



Describe a leisure activity you like doing in your free time. You should say:

- **what kind of activity it is**
- **how often you do it**
- **what equipment you need to do it**

and explain why you enjoy doing it.

Word	Example	Useful Linking Expressions
enjoy	I really enjoy walking around cities.	• I suppose ... • I guess ...
enjoyment/pleasure	I get a lot of pleasure from playing cricket	• Let me think ... • Let me see ...
interest	One of my interests is web design	• Um, well ... • Er, I'm not sure ...
interested in	I'm quite interested in web design	• ... like, you know ... • ... I don't know ...
fascinated by	I'm fascinated by the idea of	
keen on	I'm very keen on correct pronunciation.	
into	At the moment, I'm really into the history of art.	
I'd like to	I'd like to learn to play golf a lot better	
dream about	I dream about playing cricket for England one day	
love/adore	I absolutely love Chinese food	

Brief introduction

What do I do in spare time? Well there's lots of different things I could tell you about – **I'm a pretty active** person and I **like to keep myself busy** so even when I'm not working **I'm always doing something**.

What it is

I suppose my favourite activity is simply riding my bicycle. I moved to Cambridge about a year now and it's a city famous for being bike friendly – perhaps because it's so flat. So I decided to buy myself a bike. At first it was just to go to work but **I enjoyed it so much that I also started cycling for fun**.

When and where I do it

At first I would just ride around the city by myself – going through some of the parks and down by the riverside. Then I discovered that there was a really active Cycling Club. It's really just a group of people who like **to get out and about on the weekend**. So I joined up and started going out with

them most Saturdays. We don't tend to go very far – normally only around 20–25 miles and we don't race. The idea is **just to enjoy the day** and **we normally end up in** one of the local villages and share a meal or picnic **before heading back into the city**.

Why I enjoy it

I enjoy cycling because it's of course good exercise and **I like to keep fit**. But it's a bit more than that. It allows me to get out of the city and see some of the countryside.



Describe a song you like to listen to. You should say:

- **what the piece of music is called**
- **how long you have liked it**
- **when you like to listen to it and say why you like it so much.**

SAMPLE: Well ... I'm a little older than most students and when I was young Abba the Swedish **pop group** were very famous ... I don't think it was cool to like them even though they had a **huge following** but I think now people have realised what wonderful songs they wrote ... one **piece of music** in particular is called 'Slipping through my fingers' ... it wasn't a **massive hit** but I love it ... it's a song for parents and it's all about how quickly our children grow up ... it's a **slow number** and like a lot of their songs it's a very **catchy tune** ... the two women in Abba had great voices and it's the kind of music you can also **sing along to easily** ... even if you don't have a great voice ... I listen to Abba when I feel like a **sing-song** ... and I especially like to listen when I'm doing the housework ... it stops me thinking about the hard work.

adoring fans: people who love a particular band or singer

background music: music that is played while something else is happening

a catchy tune: a song that is easy to remember and makes you want to sing it

classical music: music that is regarded as part of a long, formal tradition

to download tracks: to obtain music from the Internet

to have a great voice: to sing well

to go on tour: to go on a planned series of performances around a region or country

a huge following: a large number of fans

live music: music that is listened to while it is performed (not recorded)

live performance: (see live music)

a massive hit: a record that sells lots of copies

a music festival: music performances at a venue often over several days

musical talent: skilled at music

to be/sing out of tune: to not be in harmony/to sing the wrong notes

a piece of music: an item of music

to play by ear: to play without reading the musical notes

a pop group: a small group of people who play or sing pop music together

to read music: to understand and follow written musical notes

a rock band: a group of musicians that play rock music

to sing along to: to join in singing

a sing-song: to sing informally, often with other people

a slow number: a song with a slow tempo
to take up a musical instrument: to begin learning a musical instrument

taste in music: the music someone likes

to be tone deaf: to be unable to distinguish the different notes in music



Describe a time when you were ill. You should say:

- **when this was**
- **what your symptoms were**
- **how long the illness lasted**

and say how it affected your life at the time.

SAMPLE: Pierre: This is a tricky one really as I'm usually quite healthy ... I've never been seriously ill ... like everyone else I sometimes get a few **aches and pains** or **catch a cold** ... I can remember a few months ago I had to have time off work with **a heavy cold** ... I had the usual symptoms ... **a blocked nose** ... **sore throat** ... it lasted quite a while ... about 2 weeks I think though I didn't have that much time off work ... for a few days I remember **feeling poorly** but I was **over the worst of** it after a few days and went back to work ... I always find it's better to be active when you feel ill as it keeps your mind of your symptoms ... I think my family get a little fed up with me when I'm ill though ... I tend to feel sorry for myself and lie on the sofa all day as if **I'm at death's door** ... but as I said earlier ... on this occasion it was nothing serious and didn't really cause me any problems ...

aches and pains: minor pains that continue over a period of time

to be a bit off colour: to feel a little ill

to be at death's door: (informal) to be very ill indeed

to be on the mend: to be recovering after an illness

to be over the worst: to have got through the most serious or uncomfortable stage of an illness

to be under the weather: (informal) to not feel well

a blocked nose: when the nose has excess fluid due to a cold

to catch a cold: to get a cold

a check-up: a physical examination by a doctor

a chesty cough: a cough caused by congestion around the lungs

cuts and bruises: minor injuries

to feel poorly: to feel ill

as fit as a fiddle: to be very healthy

to go down with a cold: to become ill

to go private: to choose to be treated by commercial healthcare rather than by services offered by the state

GP: General Practitioner (family doctor)

to have a filling: to have a tooth repaired

to have a tooth out: to have a tooth removed

a heavy cold: a bad cold

to make an appointment: to arrange a time to see the doctor

to make a speedy recovery: to recover quickly from an illness

to phone in sick: to call work to explain you won't be attending work due to illness

prescription charges: money the patient pays for medicine authorised by a doctor

to pull a muscle: to strain a muscle

a runny nose: a nose that has liquid coming out of it

a sore throat: inflammation that causes pain when swallowing



Describe a restaurant that you like to use. You should say:

- **where this restaurant is**
- **what kind of food it serves**
- **how often you go there**

and say why you like eating there so much.

