

Study Skills: Speaking

How much do you know about the IELTS Speaking module? Do the quiz below to find out.

Quiz

- 1 In the exam, you speak with
A your partner **B** an examiner
C your teacher
- 2 The exam has three parts. Each part lasts for about minutes.
A four **B** ten **C** two
- 3 Match the statements to the parts.
1 You discuss your opinions about a subject.
2 You answer questions about yourself and your life.
3 You speak on your own for 1–2 minutes.
4 You have time to plan your answer.
5 You are given a card with a topic to talk about.
6 The subject you talk about is connected to the subject in Part two.
A Part 1
B Part 2
C Part 3
- 4 Which of these will gain a higher score in the exam? Complete the table.
1 only talking about topics that are familiar to you e.g. your family
2 linking sentences together with words like 'and', 'because' and 'so'
3 making frequent grammatical mistakes
4 pronouncing words correctly
5 using a variety of vocabulary
6 repeating the same word many times
7 pausing a lot to think about the language you need
8 replying to a question with a one word answer e.g. 'yes'

Higher score	Lower score

Part 1

Skills development

Getting started

Remember

Bring the correct form of identification with you to the speaking exam, for example, your passport or identification card. You must bring the same form of identification that you used on your application form.

- 1 At the beginning of Part 1, the examiner will check your identity by asking you questions. Choose the best answer for each of the questions below.
 - 1 Can you tell me your full name please?
A Good morning. Yes, it's Andrea.
B Yes, my name's Andrea Popovska.
C Yes, it's Popovska.
 - 2 Can you tell me where you're from?
A I'm coming from Russia but I'm living in London at the moment.
B I'm originally from Moscow in Russia, but I live in London now.
C Moscow, in Russia.
 - 3 Can I see your identification please?
A Yes, sure, here you are.
B Yes.
C No, I'm sorry, I don't have any.

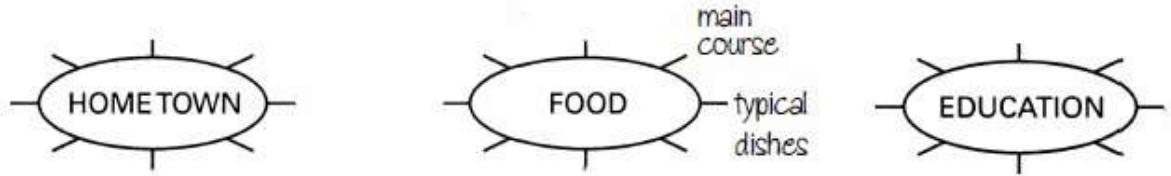


Learning key vocabulary

- 1 In Part 1 the examiner will ask you about yourself and about 'everyday' subjects. Complete the mind maps of subjects below with vocabulary from the box.

Useful language

busy degree delicious eat out facilities fast food graduation/graduate from
healthy food historic ~~main course~~ modern population qualification/qualify for
study secondary school subjects suburbs/outskirts ~~typical dishes~~



- 2 Add two more of your own words to each mind map. Then make mind maps for three of the subjects below.

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 Friends | 3 Holidays | 5 Family | 7 Your country |
| 2 Work | 4 Leisure | 6 Clothes | 8 Favourite places |

Answering the question

- 1 Match questions 1–11 with a topic from Exercises 1 and 2 above. Then complete each question with one word.

Question	Answer
1 did you last visit this place?	It was a long time ago, I think around 1992, when I was a little girl.
2 do you do?	I'd like to be a doctor in the future.
3 do you do to keep fit?	It depends on the weather. In the Summer, I go jogging, but in the Winter, I go to the gym.
4 often do you see your best friend?	We don't see each other very often because we live so far apart, so, about once or twice a year.
5 do you enjoy your job?	Because it's interesting.
6 you go out for an evening, do you like to do?	My favourite thing to do is to go to the cinema. My friends and I all like horror or science-fiction films.
7 fashion important to you?	No.
8 popular is this food in your country?	You could probably call pasta a national dish! Everyone eats it, more or less every day.
9 part of the town do you live in?	I live in the city centre, just off the High Street. It's very convenient, but can be noisy.
10 did you last go on holiday?	Barbados.
11 is your favourite school subject?	Well, I really enjoy studying Geography.

