

IELTS SPEAKING PART 2 - SIMON

1. Describe a change that you would like to see in your local area. You should say:

- what the change would be
- who would be involved in making the change
- how it would be done
- and why you would like to see the change happen

The change that I'd like to see in my local neighbourhood is the pedestrianisation of the main shopping street in the town centre. I'd like to see traffic diverted around this area in order to make it safer and more attractive for visitors and shoppers. Most of the traffic that clogs up the main street is just passing through the town, but it's the local people who have to put up with the congestion, noise and pollution.

It's the job of the local council to make changes like the one I'm suggesting. But before the council does anything, there usually needs to be some pressure from local people to bring a problem to light. So, perhaps we need a campaign by local residents who want to see this change. Then the council might contract a town planner or an architect to come up with some possible designs for a new road system.

I'm not sure how exactly the process of creating a pedestrian street would work, but I imagine that it would require detailed planning. Perhaps a bypass would need to be built around the town centre first. This would give drivers a faster alternative to driving through the town, and it would allow the main shopping street to be blocked off and pedestrianised.

I'd like to see this change because it would really improve the quality of life of residents in the town where I live. I can imagine the new pedestrian street having cafes and restaurants with outdoor seating. It would be a safer and more pleasant place for families to go shopping, and I'm sure this would have a positive knock-on effect on local shops and businesses.

2. Describe a film that you would like to see in the future. You should say:

- What the film is called
- What it is about
- How you heard about this film
- And why you would like to see it

I'm going to talk about a film that I'd like to see when it comes out later this year. It's the new James Bond film, and I saw in the news that it's going to be called 'Spectre'. I think 'Spectre' refers to the name of the imaginary criminal organisation that James Bond has to defeat in the film.

As 'Spectre' hasn't been released yet, I don't know exactly what it will be about. But I can guess that the hero, Bond, is going to be on a mission to save the world from an arch-criminal as usual. I'm sure

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it will be similar to most of the previous Bond films, with a plot line involving lots of twists and turns, and with Bond using his skills to defeat his nemesis in the end.

I first heard about this film when I was watching the news a couple of months ago, and since then I've seen the official trailer on TV. There have also been various articles in newspapers discussing the actors who have been cast to play supporting roles in the film. The James Bond films are always big news here in the UK, probably because Bond himself is an English character.

I'd like to see 'Spectre' at the cinema because I'm sure it will be full of action scenes and special effects, and I like the fact that Bond's missions always take place in spectacular locations in different parts of the world. Of course Bond films are totally unrealistic, you could even say ridiculous. But they're always fast, entertaining and fun, a bit like a roller-coaster ride!

3. Describe a prize that you would like to win. You should explain:

- **what the prize is for**
- **how you know about it**
- **what you would have to do to win it**
- **and why you would like to win this prize.**

I'm going to talk about a prize that I would like to win, which is the 'employee of the year' award at the company where I work. At the end of December each year, the company directors give this award to a member of staff who has made an outstanding contribution to the business over the previous twelve months.

I first heard about this prize during my training and orientation period just after I got the job three years ago. It was early December and some of my colleagues were discussing who might be awarded 'employee of the year' later that month. I was intrigued, and asked them to tell me more about the award.

As I said, the prize is given for 'outstanding contribution to the business'. We don't have an exact definition of what this means, but we assume that you have to achieve certain standards, such as 100% attendance, good punctuality, meeting targets and deadlines, good teamwork, and so on. I think the winner also needs to have done something especially creative. For example, last year's winner created a completely new service for our clients.

I'd like to win 'employee of the year' because it would mean that my work had been recognised by the company directors, and this would definitely help me to progress in my career. It would also give me a great sense of personal achievement.

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4. Describe an aim or goal that you hope to achieve in the future. You should say:

- **what the aim is**
- **when you hope to achieve it**
- **what you need to do to reach your goal**
- **and why this goal is important to you.**

I'm going to describe a future aim of mine, which is to write a book. I'd like to write a novel, so the story or plot would be fictional, but it would probably be influenced by some of my own experiences, ideas and views.

