

Speaking Test: Part 3 Two Way Discussion/Follow-up

After you finish your speech in Part Two of the test, you will be asked some follow up questions- some of which will be related to the topic of the Cue Card and this will be the last part of your exam. Here you are expected to answer the questions with relevance and elaboration as well. The answer to one particular question should be at least 3-4 lines lengthy.

Try to provide reasons and facts supporting your answer and include examples where required.

In Part 3, you have 4 to 5 minutes to discuss the topic from part 2 in more detail. This part is designed to stretch you as far as possible to see just how good you really are. The examiner has a couple of related sub-topics and question ideas but adapts the questions to you. This means that if you are a low level, you will get easier questions but if you are band 8, then you will start with quite difficult ones which get even more difficult. The word 'difficult' will refer to the ideas, the question and the language you need to use to answer them. You may be asked 5-7 questions depending on your answers and on the examiner as well.

IELTS Speaking, Part 3: Practice Questions with Sample Answers

Let's look at six example questions from Part 3 of the Speaking module of IELTS. The questions cover the three topics introduced in the Part 2 practice, and include a variety of question types: **Indicate a preference; Yes/No; Agree/Disagree; Open-ended.**

Try answering these questions yourself first and then compare the sample answers below with your own. Remember to expand your answers as much as possible.

Questions 1 & 2

Is it better to make important life decisions on your own or is it better to consult other people?
Do you think good decision-making can be taught?

Questions 3 & 4

Is watching TV a good way of forgetting about work or study?
Should coworkers also spend their leisure time together?

Questions 5 & 6

Do you agree that English should be the main language of international exchange?
What are the difficulties in creating a universal language?

See below for sample answers and analysis

Questions 1 & 2: Sample answers and analysis

- **Is it better to make important life decisions on your own or is it better to consult other people?**

There are good reasons for both, I suppose. Ultimately, it's our life so I suppose we should make the decisions. On the other hand, any decisions we make can affect other people- so it seems only right to discuss things with others first. Like many philosophical questions, there's no simple answer, I'm afraid.

- **Do you think good decision-making can be taught?**

Well, if we go to a bookstore, we'll see lots of self-help books that claim to teach decision-making. I'm not sure any of them are effective though. I suppose as if it depends on the type of decision we mean. If it's a business strategy, then I'm sure some decisions are better than others and business schools teach this. But if it's a moral issue then I'm not sure anyone can claim to know the right decision. So how could anyone teach it?

This IELTS candidate scores highly by:

- Giving balanced answers to both questions
- Using a time-buying strategy before answering Question 2: *Well, if you go to a bookstore...*
- Using *it depends* and conditional sentences to explore different possibilities
- Using verbs of speculation such as *suppose*
- Using *you* in the general sense to mean 'any person'
- Returning to the original question at the end of each answer

Questions 3 & 4: Sample answers and analysis

- **Is watching TV a good way of forgetting about work or study?**

Absolutely, yes. These days there's so much choice available that we can completely immerse ourselves in entertainment. I mean, we can turn on a good drama or comedy show and pretty soon forget about everything that happened that day. I think that without TV, we'd all go a little crazy.

- **Should coworkers also spend their leisure time together?**

I'm completely against this. The problem with people going out together after work is that they just gossip about certain people in the office or factory, and this can hardly be a good thing for the company, can it? Another thing is that there's always the risk that one individual will say something he/she might regret after a few drinks and then he/she has to face these colleagues again the next day. So, in short, I would definitely advise people to think twice about socializing with colleagues.