2 Which answer(s) do you think

- A is/are too short?
- B give(s) enough information?
- C doesn't/don't answer the question?
- D give(s) reasons for the answer?

Using the correct tense

1 Look at questions 1–3 and underline the verbs. Then choose the answer which best matches the verb form in the question.

- 1 Has your country changed much since you were a child?
A Definitely. It is very big with a lot of industry now.
B Yes, of course. It was small and quiet when I was young.
C Yes. It's grown from a small town to a much bigger place.
- 2 Was it easy for you to get this qualification?
A No, not really. I've worked hard for years.
B Actually, it was quite difficult. I had to work full time and study at night.
C No, it's quite a challenge as I don't like studying very much.
- 3 What would you like to do in the future?
A I try to live in the present and not think about the future.
B I applied for a job at a law firm last week because lawyers are well paid.
C I'd like to study to become a teacher and perhaps have children one day.

Remember

When the examiner asks a question, listen to the verb form in the question and try to use the same verb form in your answer. Then, when you continue to give more detail in the rest of your answer, you can use different tenses.

e.g. Where would you like to go for your next holiday?

I'd like to go to Italy. I'd particularly like to visit Rome because I've never been there before and I've heard that it's beautiful. Last year we went to Puglia in the South of Italy...

2 It's better to use more than one tense in your answer. It shows you can use lots of different grammar structures. Underline the verbs in the answer below and say what tenses the candidate uses (e.g. present simple, past simple etc).

Examiner: *Tell me about your home town.*

Candidate: *I live on the outskirts of a small, historic town in south-east Germany. Um, I've lived there for twenty three years. The town has changed quite a lot in this time. It used to be much smaller but a few years ago, a car manufacturer opened on the outskirts and this encouraged a lot of people to move to the town to look for jobs.*

3 Choose the correct tense to complete this answer. Sometimes both tenses are possible.

Examiner: *Tell me about your best friend.*

Candidate: *Her name is Frida. I've known / I knew her since we were / have been both at school. The funny thing is that at first we didn't / don't like each other, but one day I shout / shouted at a girl who was / has been horrible to Frida and we became / become friends. We see / saw each other about once a month and we always have / had a great time. I'm going to see / I'm seeing her next week for a very special occasion – she's getting married.*

Speaking fluently

1 Read the answer below and choose the correct question A–C.

- A What's your favourite hobby?
- B What's your favourite photograph?
- C Why do you like photographs?

Well, I think it's probably taking photographs. Usually I take my camera with me when I go out, and sometimes I'm lucky and see something which makes a wonderful photo. At other times, I'm not so lucky. I used to go to photography classes but now I don't have enough money to do that and anyway, I prefer to teach myself. I love photography because it's a way of keeping a moment in time forever.

2 Find four adverbs of time and frequency in the answer, e.g. usually.

Remember

You get a higher score in the speaking exam if you can:

- use discourse markers like *anyway, of course, well, at other times*
- use linking words like *but, because, so*
- use frequency adverbs like *sometimes, usually, never*

This language helps you to organize what you say and to add detail to your sentences. It makes what you say sound more fluent.

- 3 Look at the words in bold below and match sentence beginnings A–C to endings 1–3. Then answer the questions below the table.

A I like playing golf	1 and anyway , it's too expensive.
B I don't have time to go to an evening class	2 but I hate taking him out in the rain.
C I usually enjoy walking my dog	3 because it's a good form of exercise and you get lots of fresh air.

In the sentence endings, which word in bold


- 1 introduces a contrast?
- 2 introduces a second idea that supports the first?
- 3 introduces a reason?

- 4 Complete the answer to the question below with words from Exercises 2 and 3 above.