Unfortunately I have no idea where to start or what my novel would be about, so I can't imagine achieving this aim until later in my life. Maybe it will be something that I do as a hobby when I retire, or I might suddenly be inspired to start writing much sooner. It's just a vague objective at the moment.

I think it must be extremely difficult to find the motivation to write a novel, so more than anything I would need time, commitment and the passion to keep working until I finished. I would probably need to set a goal of writing for a certain amount of time each day, and of course I'd need a good idea for a story in the first place.

This goal interests me because I've always wondered how people manage to create a work of fiction from nothing; I've always wondered whether I could do the same, and whether I'd be capable of bringing a story to life. I've always enjoyed reading, and I'd like to follow in the footsteps of my favourite authors.

5. Describe an indoor game that you enjoyed as a child. You should say

- **what the game was**
- **where you played it**
- **who played this game with you**
- **and why you liked it**

As a child I enjoyed playing chess. I think chess is probably the best known board game in the world. It's a game for two players, and the aim is to defeat the other player by taking his or her pieces and eventually trapping his King. This final move is called checkmate.

I remember that it was a classmate of mine at primary school who first taught me to play chess. He had a small, portable chess set, and once I knew how each piece moved, we started playing at break and lunch times; we played in our classroom or outside on the school playground. Later my parents bought me my own chess set as a birthday present so that I could play at home.

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I taught my younger brother to play, and at some point I joined the school chess club. There I had the chance to hone my skills against some of the older pupils, and in my final year of primary school I made it onto the school team. There were five of us on the team, and we competed against children from other primary schools in the same town.

I liked playing chess because I enjoyed the challenge of thinking ahead and trying to outwit my opponent. I was probably seven or eight years old when I started playing, and it seemed like a very mysterious and intellectual game at that time. Also, although I loved winning, chess taught me to learn from my losses and to congratulate the person who had beaten me.

6. Describe a school that you went to when you were a child. You should say:

- where the school was
- when you went there
- what the school and the teachers were like
- and explain whether you enjoyed your time there.

I'm going to talk about my primary school. The school was called and it was in the town of The location of the school was great because it was within walking distance of our family home at the time. The route to school was all downhill, which made it an easy walk in the morning, but a tiring journey on the way home in the afternoon!

I was a pupil at school between the ages of 5 and 11 - the full 6 years of primary education. From age 11 onwards, I went to a nearby secondary school.

My primary school seemed like a big place at the time, but it was actually quite a small school, with only six classes. I remember there being a large room called the assembly hall, where the whole school gathered every morning to hear messages from the headmaster. I also remember spending a lot of time on the playground and on the sports field. I liked all of my teachers; they were caring but strict at the same time, and I think they fostered a positive and fun atmosphere in the school.

I have really fond memories of my primary school years, mainly because of the friends I made and the fun I had. One of my most vivid memories is of performing in the school play in my final year. I had to learn lines and play the part of a character in a traditional children's story. It was a nerve-racking experience, but it felt like my first real achievement.

7. Describe a family celebration that you remember. You should say

- what you were celebrating
- who was present
- what you and your family did to make the celebration special
- and why you enjoyed the occasion.

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I'm going to describe my sister's wedding day, which took place a few years ago in the town where I grew up. For my sister it was the biggest and most important day of her life.

I think there were around 100 people at the marriage ceremony, which was held in a church. Even more people came to the party, or the wedding reception as we call it, after the ceremony. Of course, most members of my family were there, as well as the groom's family and a collection of the bride and groom's friends and colleagues.

To make the celebration special, we did what families normally do. My mother made sure that the church and the reception venue were nicely decorated - there were flowers everywhere! Obviously we all dressed for the occasion, and there were bridesmaids, gifts, a huge wedding cake, and so on.

I enjoyed the occasion because it was great to see my sister so happy on her big day. The ceremony was perfect, and we all had a fantastic time at the reception. It's rare for me to see all of my family and friends together in one place, so that's probably what made the day so memorable for me.

8. Describe a positive experience that you had as a teenager. You should say

- **what the positive experience was**
- **where you were**
- **who you were with**
- **and explain why you found the experience positive.**

I'm going to describe the first time I visited England's capital city, London, on a school trip when I was a teenager. I had never been to London before, and it was great to share that experience with my school friends.