This IELTS candidate scores highly by:

- Using strong expressions of (dis)agreement: *Absolutely, yes; I'm completely against this*
- Using ellipsis or substitution to avoid 'parroting' the question: *Absolutely, yes; I'm completely against this*
- Supporting opinions with more than one reason
- Using *we* and *they* to make general observations about people
- Paraphrasing key elements of the question: *entertainment; colleagues; socializing*
- Summarizing the main argument when an answer becomes quite long: *So, in short...*

Questions 5 & 6: Sample answers and analysis

- **Do you agree that English should be the main language of international exchange?**

That's a very interesting question. I've never really thought about it before, actually. We all just assume that it should be English, don't we? But what other languages could we use? I suppose Chinese is becoming quite an important language, but the pronunciation is too difficult for most people. English is already the main language of universities and business, so maybe it should stay that way.

- **What are the difficulties in creating a universal language?**

Do you mean inventing a completely new language? Yes? Well, I mean, er, it's never been done before, has it? There was Latin, of course, which was used by people all over Europe, but I'm not sure if it was really created for that purpose. Actually, I think there used to be a universal language about a hundred years ago. What was it called again, Esperanto? But that disappeared quite quickly. Er, what I'm trying to say is, I don't think anyone has ever succeeded in creating a universal language, so I doubt if it will ever be possible in the future.

This IELTS candidate scores highly by:

- Using filler expressions to buy time: *That's a very interesting question; Well, I mean, er...*
- Thinking aloud rather than staying silent (both questions)
- Asking a checking question rather than simply asking for help: *Do you mean...?*
- Using a fluency expression to rephrase an idea: *What I'm trying to say is...*
- Indicating an opinion at the end of each answer, even when uncertain at the beginning.

These sample answers show that there are at least three different ways of getting a good score in IELTS Speaking, Part 3. How you answer will depend on various factors including the nature or difficulty of the question, your own personality, and your level of interest in and knowledge of the question topic.

There are also factors such as pronunciation (not mentioned here) as well as nonverbal communication which, although not included in the scoring criteria for IELTS Speaking, can certainly influence an examiner's judgment of your ability.

IELTS Speaking Part 3: Useful Language

For most people, the discussion is the toughest part of the IELTS Speaking test. Remember though, you're **NOT** required to demonstrate any special knowledge of the topics discussed. The examiner is listening for how well you connect your ideas, expand your answers and cope with difficulty when it arises. The following useful language will help you speak with more **Fluency** and **Coherence**, which together is worth 25% of your Speaking score in IELTS.

Asking for help

- Could you say that in other words?
- I'm not sure what you mean exactly.
- Do you mean ()?

Stalling for time

- That's a(n) interesting/tough/difficult question.
- I don't know much about this issue but ...
- I've never really thought about it before but ...

Giving an opinion

- Well, I think/suppose/would say ...
- ... for two/several reasons.
- I think most people would agree that ...

Self-correcting

- Or rather ...
- I mean ...
- Or, should I say ...

Rephrasing

- What I mean is ...
- What I want to say is ...
- What I'm trying to say is ...

Commenting on your own ideas

- I know this may sound obvious but ...
- This may sound strange but ...
- I'm sorry to have to say this but ...

Giving an example

- Take (), for example.
- Look at (), for instance.
- A good example of this is ().

Introducing other ideas

- On the other hand, ...
- Or, to look at it another way, ...
- Then again, ...

Getting to the point

- Anyway, to get to the point, ...
- Anyway, the main point I want to make is that ...
- So, in answer to your question, ...

Concluding

- So, that's why I think ...
- Anyway, that's why...
- So, to return to my original point, ...

Class Practice Questions

Now you have to select 15 questions from the given topics below. You will be given 15 minutes to prepare yourself and will have to answer the questions one by one. Use your own ideas, give reasons behind your answers and use examples where relevant.

IELTS Speaking Part 3 - Questions and Topics

Eating habits

- Tell me about the types of food that people eat in your country.
- How are the eating habits now in your country different from eating habits in the past?
- How healthy is your country's food?
- Why do you think different cultures have different table manners?
- How may eating habits change in coming decades?

Education

- How are education priorities today different from those in the past?
- What is your opinion on the way languages are taught in schools?
- How can the type of school you go to affect career success?
- What changes do you think will happen in the classroom in the near future?
- Do you think these changes will all be good?
- Do you think these changes will help the children in general?

