



Speaking

ROAD TO IELTS

Information about the test





The Speaking Test

The basics

The speaking test lasts 11 to 14 minutes. It is a face-to-face interview with an IELTS examiner. The examiner will make an audio recording of your interview.

The test is in three parts:

Parts	Focus
1	You answer general questions about yourself, your home, family, job, studies, your interests and a range of familiar topic areas.
2	<p>You give a talk for up to two minutes, after which the examiner may ask one or two questions on the same topic.</p> <p>You base your talk on a topic card given to you by the examiner and you have one minute to prepare your talk based on the card.</p> <p>You can make some notes and refer to them during your talk if you wish.</p>
3	The examiner asks you questions which are connected to the topic in phase 2. This is an opportunity for you to discuss more abstract ideas and issues.

What the examiner is looking for

The examiner rates your speaking against a standard set of criteria.

Criteria	How responses are assessed
Fluency and coherence	Key points for fluency are your speed and how fluid and continuously you speak. Key points for coherence are how logically you order what you say, and the connecting words and phrases you use between and inside sentences.
Lexical resource	the range of vocabulary you use and how well you use vocabulary to express meaning and opinions
Grammatical range and accuracy	the range, accuracy and appropriate use of grammar; the number of grammatical errors you make and to what extent the errors block effective communication
Pronunciation	how easy it is for the listener to understand your speech

Sample candidate card for phase 2 of the speaking test

Describe a well-known person you like or admire.

You should say:

- Who this person is
- What this person has done
- Why this person is well-known

and explain why you like or admire this person

You will have to talk about the topic for 1 to 2 minutes.

You have 1 minute to think about what you're going to say.

You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

Tips and advice for getting the score you need

In general

- Try and speak as much as you can and show what you can do. Showcase your accuracy, fluency, range of vocabulary, and pronunciation.
- Try and appear relaxed and speak naturally. It will make you and your interviewer feel more positive.
- You are given marks for pronunciation. One thing that can help is appropriate intonation to get your points across. Try not to be too "flat" in your delivery.
- Never memorise a model answer. The questions change and so you will find it difficult to answer naturally and fluently.
- Do not panic if you cannot think of a word; try to paraphrase and get round it.

Interacting with the examiner

- Do not simply say "I don't know" or request a different topic or question.
- Avoid short "yes" and "no" responses; always try to include a little extra detail.
- Do not worry if you realise you have made a mistake. It is OK to correct yourself. If you cannot correct yourself, forget it and move on.
- Do not ask the examiner if what you say is correct.
- Do ask the examiner to repeat the question if necessary. For example, "Could you repeat the question please?"

In phase 2

- Use the one-minute preparation time to make notes or bullet points before you make your short presentation. You can then look at the card and use these ideas as a guide. This gives your talk a good structure, and leads you naturally to sign-post your talk, e.g. “first...”, “next...”, “another thing...” and so on.
- It is useful to conclude by referring back to one of the main points you made earlier, e.g. “as I said before”, “the main thing...”.

In phase 3

- This is your chance to demonstrate the best you can do. Answer the questions as fully and fluently as possible, always giving reasons for your opinions.
- Use a variety of words to express opinion, e.g. “in my opinion...”, “I think...”, “as I see it...” and so on.
- If you run out of ideas or you simply do not have an opinion, a useful tactic is to present the opinion of someone you know well such as a family member or a close friend. For example, “I’m not keen on sport but my brother’s crazy about it. He...”

Good luck in your speaking test!