The positive experience wasn't confined to one particular place in London. As far as I remember, I enjoyed the whole trip, from the coach journey to the visits to various tourist attractions. We got off the coach near the Houses of Parliament, and so one of my first memories was seeing the famous 'Big Ben' clock tower. We also visited the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square.

As I said earlier, it was a school trip, and I think there were around thirty of us, including two teachers. I was with a group of close friends, which made the experience more enjoyable.

What really struck me about London was that it was historic but modern and thriving at the same time. It seemed to me to be a lively, fashionable and cosmopolitan place. Coming from a relatively small town, the experience made me keen to visit more capital cities in the future.

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9. Describe a subject that you think should be removed from school education programmes. You should say:

- **what the subject is**
- **why you think it is unnecessary for children to study it**
- **and explain what you would replace it with.**

I'm going to suggest that art could be taken out of the school curriculum. In my experience, art lessons at school tend to include drawing, painting, and the making of collages using paper, fabric and other household materials.

There are a few reasons why I think that school art lessons are unnecessary. Firstly, I don't believe that drawing and painting are essential skills that children will need when they leave school. Children might find these activities enjoyable, but it's unlikely that they will need them in the working world. Secondly, children can draw, paint and make collages in their own time at home; parents can encourage this, and they can even join in. Finally, remembering my own art lessons at school, I don't think we learnt any real art skills; the teachers left us to draw or create things, but they didn't provide much technical instruction.

Instead of art lessons, children could do more work on core subjects like maths, science or language. These subjects are more likely to help children in later life when they enter the job market, and I think both children and their teachers would benefit if more time were devoted to them.

10. Describe an interesting conversation you had with someone you didn't know. You should say

- **who the person was**
- **where the conversation took place**
- **what you talked about**
- **and explain why you found the conversation interesting.**

I'm going to talk about an interesting conversation that I had a couple of weeks ago in a music shop. I was walking along one of the main shopping streets in the city centre, when a large window displaying all sorts of musical instruments caught my eye. Out of curiosity, I decided to go in and have a look around.

The person I ended up speaking to was a shop assistant on the second floor, in the area of the shop dedicated to acoustic guitars. I hadn't intended to speak to anyone, but the assistant approached me in a friendly way and asked whether I had any questions.

I explained to the assistant that I hadn't played the guitar for years, but that I wondered what the differences were between the various acoustic guitars on show. He talked to me about the different

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makes and models, whether they were factory or hand made, the woods and varnishes used, the variation in sound quality, and of course the price range.

I found the conversation fascinating because the shop assistant was so knowledgeable. It was obvious that he had a passion for the guitar, and he didn't mind talking to me even though I had made it clear that I didn't intend to buy anything. He even picked up and played three or four of the instruments to demonstrate the differences in their sound.

11. Describe a future plan which is not related to work or study. You should say

- **what the plan is**
- **when you thought of the plan**
- **who is involved in the plan**
- **and say how you think you will achieve the plan.**

I'm going to talk about a future plan that I have, which is to buy a good camera and to become a better photographer. At the moment I'm just using the camera on my mobile phone, but I've realised that it has its limitations.

I thought of this plan when I was at a friend's wedding a few weeks ago. I got some great pictures of the bride and groom and their guests celebrating, but I did notice that with my phone camera I wasn't able to capture longer range photos, or photos in darker conditions; the phone's zoom and flash aren't very good. Next time I'd like to be able to capture a special occasion in higher quality images.

Obviously this plan depends on whether I can save enough money to buy the camera I'd like. Also, before making a decision about which camera to get, I'll probably talk to a friend who knows more about photography than I do.

In terms of buying a camera, I'll achieve this plan if I can save some money! In terms of becoming a better photographer, I think I'll achieve that goal by experimenting with my new camera and by learning as I go along.

12. Describe your favourite season in your country. You should say

- **when that season is**
- **what the weather is like at that time of year**
- **how that season is different from other seasons**
- **and why it is your favourite season.**

My favourite season in England is winter. A typical English winter would last around 4 or 5 months between November and March, but when I say that I like the winter, I'm really thinking about the coldest month or two each year.