Environment

- Is water pollution a problem in your country?
- What are some of the causes of water pollution?
- What can individuals do to try and ensure water is kept clean?
- Do you think problems with the cleanliness of water will improve in the future?

Influence of Television

- How popular is watching television in your country?
- Tell me about the types of programmes that are generally on television in your country.
- Why do people like watching television?
- Do you think state or private television is better?
- What effects can watching television have on children?

Influences on the young

- What type of people influence the young in your country?
- Why it is important to have role models?
- Do you think the education system in your country influences young people's behavior?
- What type of person (parents, teachers, friends etc) are best to influence young people's behavior?
- What do you think young people will be most influenced by in the future?

Leisure activities

- What types of leisure activities are popular in your country?
- Why it is important for people to have time for leisure activities?
- Why are some activities more popular than others?
- Are the types of leisure activities that are popular today the same as those that were popular when your parents were young?
- What types of leisure activities may become more popular in the future?

Shopping

- Is shopping a popular activity in your country?
- How have shopping habits changed over recent years?
- To what extent do you think advertising affects the way people shop?
- Do you think shopping habits are likely to change in the future?

Sports

- What types of sports are popular in your country?
- What are the benefits of playing a sport?
- Do you think the types of sports which are popular will change in the future?
- How can sports bring people from different countries closer together?

Transport

- How do most people travel long distances in your country?
- Have the types of transport people use changed much over the last few decades?
- What kinds of improvement have there been in transport in your country in recent years?
- Do you think the transport system is likely to continue to improve in the future?
- How can this be done?

Music

- Should we focus more on traditional music?
- Do you think having a good voice gives you an edge over others?
- What main qualities are required to be a good singer?
- Do you think the government should promote music in schools?
- Do you think young people should be exposed to different types of music?
- How can this exposure influence them

Books

- What kind of books are usually read in your country?
- Do only older people read books in your country?
- Why are certain books more suitable for elderly people?
- What kind of books do you like to read?
- Does younger generation in your country continue reading books?
- Do younger people read different books compared to older people?

Free Time

- What type of activities do you like to do in your free time?
- How long have you been interested in these activities?
- Do you like to do these activities alone or with other people? (Why)?
- Do you think people have enough free time? (Why/why not)?

Family

- How many people are there in your family?
- Do you all live in the same house? (Why/why not)?
- What things do you like doing together?
- Who is your favorite family member?

Timing

- Is being late acceptable in your culture? (Why/why not)?
- Are you ever late for appointments? (Why/why not)?
- What type of excuses do you think are alright for lateness?
- How do you feel when someone is late for an appointment with you?

Neighbors

- Do you know the people who live next door to you?
- How often do you see each other?
- What kind of relationship do you have?
- How can neighbors be helpful?
- What kind of problems can people have with their neighbors in a big city?

Food

- Do you enjoy cooking? (Why/why not)?
- Which items can you cook? (Why)?
- What kinds of food are popular in your country?
- Is it an important part of your culture to have dinner parties? (Why)?
- Do you prefer to eat with other people or on your own? (Why)?

Dreams

- Do you dream much at night?
- Do you often remember your dreams?
- Do you think we can learn anything from dreams? (Why)?
- Do people in your country talk about their dreams? (Why)?
- Do you think that dreams can come true?

Magazines and Newspapers

- Which do you prefer reading- newspapers or magazines? (Why)?
- What type of stories do you like to read about? (Why)?
- Do you think reading a magazine or a newspaper can help you learn a language? (Why)?
- Why do you think some people prefer magazines to newspapers?

Humor

- What type of programmes do you find funny on TV?
- Which types of programmes are most popular in your country? (Why)?
- What kind of things make you laugh? (Why)?
- Do you like to make people laugh? (How)?
- Do you think it is important to have a sense of humor? (Why)?