SAMPLE: OK ... this is a nice topic to talk about ... there's a restaurant just around the corner from where I live ... it's an Italian restaurant so as you'd expect you can eat various pasta dishes and pizzas and I usually go there with my family for **a slap-up meal** if we have anything to celebrate ... it's quite a posh restaurant ... the kind of place you would take someone if you wanted to **wine and dine** them ... we usually order **a 3-course meal** ... a light starter then a main dish ... and I have quite **a sweet tooth** so I always look forward to the dessert ... I usually order Tiramisu ... it **makes my mouth** water just to think about it ... I'm always totally **full up** by the end ... why do I enjoy it there ... well ... it's not cheap ... my parents always **foot the bill** and we couldn't afford to go there regularly so it's always a nice treat ...

to be full up: to eat to the point that you can no longer eat any more

to be starving hungry: an exaggerated way of saying you are very hungry

to bolt something down: to eat something very quickly

to be dying of hunger: an exaggerated way of saying you are hungry

to eat a balanced diet: to eat the correct types and amounts of food

to eat like a horse: to eat a lot

to follow a recipe: to cook a meal using instructions

to foot the bill: to pay the bill

a fussy eater: somebody who has their own very high standards about what to eat

to grab a bite to eat: to eat something quickly (when you're in a rush)

to have a sweet tooth: to enjoy sugary food

home-cooked food: food cooked at home from individual ingredients

the main meal: the most important meal of

the day, usually eaten in the evening

to make your mouth water: to make you feel very hungry for something

to play with your food: to push food around the plate to avoid eating it

processed food: commercially prepared food bought for convenience

a quick snack: to eat a small amount of food between meals

a ready meal: see 'processed food'

a slap up meal: a large meal

to spoil your appetite: to eat something that will stop you feeling hungry when it's meal-time.

a take away: a cooked meal prepared in a restaurant and eaten at home

to tuck into: to eat something with pleasure

to wine and dine: to entertain someone by treating them to food and drink

to work up an appetite: to do physical work that leads to you becoming hungry



Describe a time when you experienced extreme weather conditions. You should say:

- **when this was**
- **where you were**
- **what the weather was like**

and say how you felt about the experience.

SAMPLE: I was studying English in a language school a few years ago ... we were in Cornwall in the UK ... we'd been enjoying lovely sunny days ... **not a cloud in the sky** ... when all of a sudden there was a **change in the weather** ... we were in town walking around the shops when it started **to pour down** ... I'd never seen such **heavy rain** before ... within about 10 minutes the roads were full of water ... I think they call it a **flash flood** ... it was like being in the middle of a **tropical storm** ... the water was almost up to my knees ... the **weather forecast** hadn't predicted it so everyone was taken by surprise ... I'm not sure you could call it 'extreme' weather as a few hours later it started **to clear up** ... **the sun came out** and slowly the water level went down ... but a lot of people's houses were flooded so it would have been extreme for them ... I found it all quite exciting ... in my country we generally have a very **mild climate** and don't often get floods like this so it was quite an experience for me.

to be below freezing: below zero degrees Celsius

bitterly cold: very cold and unpleasant

a blanket of snow: a complete covering of snow

boiling hot: very hot (informal)

changeable: weather that often changes

a change in the weather: when weather conditions change

clear blue skies: a sky without clouds

to clear up: when clouds or rain disappear

to come out (the sun): when the sun appears out of a cloudy sky

a cold spell: a short period of cold weather

to dress up warm: to wear warm clothes to protect yourself against wintry conditions

a drop of rain: a little bit of rain

a flash flood: a sudden and severe flood

freezing cold: very cold (informal)

to get caught in the rain: to be outside when it rains unexpectedly

to get drenched: to get very wet

heatstroke: a serious condition caused by being

too long in hot weather

a heatwave: a period of very hot weather

heavy rain: intense rainfall

long-range forecast: the weather forecast for several days or weeks ahead

mild climate: a climate without extreme weather conditions

mild winter: a winter that isn't particularly cold

not a cloud in the sky: see 'clear blue skies' above

to pour down: to rain heavily

to be rained off: to be cancelled or postponed due to poor weather

sunny spells: short periods of sunny weather

thick fog: a dense fog that makes visibility very poor

torrential rain: see 'heavy rain' above

tropical storm: a storm typical of ones that you find in tropical climates

weather forecast: a TV/radio programme or section in a newspaper/magazine which predicts weather conditions



Describe an interesting town or city in your country that visitors might enjoy. You should say:

- **what the place is called**
- **where the place is**
- **what the facilities are like**

and say why visitors might enjoy going there.