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During those really wintry months, the temperature drops below zero and it often snows. Over the last few years we've had periods of quite heavy snowfall, to the extent that roads have been blocked and schools have had to close. Last winter I remember looking out of the window one morning and seeing everything covered in a layer of white.

Obviously the snow is what differentiates winter from the other seasons, but when it doesn't snow there isn't much difference between winter, autumn and spring; winter is just a bit colder.

The reason I've chosen winter as my favourite season is because I like the snow. I live near the countryside, and the landscape looks beautiful when everything is covered in white. We also celebrate Christmas and New Year in the winter, and these are my favourite festivals.

13. Describe an open-air or street market which you enjoyed visiting. You should say:

- **where the market is**
- **what the market sells**
- **how big the market is**
- **and explain why you enjoyed visiting it.**

I'm going to describe a street market that I've enjoyed visiting many times in Manchester. It's the Manchester Christmas Market, and it comes to the city for about a month from the end of November every year. The market stalls are spread across several sites in the city centre, but the centrepiece is the large European market in Albert Square next to the Town Hall.

The Christmas Market stalls sell an array of Christmas gifts and mouth-watering food and drink from all over Europe. It's a great place to find handmade crafts such as jewellery, ornaments, wooden toys and other souvenirs, but it's the food and drink that seem to be most popular. Probably the biggest seller is the 'Gluhwein', a hot, sweet wine which is sold in a souvenir mug.

The market was originally quite small, occupying just one of the central squares in Manchester, but it's grown quickly in recent years, spilling over into maybe five other pedestrian streets and a few other squares. Apparently there are over 200 stalls now, so it's become a really big event attracting thousands of visitors.

The main reason I've always enjoyed visiting the Christmas Market is the fantastic atmosphere. When I went there last December, it didn't matter how cold or wet the weather was, Manchester seemed to come alive when the market opened; the streets were bustling with people and there was a real festive feel to the city.

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14. Describe a funny situation that made you laugh. You should say

- **when this situation took place**
- **what happened**
- **how you reacted and why you found the situation funny.**

I'm going to talk about a funny thing that happened to me a couple of weeks ago. I think it was a Saturday morning, and I was sitting having a coffee in a café near where I live.

I was on my own so I decided to read the newspaper while drinking my coffee. I must have been quite engrossed in what I was reading because the time passed quickly, and I suddenly realised that I needed to get going. What I didn't realise was that I had been sitting with my legs crossed, and one of my legs had completely gone to sleep. As I stood up to leave the café, I quickly became aware that my left leg was 'dead', but it was too late; I started to fall. I thought I could catch myself on the table, but the table tipped over and I fell to the floor in front of everyone in the café!

I can remember being on my knees in the middle of the café, looking up at the staff and customers around me. I felt really embarrassed and I expected the other people to find it funny, but to my surprise nobody was laughing. They were all worried that something really bad had happened to me! As I got up from the floor, I had to explain to the whole café that I was fine. I was embarrassed at the time, but I laughed about it later!

15. Describe a team project that you worked on. You should say:

- **what it was**
- **what you did**
- **and how you felt about it.**

I'd like to talk about a team project that I was involved in during my final term at business school. There were four of us on the team, and our task was to work with a local company to research a new market, in a European country, for one of their products or services. Our objective was to produce a report and give a presentation.

The first thing we did was split into two groups of two. We had been assigned a company that produced a range of bicycle accessories, so two of us spent some time getting to know the company while the other two researched the market and the competitors in the target country, which was Germany. In the end, I think it was a successful project because we managed to identify a possible gap in the market in Germany for one of the company's products. Our group presentation also went really well.

Until that point, the course had been all about business theory, so it was quite a learning experience to work with a real company. I felt a real sense of accomplishment when we handed in our report and delivered our presentation, and I think all of us were proud of what we had done.

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16. Describe a piece of furniture that you own. You should say

- **what it is**
- **where you bought it**
- **how you use it**
- **and explain why you like it.**

I'm going to talk about my favourite chair. It's a big, leather armchair that sits in my living room at home, just under my living room window.