Examiner: *How popular is football in your country?*

Candidate: *Well, you could call it a national sport. Matches are (1) on a Sunday and whole families go to watch. I really enjoy watching football (2) the players are really skilful. It's like an art. I used to play (3) I had to stop (4) I hurt my knee, and (5) I wasn't very good at it. My brother still plays though and (6) when I'm not busy, I go to watch his matches. He's a much better player than me.*

Skills practice

- 1  Listen to two candidates, A and B, answering a question, and read the recording script on page 93. Which candidate do you think gives the best answer? Why? Think about the following questions.
Which candidate
 - 1 doesn't hesitate too much?
 - 2 uses a better range of vocabulary?
 - 3 uses grammar accurately?
 - 4 answers all parts of the question fully?
 - 5 has pronunciation which is easier to understand?
 - 6 uses connecting words, linkers and adverbs of frequency?
- 2 Look again at the 'everyday' subjects on page 56. Choose three topics and write four questions that an examiner might ask for each topic.
- 3 Practise answering the questions and record your answers if possible. Then listen to your recording and complete this checklist.

- | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you give enough information?• Did you give reasons for your answer?• Did you use the appropriate tenses?• Did you use linking words and discourse markers?• Did you use a range of vocabulary? |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Remember

You only have one minute to prepare so don't try to write a lot. Just note down single words.

Your notes are there to help you, but you shouldn't read them out. Just use them as a guide.

Don't worry if the examiner stops you when you are speaking. It's better that you say as much as you can.

Planning your answer: writing notes

- 1 In Part 2 of the Speaking module, you are given a card with a question on it. You will have one minute to read the question and make notes on your answer. Look at two students' notes for the question below. Which notes do you think would be more useful in an exam?

Describe your favourite place. You should say:

- where it is
- when you first went there
- what it looks like

and explain why you like it.

A It's in Croatia on the Dalmatian Coast, it's a city called Dubrovnik. When I was very little, with my family, but went back again last year. It's a walled city and it's unusual because it's surrounded by sea. It's really beautiful.

B Croatia, Dubrovnik
Child, with family. Last year.
Walled, unusual location,
beautiful

Introducing ideas and opinions

You can prepare for Part 2 of the Speaking module by learning useful phrases to introduce your ideas and opinions.

These useful phrases often begin with words that link to the question, or to the sentences before. Some useful phrases are:

What I like about ... is that ...

The good / interesting / best thing about ... is that

The reason that I like ... is that ...

The place / person / thing I like / admire the most is ...

The place where I first saw ... was ...


e.g. **What I like about running, is that it isn't competitive.**

The best thing about running, is that it's not competitive.

The reason I don't like football, is that it's boring to watch.

The person (who) I admire the most, is my sister.

The place where I first saw David was Florence, in Italy.

- 1  22 Listen to a student's answer to the exam question on page 59 and tick the phrase (a or b) that you hear.

- 1 **a** One of my favourite places is in Croatia.
b Croatia is one of my favourite places.
- 2 **a** I like Dubrovnik because of its location.
b What I like about Dubrovnik is its location.
- 3 **a** You can combine a city break with swimming and sunbathing, which is good.
b The good thing about this is that you can combine a city break with lots of swimming and sunbathing.

2 Complete the sentences with answers which are true for you. Use the prompts in brackets to help you.

- a The reason I don't like (a place) is that
- b The interesting thing about (a person) is that he/she is
- c What I admire about (a person) is that he/she is
- d The good thing about (an activity) is that it's

3 Read the exam question and the student's notes. Use the notes to answer the question. Try to use the useful phrases for introducing ideas.


Describe a restaurant that you enjoyed going to.

You should say:


- where the restaurant was
 - why you chose this restaurant
 - what type of food you ate in this restaurant
- and explain why you enjoyed eating in this restaurant.

- 'Effi's' in Istanbul, Turkey
- birthday party, recommended by hotel
- Turkish food: kebabs, meze, pilav
- great atmosphere, food delicious

Organizing your answer

1  **23** Listen to a student's answer to the question 'Describe a piece of art you like' and number the parts of the question in the order that the student answers them.

- A who made it
B where you first saw it
C what the piece of art is
D why you like it

2  **23** Complete sentences A–D with one word. Then listen again and check your answers.

- A of my favourite art works is called ...
B The where I first saw *David* was in ...
C An called Michelangelo created the sculpture ...
D The I like the statue is that ...

3 Read the exam question in Exercise 5. How does the student introduce each point of the question?

- A He repeats the points on the card using the same words.
B He uses different words to talk about the points on the card.