SAMPLE: Anyone who comes to my country really should spend some time in Barcelona ... it's a beautiful place ... it's not what you would call a **sprawling city** ... it's quite compact really and you could walk across the city in a couple of hours ... but there's no need to do that as we have a fantastic **public transport system** so it's easy **to get around** ... there are various districts all with their own character ... you have the **upmarket shops** in the centre ... you'll find lots of **chain stores** you'll recognise from your own country but also local brands as well ... we have the narrow streets in the Gothic district with lots of **fashionable boutiques** and **tourist attractions** ... there's the Olympic area and the beaches along the coast ... and dotted around the city are some lovely **public spaces** ... parks and squares in the **city centre** and **on the outskirts** of Barcelona where people relax with their friends and family ... and of course **pavement cafes** everywhere ... all that and some great historical **places of interest** ... so a great destination for tourists ...

boarded up shops: shops that are no longer doing business

chain stores: well-known brands with shops in multiple cities

to close down: to stop doing business

fashionable boutiques: fashionable clothes shops

to get around: to travel around

high-rise flats: multi-story apartments

inner-city: the central part of a city where people live and where conditions are often poor

in the suburbs: the outer area of large towns and cities where people live

lively bars/restaurants: bars or restaurants with a good atmosphere

local facilities: local buildings or services serving the public

multi-story car parks: car parks on several floors

office block: a large building that contains offices

out of town shopping centre/retail park: large shopping centres outside of the town or city

pavement cafe: cafes with tables outside on the

pavement

places of interest: buildings that have a particular interest for visitors

poor housing: housing that is not in good condition

public spaces: areas in a town or city that are open to the public

public transport system: public vehicles such as buses and trains that operate at regular times on fixed routes

residential area: an area where people live

run down: old and of a poor standard

shopping centre: an area consisting of multiple shops

shopping malls: large indoor shopping centres

sprawling city: a city that has grown over time and which covers a wide area

tourist attraction: a place of interest to tourists

traffic congestion: heavy traffic making it difficult to move around a town or city

upmarket shops: expensive fashionable shops



Describe a beautiful place you once visited. You should say:

- **when you went to this place**
- **where it was**
- **who you went with**

and say why you liked it so much.

Sample: Sally: A few years ago I went on a **long weekend** to the Lake District in the UK ... it's a very popular **holiday destination** in the north of England ... I went on my own and had a wonderful time ... I stayed in a **youth hostel** and met some really nice people ... but the most memorable thing about the holiday were the **breathtaking views** ... and lovely **picturesque villages** ... it can get very busy with **hordes of tourists** so I decided **to go out of season** in the autumn ... the weather was fantastic and the shops were full of **local crafts** ... a really great holiday ... it's certainly not the kind of **short break** for someone looking for a busy nightlife but if you want to relax in the middle of **stunning landscape** I would certainly recommend a holiday to the Lake District.

all-in package/package holiday: a holiday where you purchase the travel and accommodation together

breathtaking view: an extremely beautiful view

charter-flight: a cheaper form of flying than a scheduled flight

check-in desk: the place at the airport where you register for your flight and deposit your luggage

departure lounge: where you wait for your flight to be called

far-off destination: somewhere a long way away

to get away from it all: to take a holiday to escape a busy or stressful lifestyle

guided tour: an organised group shown around a place of interest by an expert

holiday brochure: a glossy publication with details of holiday packages

holiday destination: where you go for a holiday

holiday of a lifetime: a special holiday that you are unlikely to repeat

holiday resort: a place where lots of people go for a holiday

hordes of tourists: crowds of tourists

local crafts: objects produced locally

long weekend: an extended weekend holiday including Friday or Monday

out of season: outside of the main holiday period

picturesque village: very pretty village

passport control: the place where your passport is checked

places of interest: sites of interest to tourists

wildlife safari: a holiday, often in Africa, to observe wild animals

self-catering: a holiday where you supply your own food

short break: a short holiday

to go sightseeing: to look around the tourist sites

stunning landscape: extremely beautiful countryside

travel agent: a shop that specialises in booking holidays

tourist trap: somewhere where too many tourists go

youth hostel: a cheap form of accommodation



Talk about a good news you received through phone. You should say:

- **What was the news**
- **What time you heard it**
- **Who gave you the news**

and explain how you felt about the news.

Model Answer:

After I finished my graduation, I applied for 2-3 jobs and faced the interviews in these companies. One day I got a phone call from one of the companies from the HR department and the caller confirmed that I was hired for the job I applied for. This was a very exciting and good news for me as I was expecting to start a job so eagerly.

I did not know the person who called me at that time but later I found that he was the head of the human resources department of the company and his name was Kane. I heard it in (...say a year i.g. 2004...) and it was probably June.

My parents and relatives wanted me to get involved in a job right after my graduation and I felt the same. Some of my classmates were already doing jobs and I thought I should start a job as well. After I got the job confirmation call, I was very excited and happy. The first job confirmation in my opinion is very significant and exhilarating and I felt no less. I was so happy that I instantly confirmed that I'd be joining the job from the next week. Then I shared the news with my parents and sisters and they were very happy as well.



Describe an annoying person you know about. You should say:

Who is s/he

Why s/he is annoying

How s/he behaves with others

And explain what can be done to reduce his/ her annoying behaviour.

fall out

We used to get on pretty well but then we fell out with each other when we went to university.

a rocky relationship

It was quite a rocky relationship as we used to argue with each other all the time and we sometimes went days without speaking to each other.

can't stand

I couldn't stand my brother when we were younger. I guess it was an extreme case of sibling rivalry.

turn sour

I think our relationship turned sour when she refused to help me.

get off on the wrong foot with

Although we are now good friends, our relationship got off on the wrong foot and initially we couldn't

stand each other.

clear the air

There are times when we have serious disagreements, but we always manage to clear the air afterwards.

get on someone's nerves

Despite the fact that she is a nice person and has many good qualities, she still gets on my nerves and I find it hard to like her.

let someone down

I do like her, but there was one occasion when she let me down quite badly.

look down on

One thing I don't like about him is that he looks down on people who are less intelligent than him.



Describe someone in your family who you really admire. You should say:

- **What relation this person is to you?**
- **What are your first memories of this person?**
- **How often you see this person?**

and explain why do you admire this person.