I didn't actually buy the armchair. One of my friends was moving house and was going to buy some new furniture. I had always liked his leather armchair, so he said I could have it if I managed to move it. The chair wouldn't fit in my car, and it was tricky to get it out of my friend's apartment. I had to hire a small van to take the armchair home.

Obviously I use the armchair for sitting! It's my favourite place in the house to relax, read a book, watch TV or even do some work; the chair's arms are quite wide and flat, so my laptop fits nicely on either of them. Last night I fell asleep in my armchair while I was watching a film.

The main reasons why I like this piece of furniture are that it's comfortable and it's in the perfect position in my living room. The only drawback might be that I enjoy sitting in the armchair too much, and sometimes I think it makes me lazy!

17. Describe an old building that you like. You should say:

- **where it is**
- **what it is used for**
- **and why you like it.**

I'm going to describe a very famous building in New York: the Empire State Building. People might not think of it as an old building, but the Empire State Building was built in 1931, so I don't think it can be classed as new. It's located on Manhattan island and it's probably the most distinctive and recognisable building when you look at New York's skyline.

As far as I know, the Empire State Building is an office building, but visitors can go up to an observation deck on the top floor, which is the 102nd floor. There's also a 360-degree observation area on the 86th floor. Apparently, the building makes more money from the sale of tickets to the observation floors than it does from office rentals.

I think the Empire State Building is still one of the most impressive skyscrapers in the world. It's such an iconic structure, and it's amazing to think that it was built around 80 years ago. The best thing about the building is the viewing deck on the top floor, which offers spectacular views of the city; it's

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definitely the best vantage point in New York. I'd recommend anyone who visits the city to go there and experience the view.

18. Describe a TV programme or channel that you enjoy watching regularly.

- **What it is called and what is it about?**
- **When do you usually watch it ?**
- **Why do you prefer it to other programmes or channels?**

I rarely watch traditional television channels nowadays; I much prefer searching for interesting programmes or videos online. So, although it's not a normal TV channel or programme, I'd like to talk about a website which I think is kind of a modern version of a TV channel. It's called TED, which stands for 'Technology, Entertainment, Design', and it's a great place to watch short talks and presentations about all sorts of interesting topics.

The good thing about the videos on TED is that I can watch them whenever I want. I have ted.com saved as one of my favourites on my laptop, and I tend to visit the website every few days to check whether there is anything new. I often watch TED videos on my phone while I'm travelling to work on the train.

The reason I like watching online videos on TED is that I learn something new every time I watch one. The tagline for the TED website is 'ideas worth spreading', and this really sums up the appeal of the site for me. Instead of watching meaningless soap operas and talk shows on TV, I'd much rather spend 10 minutes watching someone talk about a breakthrough in technology, science or healthcare.

19. Describe a vehicle you would like to buy in the future. You should say

- **what kind of vehicle it is**
- **what you would use it for**
- **and why you would like to buy it.**

If I had the money, I'd like to buy my own helicopter. I recently saw a TV programme about someone who flew around in his own helicopter, and I remember thinking that it would be great to have one. The helicopter on the programme was a small, blue, two-seater and it seemed quite easy to fly - that's the kind of thing I'd like to buy.

Ideally, I'd use my helicopter instead of a car. First, I'd need to learn to fly it, but then I'd use it to go on short trips or holidays. It would be fantastic to be able to avoid traffic jams, and get everywhere in a fraction of the time it normally takes. I'd take friends and family sightseeing, over cities or mountain tops, and maybe I could even use it to do the shopping!

The reason I'd like to buy a helicopter is that you can park one almost anywhere. You don't need to find a runway or an airport like you would for a plane. So I'd be able to park my helicopter in my

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garden - if I had a bigger garden. Also, I've always been intrigued by those helipads on the tops of tall buildings - I think it would be fun to land on top of a building. A helicopter probably isn't a realistic choice of vehicle, but you never know - I might win the lottery!

20. Describe a website that you often use. You should say:

- what type of website it is
- how you found out about it
- what it allows you to do, and why you find it useful.

Facebook is a social networking website. It's a free website that allows you to keep in contact with friends or find people you've lost touch with. It's one of the most popular websites in the world, with millions of users in different countries.

All of my friends use Facebook. One of my friends sent me an email inviting me to join. I signed up and I've been using it ever since.