4 The student adds extra detail which is not included in the question. Read the answer in the recording script on p93 and underline the extra detail.

- 5 Read the question and a student's answer below. Use the phrases in Exercise 2 above to improve the student's answer. Then add extra detail from the box below.

Describe a piece of art you like. You should say:


- what the piece of art is and who made it
- what it looks like
- where you first saw it


and explain why you like it.

What is the piece of art? It's called 'Composition VIII'. The kind of art is a painting. It's abstract. A artist called Wassily Kadinsky painted it. I first saw it in a gallery in New York when I was a music student. I like it because it is different. Kadinsky thought that art was like music. He said that 'the soul is the piano with many strings'.

oil painting painted in 1923 Russian artist
Guggenheim museum, New York
Painting full of shapes – circles, semi-circles, triangles Lots of lines two dimensional

Using stress and intonation

- 1  24 Listen to two examples of the same answer. Which example A or B sounds more interesting?

- 2  24 Listen to example B again. Underline words in the first two lines which are 'stressed' (emphasized by being said more loudly or with greater force).

The person I admire the most is my mother. The reason I think she's wonderful is that she has always put her children first.

- 3 It's important to vary the tone of your voice so that you sound more interesting. Read and listen to these sentences. Then listen again and repeat them. Copy the intonation used.

The PERSON I admire the MOST Is my MOTHER.

The REASON I think she's WONDERFUL is that she has ALWAYS put her CHILDREN FIRST.

Remember

After you finish answering the question on your card, the examiner will often ask you some more questions. Try to answer them in complete sentences and give more details where possible.

Skills practice

- 1 Read the question and make notes. Stop after one minute.

Describe an interesting historic place in your country. You should say:

- what the place is
- where the place is
- what you can see there now

and explain why the place is interesting.

- 2 Practise answering the question. Then practise with another student. Complete this checklist for your partner and ask them to complete their checklist for you.

- Did you give enough information?
- Did you give reasons for your answer?
- Did you use the appropriate tenses?
- Did you link your ideas together?
- Did you use focusing phrases to introduce your ideas?
- Did you answer all the parts of the question?
- Did you use synonyms and organize your answer correctly?
- Did your answer sound interesting?

Part 3

Remember

In Part 3 of the exam, the examiner asks you further questions which are connected to the topic of the question in Part 2. These questions encourage you to talk about less personal, more abstract ideas and topics.

Skills development

Discussing topics

- 1 Which question(s) (A–F) is asking the speaker to
- 1 consider both sides of an argument?
 - 2 make suggestions and give examples?
 - 3 make a prediction?
- A Do you think the Internet is a good or a bad thing?
 B What are the advantages and disadvantages of learning a foreign language?
 C Do you think people will have more or less free time in the future?
 D What kinds of things do you think students should learn in history lessons?
 E What do you think the consequences of increasing fuel prices will be?
 F Which is better: having a lot of money or having close friends?
- 2 25 Listen and say which three of the questions A–F above the students answer.
- 3 25 Listen again to the first answer and number expressions A–D in the order that you hear them.
- A whereas C Overall though, I think ...
 B In my opinion ... D Unfortunately ...
- 4 Listen again to the second answer and match expressions A–E with the correct sentence ending.

A I don't think that ...	1 money can actually make you lonely.
B I believe that ...	2 stay with you whether you are rich or poor.
C It seems that ...	3 to have good friends than money.
D Real friends, on the other hand ...	4 money can buy you happiness.
E It's much better ...	5 it's much more important to have good friends than to be rich.

- 5 Read phrases A–D and decide whether they introduce positive, negative or neutral information. Then listen and check your answers.
- A I hope that ... C However, I'm afraid that ...
 B Fortunately ... D Realistically ...

Skills practice

- 1 Choose three of the questions A–F above and practise answering them. Then find a friend to be the 'examiner'. Ask them to complete the checklist at the top of the page. Did you use language to express your opinion?

Remember

Part 3 is a discussion with the examiner. Listen carefully to the examiner's questions and answer each question as fully as possible, so that the examiner can listen and get a good idea of your language level. Include extra detail in your answer but make sure you answer the question – don't include information which isn't relevant.