Good relationships

get on like a house on fire

As soon as we met each other we got on like a house on fire and just took an instant liking to each other.

have a soft spot for

I always had a soft spot for Maria despite the fact that she often let me down. [to let someone down is to disappoint them]

get along with

I suppose I always got along quite well with my

sister when we were growing up.

look up to

When I was a child I always looked up to my father. He was a real role model for me.

speak the same language

I think one reason we get on so well is that we really speak the same language as each other. There's almost nothing we disagree about.

be on the same wavelength

We're almost exactly on the same wavelength as each other and agree about almost everything.



Describe your ideal job. You should say:

- **what this job is**
- **whether you would need any qualifications**
- **whether it would be easy to find work**

and say why you would enjoy this job in particular.

SAMPLE: Max: I've always loved watching wildlife programmes on TV and often thought how much I'd enjoy working with animals ... perhaps in a safari park ... something like that ... you'd probably need a degree to have any chance of being **called for an interview** and whether there are many **full-time jobs** I don't know ... I'm sure a lot of parks rely on **voluntary work** so it might not be easy ... and it probably wouldn't be **well-paid** either but money isn't everything ... I'd get so much **job satisfaction** ... I can't imagine it being the kind of job where you get **stuck in a rut** ... and I think I'd be good at it as well ... I'd love to work with animals I enjoy **manual work** and I'm a **good team player** ... so even though the **working conditions** might not be the best I think that would be my ideal job ...

to be called for an interview: to be invited to attend an interview

to be your own boss: to have your own business

a dead-end job: a job with no promotional opportunities

to do a job-share: to share the weekly hours of work with another person

a good team player: somebody who can work well with other people

full-time: the number of hours that people usually work in a complete week

a heavy workload: to have a lot of work to do

a high-powered job: an important or powerful job

holiday entitlement: the number of days holiday allowed

job satisfaction: the feeling of enjoying a job

manual work: work that requires physical activity

maternity leave: time off work given to a woman about to have a baby

to meet a deadline: to finish a job by an agreed time

a nine-to-five job: a normal job that consists

of an 8 hour day (approximately)

one of the perks of the job: an extra benefit you get from a job

part-time: working less than full-time

to run your own business: see 'to be your own boss'

to be self-employed: see 'to be your own boss'

sick leave: time allowed off work when sick

to be stuck behind a desk: to be unhappy in an office job

to be/get stuck in a rut: to be in a boring job that is hard to leave

to take early retirement: to retire early (retire: to reach an age when you are allowed to stop working for a living)

temporary work: work done for a limited time only

voluntary work: to work without pay

to be well paid: to earn a good salary

working conditions: the hours, salary and other entitlements that comes with the job



Describe an unusual or interesting thing you did recently.

You should say:

- **Where did you do it?**
- **When did you do it?**
- **Who did you do it with?**

and describe why it was unusual or interesting.

Model Answer:

Few months back while our visit to a friend's hometown, all of a sudden the friend proposed us to go inside a nearby forest and have a picnic there. This was a plan proposed by Arnold (...say one of your friend's name...) and 4 of our friends agreed to do so.

This was bit dangerous as people scarcely go inside the forest and from the local people we have heard different scary and wild stories about this jungle. Our main attraction was the abandoned house inside the jungle and we planned to do the picnic there and take photos of wild lives and the abandoned house. We knew that my friend's guardians won't permit us to do that and hence we planned not to let them know about it upfront.

On a Thursday morning we left the friend's house and bought the necessary ingredients, vegetables, foods and other things that would be required for us to do the picnic. We entered inside the jungle and to our surprise the inside was much more open and beautiful than we thought it would be. With some difficulty we reached near the abandoned house and spent time till the afternoon. This was a very exciting and unusual experience for us. We collected some woods and made an arrangement for cooking. We eat the food we cooked and that was horrible in taste. However, we were looking for the adventure and interesting stuffs so a bad food did not kill our spirit. We could not enter inside the abandoned house as it was blocked and very fragile. We took several photos of the place and we notices some of the wild animals were observing us with suspicion.

I have to confess that was a bit dangerous and imprudent thing to do but we enjoyed our interesting and unusual picnic inside a forest.



Describe someone you know who dresses well. You should say

- **who they are**
- **how you know them**
- **what kind of clothes they wear**

and say why you like the way they dress.

SAMPLE: I'd like to talk about one of my teachers ... Miss Evans ... she teaches us English in the school I go to ... we always look forward to seeing what she's going to wear when our lessons start ... she's always very **well dressed** and **takes a lot of pride in her appearance** ... it's not that she dresses in very **smart clothes** ... she doesn't come to school **dressed to kill** or anything like that ... but what she wears really **suits her** ... and she has a great **sense of style** as well ... we often ask her where she gets some of her clothes and most of the time they're just **off the peg** ... and she says she's not interested in **designer labels** or anything like that ... she doesn't seem too concerned about **keeping up with the latest fashion** ... she just wears clothes that are **timeless**... yes ... Miss Evans is the person I think looks great in the clothes she wears ...