Facebook allows you to keep up to date with what friends are doing. You have a profile page with information and status updates so that you can tell everyone what you're doing. You can post messages to other people's pages. You can upload photos and videos. I find Facebook most useful for organising my life, keeping in touch with friends and storing photos. I think social networking websites have become part of everyday life.

21. Describe a beautiful garden that you like. You should say

- where it is
- what you can see there
- what people do there
- and explain why you like it.

Today I'd like to describe my home garden, which I think is a beautiful one and which I like very much. The garden is part of my home's backyard, and my house is located in the suburbs, about a 1-hour drive from the city of San Francisco. There is a big tree right in the middle of my garden, which is surrounded by a hot tub, a small water fountain, several bushes, a section for vegetables, and different kinds of flowers.

This garden was actually one of the reasons why my wife and I chose to buy our house because it had been beautifully maintained by the previous owner's gardener and landscaper. It's been only 1 year since we bought the house and now we are taking care of the garden ourselves. Even though we are not experts in gardening, we still try our best to plant things that we like, such as roses and tulips, and we even grow our own tomatoes.

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Whenever family and friends come to visit us, we invite them to have a relaxing time in our hot tub, and enjoy the view. So in other words, our garden has also become a kind of resort! It definitely requires lots of hard work to properly maintain the garden, but it gives us a great sense of accomplishment to “decorate” it the way we like.

All in all, the garden is one of the best features of my home and it is a place where I can relax after a long day of work or during the weekends.

22. Describe a situation that made you angry. You should say

- **when it happened**
- **what happened**
- **how you felt**

A recent situation that made me angry was getting stuck in a traffic jam on the way to meet some friends. It was last Sunday lunchtime, and I didn't expect there to be much traffic; people don't work on Sundays, so the roads aren't usually very busy.

Everything was going well until suddenly I saw a queue of cars on the road in front of me. I had no choice but to join the queue and wait to get past whatever was causing the delay. It turned out that it was caused by some roadworks, and it took me an extra 30 minutes to get past them.

Getting stuck in traffic congestion doesn't usually make me angry, but this time it did, mainly because I wasn't expecting it and I knew that my friends were waiting to meet me for lunch. I felt frustrated and powerless because there was nothing I could do to change the situation, and I had no idea how long I would be sitting there waiting. When I finally saw the reason for the congestion, I was relieved that I was close to getting past the roadworks, but I still felt a bit stressed knowing that I was half an hour late.

23. Describe an artist or entertainer you admire. You should say:

- **who they are and what they do**
- **how they became successful**
- **how you found out about them**
- **and why you admire them**

I'm going to talk about a musician that I admire, called... He's a singer who also plays the guitar and writes his own songs. I think he recorded his first album about 10 years ago, and he's released several other CDs since then.

He became successful after many years of writing songs and performing live in small venues all over the country. Gradually he built a following of people who liked his music. I think the key to his

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success was one of his songs that was used on a TV advertisement. This meant that more people became aware of his music.

I found out about... because one of my friends got tickets to see him in concert. I hadn't heard any of his music before, but I went along to the gig and really enjoyed it. After that I bought the first CD, and now I've got all of them.

The reason I admire... is that he has worked hard for his success: it takes years of practice to become a good singer and guitarist, and he spent several years playing to very small audiences before he became successful. I also like the fact that he writes his own music. I admire people who have worked hard to get where they are.

24. Describe an interesting lesson that you attended. You should say:

- **where you attended this lesson**
- **what it was about**
- **and why you found it interesting**

I'm going to talk about an interesting science lesson that I attended at secondary school when I was 14 or 15 years old.

It was quite a long time ago, so I can't remember every detail, but the lesson was about respiration. We learnt about how the lungs work, how we breathe, and how oxygen passes into the blood. The science teacher also talked to us about the effects of smoking on the lungs.

I found this lesson interesting because my science teacher, Dr. Smith, always introduced new topics by showing us a video. We watched a short film about how respiration works, and I found this much easier to understand than a science textbook. The film showed diagrams of the lungs to explain the breathing process. Later in the lesson we saw real photos of healthy lungs and lungs that had been damaged as a result of smoking; they had turned black. I think the image of a smoker's lungs is the reason why I remember this lesson.

