **Do you think your country has an effective education system?**
- Effective? Yes. Effective enough? No. The education system in my country must be modernized or else the future generations will be the sufferers. Still now there are hundreds of Bengali Medium school where English as an International Language is ignored.

CLASS WORK

You are to pick 10-15 questions from the given topics. Any 10-15 questions can be chosen.

You will be given 15 minutes to prepare yourself and then intensive PART 1 Practice will begin.

Good Luck!

Warm-up

1. Could you tell me your full name please?
2. What is your nickname?
3. What shall I call you?
4. Does your name have any special meaning?
5. Why do so many people change their names?
6. Is your name important to you?

Hometown or birth place

7. Where do you come from?
8. Where do you live?
9. Can you tell me something about your hometown?
10. Can you tell me some famous landscapes or scenic spots in your hometown?
11. Can you tell me some history of your hometown?

Personal background and information

12. Are you a student or do you have a job?
13. What do you like most about your study?
14. What kind of job do you prefer after graduation?
15. What is your major?
16. What do you do for living?
17. Could you tell me a typical day of yours?
18. How did you get your job?
19. Are you satisfied with your job?
20. What do you like most about your job?
21. What kind of job will you prefer in the future?

Hobby or inclination

22. What do you usually do in your spare time?
23. Do you prefer to stay alone or with your friends?
24. What do you usually do on weekends and weekdays?
25. What do you usually do when you go out?
26. What do you usually do with your friends?
27. Do you like reading?
28. What kind of books do you like best?
29. Do you like English? Why or why not?
30. What do you think of the importance of English?
31. What are some common good habits and bad habits? Why?

Future plan

32. Why are you taking the IELTS test?
33. What are you planning to do in the next five years?
34. What are you planning to do in the next ten years?
35. What is the first thing you will do when you arrive at the new place?

Traveling

36. Do you like traveling?
37. Do you like travel alone or with your friends?
38. Have you traveled to other places? Where are they?
39. What do you usually do when you first arrive in a new place?
40. What are the benefits of traveling?
41. Why do so many people like traveling nowadays?

Friends

42. Do you have many friends? Are they casual acquaintances or close friends?
43. Do you prefer to stay with your family or with your friends?
44. Do you prefer one or two close friends or many friends?
45. Can you talk about your best friend?
46. How do you make friends?
47. What do you usually do with your friends?
48. Is the time you spend with your friends as much as that you spend with your family?

Music

49. Do you like music?
50. What are the benefits of listening to music?
51. What kind of music do you like best?
52. Why do you like this kind of music?
53. Who is your favorite artist?

Transportation

55. Can you say something about the transportation in your hometown?
56. What is the common means of transport in your country?
57. Which transport do you use for regular commute?
58. Do traffic jams often occur in your hometown or in the city where you live?
59. How can we solve the problem?
60. What changes in transportation have taken place in the past several years in your country?