to be on trend: to be very fashionable

casual clothes: not formal

classic style: a simple, traditional style that is always fashionable

designer label: a well-known company that makes (often expensive) clothing

dressed to kill: wearing clothes that attract admirers

to dress for the occasion: to wear clothes suitable for a particular event

fashionable: in fashion

fashion house: a company that sells (usually expensive) new styles in clothes

fashion icon: a person who is famous for their sense of fashion

to get dressed up: to put on nice clothes, often to go out somewhere special

hand-me-downs: clothes that are passed down from older brothers or sisters to their younger siblings

to have an eye for (fashion): to be a good judge of to have a sense of style: the ability to wear clothes that look stylish

to have a sense of style: the ability to wear clothes that look stylish

the height of fashion: very fashionable

to keep up with the latest fashion: to wear the latest fashions

to look good in: to wear something that suits you

to mix and match: to wear different styles or items of clothing that aren't part of a set outfit

must-have: something that is highly fashionable and therefore in demand

off the peg: clothing that is ready made

old fashioned: not in fashion any more

on the catwalk: the stage that models walk along to show off the latest fashions

a slave to fashion: someone who always feel the need to wear the latest fashions

smart clothes: the kind of clothes worn for a formal event

to suit someone: to look good on someone to take pride in one's appearance: to pay attention to how one looks

timeless: something that doesn't go out of fashion

vintage clothes: clothes from an earlier period

well-dressed: to be dressed attractively



IELTS Speaking Part 2: describe an advertisement

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.**

Choose something simple. Here's an example with the "band 7" vocabulary underlined:

1. I'm going to talk about an advertise-



ment for Coca-Cola, which is one of the **biggest brands** in the world. I've seen Coke advertised everywhere, on posters and TV commercials.

2. 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.

3. 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**.



Saying when

Talk you about a stressful situation. You should say:

- **what it was**
- **when it happened**
- **who else was involved in the situation**

And explain what you did to deal with the stress.

a little while ago

I visited the museum a little while ago, I think it may have been in December. There was certainly snow on the ground

some time back

This all happened some time back. I'm not quite sure when but I was still at university and

when I was around

We went there when I was around 23 and I was living in Egypt I think and working there as a teacher

I can't remember the exact date but...

I can't remember the exact date but I suspect it was around the middle of October because that's when my birthday is and I remember.....

It was around about

It was around about Easter I think as all the family were there – which is slightly unusual

sometime in

It was, as far as I can recall, sometime in July that I last went there.

just before/after

The last time we saw each other was just before Christmas. In fact I think it was Christmas Eve.



Describe a business you know that you admire. You should say:

- **what this business is**
- **what the business sells**
- **how long you have known about the business**

and say why you like it so much.

SAMPLE: Actually I discovered a business very recently that I like so much I'd like to do something similar in the future ... it's a small **niche business** that runs courses in how to cook ... especially bread ... the owner uses his kitchen for the courses and **went into business with** a local community shop and sells a lot of the bread and cakes they make in the shop ... I first got to hear about the business last year ... my wife paid for me to do one of the baking courses and I got to know the owner during the training ... it's a **lifestyle business** really ... he doesn't have plans **to take on employees** or expand into new areas ... he's happy earning a living doing the thing he loves ... I really admire what he does and I'm sure a lot of people would love to do something similar ... he **has a web presence** ... in fact that's how we got to find out about his company ... and he uses social media **to raise the company profile** ... but he's the only person involved in **running the business** so he's in complete control of where the business goes ... that's something that must make it really satisfying ... as long as he's managing **to balance the books** and the **cash flow** is healthy I'm sure he must be very pleased with what he has achieved ...

to balance the books: to not spend more money than you are earning

to be self-employed: to work for yourself/to not work for an employer

to cold call: to make a sales call to someone without asking them for permission first

cut throat competition: when one company lowers its prices, forcing other companies to do the same, sometimes to a point where business becomes unprofitable

to do market research: to do research into what potential customers would or wouldn't buy

to draw up a business plan: to write a plan for a new business

to drum up business: to try to get customers

to earn a living: to earn money

to go bust: when a business is forced to close because it is unsuccessful

cash flow: the money coming in and going out of a business

to go into business with: to join another person to start or expand a business

to go it alone: to start your own business

to go under: (see 'to go bust')

to have a web presence: to have a website or social media profile that showcases your business

to launch a product: to start selling and promoting a new product

to lay someone off: when a company ends an employee's contract of employment

lifestyle business: a business that is set up to bring in a sufficient income and no more

to make a profit: to earn more money than it costs to run the business

niche business: a business that serves a small, particular market

to raise a company profile: to make more people aware of a business

to run your own business: to have a business of your own

sales figures: a report of the income a company generates through sales of products or services

to set up a business: to start a business

stiff competition: strong competition from other companies in the same area of work

to take on employees: to employ people

to take out a loan: to borrow money

to win a contract: when a business gets legally-binding work with an individual or company

to work for yourself: (see 'to be self-employed')



Describe a book you have read or a film you have seen. You should say:

- **what this book or film was**
- **when you read or saw it**
- **why you decided to see the film or read the book**

and say if you enjoyed it and why.

SAMPLE: I like reading ... especially English novels ... it's a great way to improve your vocabulary and there are so many fantastic authors to choose from ... one book that **came highly recommended** by my teacher was The Mayor of Casterbridge ... I was studying at a school in The UK at the time and she said it would give me a picture of what life was like years ago in the area I was living ... well I have to say I absolutely loved it ... it was **a real page-turner** ... it's a **historical novel** and **the setting** was a fictional town called Casterbridge ... but actually it was **based on** a town near where I was studying called Dorchester ... it had such a great **plot** ... to cut a long story short **it tells the story of** the downfall of a man called Henchard **the central character** who lives during a period of great social change around the time of the industrial revolution ... the reason I enjoyed it so much ... apart from the great story ... it gave me a picture of what life had been like in the place I was studying at the time ... I really **couldn't put it down** ... a fantastic story ...