25. Describe a modern building. You should say:

- **where it is**
- **what it is used for**
- **and why you like/dislike it.**

I'm going to describe a modern building in Manchester. It's called the Beetham Tower, and it's the tallest building in the city, with about 50 floors.

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Although it's called the Beetham Tower, most people know this building as the Hilton Hotel. In fact, the bottom half of the tower is the hotel and the top half is apartments. The apartments are expensive because the location and views make them very desirable. Beetham

I'm not sure if I like the design of the building, it's just a huge glass tower, but it definitely stands out. It has become a famous landmark in the city. You can see it as you approach Manchester, and it's an easy place to meet people because it's so distinctive and easy to find. The most interesting thing about the Beetham Tower is that there is a bar/restaurant on the 23rd floor which has spectacular views of the city; it's definitely the best vantage point in Manchester because there are no walls, only huge windows, so you can look out over the city in any direction. I'd recommend anyone who visits Manchester to go there and experience the view.

26. Describe a practical skill that you have learnt (e.g. cooking, driving). You should say:

- what the skill is
- how you learnt it
- why you learnt it
- and how this skill has helped you

I'm going to talk about driving, which is a practical skill that I use almost every day.

I learnt to drive a car by taking lessons when I was 17. My parents paid for me to have lessons with a professional driving instructor. I learnt by practising: first I had to get used to steering, changing gears and using the mirrors, then we practised things like reversing and parking. I also had to learn the highway code.

As a 17-year-old, I wanted to have the experience of driving a car, and I was fed up with having to walk or take the bus or train whenever I wanted to go somewhere. I also knew that driving would be an extremely useful skill.

Being able to drive has helped me in so many ways. The public transport where I live isn't very good, so I travel to work by car most days. Having a car makes my life much easier when it comes to things like shopping or visiting family and friends.

27. Describe a person you admire. You should say:

- who the person is
- what he or she is like
- and why you admire him or her.

I'm going to talk about my father because he has been a major influence in my life.

IELTS SPEAKING PART 2 - SIMON

My father was always a good role model for me as I was growing up. He's hard-working, patient and understanding; he's also got a good sense of humour and seems to get on well with everybody. Hopefully I've inherited some of these traits.

I admire my father because I think he brought me and my brothers/sisters up well; he was quite strict but always fair, and he has always been someone I can turn to for advice. I think my father set a good example by working hard and having a positive outlook on life. I remember that he used to leave for work early and come home quite late, but he always made time for me and my brothers/sisters.

28. Describe an interesting advertisement that you have seen. You should say:

- **where you saw it**
- **what it was about**
- **why you think it was an interesting advertisement.**

I'm going to talk about an advertisement for Coca-Cola, which is one of the biggest brands in the world. I've seen Coke advertised everywhere, on posters and TV commercials.

The advert shows a picture of Santa Claus smiling and holding a bottle of Coke. I think the aim is to target children and associate (link/connect) the brand with Christmas time.

The advert is interesting because the company is deliberately trying to influence and attract children. The marketers are trying to capture young customers. They are presenting the drink as something special, a gift for Christmas. However, Coca-Cola is not necessarily a healthy drink for children; it contains a lot of sugar. Maybe this kind of advertising manipulates children and encourages them to pester their parents.

29. Describe a wild animal from your country. You should say:

- **what the animal is and what it looks like**
- **where it lives**
- **and explain how people in your country (or you) feel about this animal.**

I'm going to describe the 'robin' which is a wild bird that is common in the UK. The robin is a small bird with brown and white feathers and an area of bright red colour on its face and on the front of its body. The area of red colour makes robins very easy to distinguish from other birds. Robin

Robins are common garden birds. Many houses in the UK have a garden, and you can often see this bird sitting in a tree. They make their nests in trees and go looking for food. You might also see a robin if you go for a walk in the countryside or in a park.

IELTS SPEAKING PART 2 - SIMON

Robins have a special place in British culture. They are considered to be christmas birds, and are often used on christmas cards. Many people leave food in their gardens for robins and other small birds to eat.