an action movie: a film with fast moving scenes, often containing violence

to be engrossed in: to be completely focused on one thing

bedtime reading: something to read in bed before you go to sleep

to be a big reader: someone who reads a lot

to be based on: to use as a model

a box office hit: a financially successful film

to be heavy-going: difficult to read

a blockbuster: a film that is a big commercial success

to catch the latest movie: to see a film that has just come out

the central character: the main person in a film or book

a classic: of the highest quality

to come highly recommended: to be praised by another person

couldn't put it down: wasn't able to stop reading a book

an e-book: a digital book

an e-reader: a device for reading e-books

to flick through: to look quickly through a book

to get a good/bad review: to receive positive or negative feedback

to go on general release: when a film can be seen by the general public

hardback: a book with a rigid cover (see 'paperback'

below)

a historical novel: a story set in the past

a low budget film: a film made with a small amount of money

on the big screen: at the cinema

a page turner: a book that you want to keep reading

paperback: a book with a flexible cover (see 'hardback' above)

plot: the main events in a film or book

to read something from cover to cover: to read a book from the first page to the last

sci-fi: science fiction

to see a film: to see a film at the cinema (see 'watch a film' below)

the setting: where the action takes place

showings: performances of a film

soundtrack: the music that accompanies a film

special effects: the visuals or sounds that are added to a film which are difficult to produce naturally

to take out (a book from the library): to borrow a book from the library

to tell the story of: to outline the details of someone's life or an event

to watch a film: to watch a film on TV (see 'to see a film' above)



Describe a person whose appearance you like. You should say:

- **who this person is**
- **what their relationship is to you**
- **what they look like**

and say what it is about their appearance you like.

SAMPLE: OK ... I'd like to talk about my aunt ... her name's Marta and she's quite a character ... she's **middle-aged** but has a very **youthful appearance** ... she's a little **overweight** I suppose but not too much ... she has a friendly **round face** framed by **thick blonde hair** ... she has a lovely **complexion** and she's always **well-turned out** ... she actually always looks like she's going out for the evening to somewhere special ... there's **never a hair out of place** ... I've always thought she **bears a striking resemblance** to someone on TV ... I can't remember the name now ... she **wears glasses** and always seems to have a different pair on every time I see her ... I like the way she looks because she wears clothes that are right for her age and manages to look glamorous without it looking like she's too done up ... yes ... I'll be happy if I look like her when I'm her age ...

to bear a striking resemblance: to look very similar to
cropped hair: very short hair
disheveled hair: untidy hair
to dress up to the nines: to dress very smartly or glamorously
fair hair: light-coloured hair
to be fair-skinned: light skinned
to get done up: to dress smartly
to be getting on a bit: to be getting old
to go grey: to have hair that is turning grey
to be good looking: to be attractive
to grow old gracefully: to act in a way that embraces the fact you are getting older
to be hard of hearing: to find it difficult to hear
in his/her 30s/40s: to be 20/30 something
scruffy: dressed untidily
to look young for your age: to look younger than you are

to lose one's figure: to have a figure that has lost its toned shape
complexion: natural skin colour and texture
make up: cosmetics
medium height: average height
middle-aged: approximately between 45-65
to never have a hair out of place: perfectly styled hair
to be overweight: to weigh more than is regarded as healthy
pointed face: the opposite of a round face
shoulder-length hair: hair that comes down to the shoulders and no further
slender figure: a figure that is tall and slim
slim figure: attractively thin
thick hair: a lot of hair
to wear glasses: to use spectacles
to be well-built: to be muscular
to be well-turned out: to look smart
youthful appearance: to look young



Describe a house or an apartment you would like to live in. You should say:

- **what kind of accommodation it would be**
- **where it would be**
- **who would live there with you**

and say why you would enjoy living in this place.

SAMPLE: I think most people when answering this question would say they'd like to live in a big **detached house** with **spacious rooms** ... views of the countryside and so on ... but actually my **ideal home** would be a lot different ... I've always loved the idea of having a **mobile home** ... a really expensive one with **all the mod cons** ... so I could live wherever I wanted or at least have lots of holidays and be able to take all my **home comforts** with me whenever I travelled ... I realise this would have to be a second home as I'd need a base ... a **permanent address** ... but the mobile home would be the accommodation I'd find it exciting to live in ... I suppose once I settle down and have children I'll want **to get on the property ladder** ... I'll be like everyone else ... saving up **to put down a deposit** on a house or an apartment ... I don't think my family would want to live in a mobile home ... but I like to think I'll still keep that **dream home** in mind ...

(all the) mod cons: technology at home that makes jobs easier such as a washing machine, dishwasher etc.

apartment block: a large building made up of smaller units of apartments

back garden: a garden at the rear of the house

detached house: a house that is not physically connected to another property

to do up a property: to repair an old building

dream home: a home you regard as perfect

first-time buyer: someone buying a property for the first time, especially when taking out a loan (mortgage)

fully-furnished: a rented property with all furniture included

to get on the property ladder: to buy a property with the aim of buying another bigger or more expensive one later in life

hall of residence: a college or university building where students live

home comforts: things that make a home feel comfortable to live in

house-hunting: looking for a property to live in

house-warming party: a party to celebrate moving into a new home

ideal home: a perfect home

to live on campus: to live on the university or college

grounds

mobile home: a home that can be moved by a vehicle or one that has its own engine

to move into: to begin to live in a property

to own your own home: to have bought the property you live in

to pay rent in advance: weekly or monthly rent paid at the beginning of the week or month

permanent address: a fixed address

property market: the buying and selling of land or buildings

to put down a deposit: to pay an amount of money as the first in a series of future payments

rented accommodation: property owned by someone else and for which a person pays a fixed amount to live in

single room: a room for one person

spacious room: a large room

student digs: student accommodation

the suburbs: a residential area on the edge of towns or cities

to take out a mortgage: to borrow a large amount of money, paid back over several years, in order to buy a house

terraced house: a house connected on both sides by other properties



Describe a childhood friend who you really liked to spend time with. You should say:

- **When and how you met.**
- **How often you see this friend.**
- **What kind of personality your friend has**

and say why you like to spend time with this particular friend.

Closeness of relations move in the same circles

Although we are not particularly good friends, we see each other quite a lot as we move in the same circles.

be on nodding terms

While we are on nodding terms and say hello to each other every day, I wouldn't call him a friend.

know someone inside out

I guess you could say I know him inside out by now – all his good points and all his bad points.

keep in touch with

Sadly, we didn't stay in touch with each other after

we left school and I don't know what he's doing now.

see eye to eye with someone

We see eye to eye about most things but we can never agree about what film to watch.

keep yourself to yourself

He wasn't very outgoing and sociable and preferred to keep himself to himself. For all that, he was perfectly friendly.

wear the trousers

Although David earns more money, it is Sylvia who really wears the trousers in the relationship. David will also do what she says,



Describe a teacher you once had who you enjoyed being taught by. You should say:

- **who this person was**
- **when they were your teacher**
- **which subject they taught you**

and describe what it was about their character that you liked.

SAMPLE: I'd like to describe my English teacher from school ... Miss Thomas ... this was a few years ago now and she was my teacher at a time when I was getting a little bored with being at school ... unlike some of the other teachers Miss Thomas never **lost her temper** ... she was very calm and **easy-going** ... she was also very **broad-minded** ... we were able to ask her questions about lots of subjects that some other teachers would refuse to discuss which made us respect her even more ... she had a great **sense of humour** too ... she'd laugh at our jokes as well as making us laugh ... and she would also **bend over backwards** to help us with our work ... she always **put us first** and often stayed around at the end of class to talk with anyone who needed help ... apparently she was highly respected within her field but you would never know as she was the type that **hid her light under a bushel** ... she was very modest and **self-effacing** ... so yes ... Miss Thomas was a teacher I have fond memories of ...

to be the life and soul of the party: a fun person, someone who is the centre of activity

to bend over backwards: to try very hard to help someone

broad-minded: prepared to accept other views or behaviours

easy-going: relaxed and not easily worried about anything

extrovert: an energetic person who likes the company of others

fair-minded: to treat people equally

fun-loving: to enjoy having fun

to hide one's light under a bushel: to hide one's talents and skills

good company: enjoyable to socialise with

good sense of humour: the ability to understand what is funny

introvert: someone who is shy

laid-back: see 'easy-going'

to lose one's temper: to suddenly become angry

narrow minded: opposite of 'broad-minded' (see above)

painfully shy: very shy

to put others first: to think of others before yourself

quick-tempered: to become angry quickly

reserved: shy

self-assured: confident

self-centred: thinks only of oneself

self-confident: believes in one's own ability or knowledge

self-effacing: to not try to get the attention of others (especially in terms of hiding one's skills or abilities)

to take after: to be like (often another member of the family)

thick-skinned: not easily affected by criticism

trustworthy: can be trusted



Describe a person whom you have a crush on. You should say:

- **Who she/he is**
- **How long you have known them**
- **What qualities he/she has**

And why you like/love them so much.

for quite some time

I've known him for quite some time. In fact we first met 20 years ago when I was at university

for over [20] years now

I've been living in Cairo for over 20 years now. I first moved here when I was a student and then.....

for about [a week] or so

I've only been reading it for about a week or so and so I haven't yet read that much but...

for a good long time

I've been learning English for a good long time now. I first started to learn it

for ever and a day

We've known each other for ever and a day. We first met

ever since

I've known her ever since we were at primary school together.



Describe an item of technology you have that is very important. You should say:

- **what the technology is**
- **when you got it**
- **how often you use it**

and say how different your daily life would be without it.

SAMPLE: I don't have many **gadgets** ... just a computer ... a laptop and my mobile phone ... but I'll talk about my computer as it's so useful ... it's funny really ... 2 years ago I was still learning to use computers ... how to use email ... **send attachments** how to **access websites** ... then I decided to do a **digital editing** course for video and photography ... and so I bought the laptop when I started the course ... my husband had a **desktop PC** but it was very slow so I decided **to upgrade** to a powerful one because we do a lot of video editing on the course ... it's a **high-spec** laptop ... very fast ... the latest **operating system** ... it **boots up** really quickly and it's fun to use so it makes working a pleasure ... I've become a competent computer user now ... if I didn't have it I daresay I'd have to spend more time at college using their computers ... but on the positive side I suppose I'd read a lot more if I didn't have it ... I probably waste a lot of time **surfing the web** ... but hopefully I won't have to be without it ...

to access websites/email: to locate

to back up files: to make a copy of files in case of a computer problem

to boot up: to start a computer

to bookmark a webpage: to mark a webpage for future reference

to browse websites: to look at websites

a computer buff: an expert computer user

to crash: to suddenly stop working

to cut and paste: to move text or images from one place in a document to another place

a desktop PC: a computer that isn't portable and remains in situ on a desk

digital editing: to edit digital materials like audio or video files

download (podcasts): to save a copy of a file from the internet to your own device

to enter a web address: to type the address of a website into the address bar of your browser

a gadget: a technological tool like a mobile phone or camera

to go online: to start using the Internet

high-spec (laptop): powerful computer with top quality components

Internet security: Internet safety

intranet: a network of connected computers within an organisation that is not accessible by unauthorised visitors

to navigate a website: to find your way around a website

operating system: the software that tells the computer how to work

send an attachment: send an email with an accompanying file

social media: media used to interact with other people such as Facebook or Twitter

to surf the web: to look at a series of websites one after the other

a techie: somebody who has an interest in technology

to upgrade: to obtain a more powerful or feature-rich computer or piece of software

video conferencing: to see and hear people from different locations using the Internet

wireless hotspot: a public place where you can access the Internet

wireless network: a network where users can access the Internet without the use of fixed cables

word processing: producing written texts on a computer



Describe a sport place you like going to in your leisure time. You should say:

- **what this place is**
- **when you go there**
- **what you do there**

and say why you enjoy it there so much.

SAMPLE: I'd like to talk about my local **sports centre** ... it's a place I spend a lot of time in ... it's a new building with all the latest **sports facilities** ... I probably go there at least twice a week ... sometimes more often ... it's a huge place ... there's an outdoor **athletics track** and some **football pitches** ... I **play football** so I'm often out there ... there are several indoor **squash and tennis courts** that I use occasionally ... a big **swimming pool** ... although I don't use that very often ... I'm not a very **strong swimmer** ... there's a gym ... lots of things really ... why do I enjoy going there ... it's just a really fun place to be ... there's a good social side to it all ... you can enter competitions ... meet up with other people who want to do the same sports ... and because there are so many activities on offer it gets you interested in different things ... for example I was listening to some people talking about training **to run the marathon** and I've decided I might even think about that ... I **go jogging** a couple of times a week so it would give me something to aim for ... so yes ... the sports centre ... that's the place I really like to visit.

an athletics meeting: an event where various athletics sports are held

an athletics track: a running track

an away game: a football match played in the opposing teams stadium

a brisk walk: a fast walk

to do judo: (not go or play)

a football fan: someone who likes football

a fitness programme: a schedule of activities to keep fit

a football match: a game of football

a football pitch: the surface on which you play football (as opposed to a stadium, which is the building)

a football season: a period in the year when football is played

to get into shape: to become fit

to go jogging: to run around the streets

a home game: a football match played in the teams own stadium

to keep fit: to stay in good physical condition

to be out of condition: to not be physically fit

a personal best: to achieve the best personal result so far in a sport

a personal trainer: a sports coach that helps you on a one-to-one basis

to play tennis/football: (not do or go)

to run the marathon: to run a distance of 42.195 Kilometres

a season ticket: a ticket that gives you entry to most of a team's home games during the sporting year.

to set a record: to achieve the best result in a sport

a sports centre: a public building where people can do various sports

sports facilities: the equipment and services needed to do a sport

a squash/tennis/badminton court: the surface where you play these sports

strenuous exercise: exercise that needs a lot of physical effort

a strong swimmer: a good swimmer

a swimming pool: the place where you swim

to take up exercise: to start doing exercise

to train hard: to train with a lot of effort



How often

This third set of phrases is for cue cards that ask you to say how often you do something.

Talk about a person who you study with. You should say:

- **Who the person is**
- **What do you study together**
- **How often do you study together**

And explain why do you chose this person to study with

on a pretty regular basis

We get together on a pretty regular basis – about once a month I suppose.

a couple of times a [week]

I suppose I play tennis a couple of times a week in the summer. Although in winter....

not that frequently/often

I don't cook for myself that often.

more or less all the time

I use my computer for reading more or less all the time but I do also like to read traditional books occasionally.

from time to time

I can't say that I eat out that often, but from time to time it is nice to treat myself



Describe a time during your education that you really enjoyed. You should say:

- **when this period was**
- **where you were**
- **what you were studying at the time**

and say why you were so happy.

Sample: Caroline: I'd like to tell you about my time at university ... I was **a mature student** ... I didn't go to university until I was 25 ... and it was my first time away from my parents so it was very exciting ... I was doing a **Bachelors Degree** and it was a bit of a challenge ... some people **take a year out**

but I'd been away from education for 8 years ... plus I had **to work my way through uni** so I was very busy ... and **sitting exams** at the end of each year was a new experience for me as well but I really enjoyed higher education learning about a subject I loved ... history ... and the social life was great as well ... I don't think I've ever had so many friends ... I had my **graduation ceremony** last year in the local cathedral and I know my parents were really proud ... so yes ... that was a really happy time ... I'm thinking of doing a **Masters Degree** soon ... though that might be through **distance learning** as I have a full-time job now ...

to attend classes: to go to classes

bachelors degree: an undergraduate course which usually lasts 3-4 years

boarding school: a school where pupils live during term time

distance learning: a way of studying where tuition is carried out over the Internet or by post

face-to-face classes: as opposed to distance learning the traditional way of studying in a classroom with colleagues and a teacher

to fall behind with your studies: to progress less quickly than others

to give feedback: to offer guidance on a student's work

a graduation ceremony: an event where a successful student receives his or her academic degree

higher education: education, usually in a college or university, that is followed after high school or secondary school

an intensive course: a course that offers lots of training in order to reach a goal in as short a time as possible

to keep up with your studies: to not fall behind

to learn something by heart: to memorize it

a mature student: a student who is older than average and who has usually returned to education after a period at work

masters degree: a period of study which often follows the completion of a bachelors degree or is undertaken by someone regarded as capable of a higher-level academic course

to meet a deadline: to finish a job or task in the time allowed or agreed

to play truant: to stay away from classes without permission

private language school: an independent school run as a business concern

public schools: exclusive independent schools in the UK

a single-sex school: a school where only boys or girls attend (as opposed to a mixed-sex school)

to sit an exam: to take an exam

state school: a school paid for by public funds and available to the general public

subject specialist: a teacher who has a great deal of knowledge about the subject they teach.

to take a year out: to spend a year working or travelling before starting university

tuition fees: the money paid for a course of study

to work your way through university: to have a paid job whilst studying to support yourself financially