

IELTS SPEAKING 8.5 MASTER PLAN

Master Speaking Strategies & Speaking
Vocabulary for the Real Test, Including
100+ IELTS Speaking Activities
(IELTS Speaking Book 1[®])

MARC ROCHE

IELTS Speaking 8.5 Master Plan

– Master Speaking Strategies & Speaking Vocabulary for the Real Test, Including 100+ IELTS Speaking Activities

IELTS Speaking Book 1

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Topics Covered in this guide:

IELTS speaking, IELTS practice, IELTS book, IELTS vocabulary, grammar for IELTS

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[**Thank you**](#)

“Wise men speak because they have something to say; Fools because they have to say something.”

Plato.

Introduction



Ok, so, I believe in keeping things simple whenever possible, so I'm going to keep this introduction short, so you can focus on the important things.

This master plan is simple. Follow it, and you will increase your speaking band score. In this book, you have the tools you need to increase your speaking score to 8.5 by improving your vocabulary, grammar and coherence. I have not included pronunciation guides in the book, as I know that pronunciation comes from hearing English, absorbing the sounds and then practising them. No book can provide this for you unfortunately, and any books that promise to do this are not telling you the truth. Online pronunciation dictionary is here if you want to check it out <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/browse/pronunciation/english/>

The IELTS speaking test is exactly the same for both IELTS Academic and for IELTS general. It lasts for 11 to 14 minutes and consists of three parts.

Part one of the IELTS speaking test is basically an introduction for you as the candidate and for the examiner. It gives you both an opportunity to get comfortable and gives the examiner an initial general idea of your level of English. There's no need to feel nervous here. I know that it's very difficult not to feel a little bit nervous but try to think of this as a friendly informal chat with a friend or an acquaintance. The examiner wants you to succeed in the IELTS test, and if you can show your personality and feel relaxed enough to show the examiner your level of English you will succeed.

Part 1	Examiner and candidate introduce themselves, candidate answers general questions on familiar topics e.g. family, job, studies, free-time etc.	about 4 to 5 minutes
Part 2	Candidate asked to speak on a given topic (information is written on a task card) for 1-2 minutes. One minute of preparation in which the candidate can make notes is allowed.	4 minutes
Part 3	Discussion on more abstract issue related to the chosen topic in part 2 of the test.	about 4 to 5 minutes

Scoring and Band Descriptors

You don't need me to repeat the band descriptors that are publicly available from the IELTS.org website.

For the public version of the IELTS speaking and band descriptors, please visit IELTS.org

<https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/teach-ielts/test-information/assessment>

Here is a direct link to the PDF: <https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/speaking-band-descriptors.ashx?la=en>

SECRET # 1. The Truth about your Speaking Skills

Attitude

A 2007 study of teenage students found that students who thought of intelligence as non-fixed and changeable were more likely to gradually increase their grades for the following two years. Interestingly, students who thought of intelligence as a fixed, 'you are what you're born with' factor, saw very little change in their grades (Blackwell et al., 2007).

After the initial tests, the researchers then performed an intervention with some of the low-achieving students. They taught the students about how their brain worked and how learning changes the human brain by creating new connections. They drilled into them that **THEY** were in charge of controlling this process and that they had the power to change their brain through their daily activities. Amazingly, grades for the group of students who learnt about how their brain worked immediately started to improve, while the grades of the students who hadn't received the intervention carried on getting worse!

This highlights just how important it is for you to fully understand that **YOU** are in control of how good you are at something. Your brain is hard-wired to respond to your actions and your environment, so once again **YOU** are in control.

Avoid writing individual words in your notebook

I don't recommend writing down individual words in your notebook, simply because when you do this, you are writing and thinking about the word out of context. This makes it more difficult to remember and more difficult to actually apply in real life or in the exam. What I recommend you do, is write down vocabulary within sentences. So when you write a sentence down in your notebook, you underline the key words that are difficult or important, and then you can write a definition or explanation in your own words.

Don't copy definitions, try to paraphrase them instead.

Paraphrasing definitions allows your brain to process the meaning of the word and forces it to think about the word in a real-life context. This speeds up your learning and also speeds up your ability to use language in real sentences when you're speaking.



Voice, Posture and Eye Contact in the IELTS Test

“We often refuse to accept an idea merely because the tone of voice in which it has been expressed is unsympathetic to us.” –

Friedrich Nietzsche

Voice projection, posture and eye contact do not appear in the criteria for the exam, but they are vital if you want to give the best possible impression.

Think about it for a second, if the examiner is struggling to hear you, he or she is getting very little eye contact from you and you are slouching over your chair looking at the floor, they are going to have serious problems understanding what you're saying. This will definitely affect your band score. On the other hand, if you have great posture, great eye contact and great voice projection, your English speaking skills will be better and you'll get a higher score in the test. The examiner will be able to connect with you, and you'll be more fluent because you'll be providing him or her with essential information through body language, voice and eye contact. It will be easier for you to explain things and you'll instantly feel more comfortable and confident.

Confidence in the IELTS Speaking Test

As I mentioned above, if you focus on maintaining great posture, great eye contact and great voice projection, you'll instantly be more fluent, and it will be easier for you to explain your ideas. This will make you feel more comfortable and confident straight away.

Why is confidence important? Confidence is something that is rarely talked about when preparing for IELTS speaking, but it's essential.

If you have ever seen a professional sports player who has lost his or her confidence, you'll already know that confidence is the difference between a bad performance and an outstanding, record-breaking performance. If you haven't seen this happen in sports, I would urge you to look for some examples online. It will change your perspective on the IELTS speaking test.

Communicating with confidence in English is a skill anyone can develop. It just takes patience and a willingness to learn from mistakes. It comes down to practice, practice and more practice. No magic. Just practice and willingness to not judge yourself, so that you can adapt and learn.

SECRET # 2. Voice



One of the main ways to make sure give a great impression in the speaking exam is to talk in a manner that makes the examiner want to listen. Your tone of voice plays a key role in having people not only listen to what you're saying but understand it as well. Tone is comprised of a few key elements: pitch, volume, pace, and emphasis.

People have an instinctive reaction to the tone of someone's voice and you want that reaction to be positive. Think of someone you've heard that has an inviting quality to their voice. A popular example is actor Morgan Freeman. He has a rich, deep, expressive voice that naturally draws attention. His voice alone has given him access to an immense amount of opportunities, including the narration of several documentaries. Contrast that with the voice of someone you don't like to listen to: they're often monotone, nasally, and unappealing overall. Even if what they're saying to you has value, you're less likely to accept their message based on the tone of their voice.

So, when thinking about your own tone try to emulate the voices of those who successfully capture your attention. This does not mean you should be doing an impression of someone else, but simply working within the natural range of your own voice. You should not have to strain yourself or your vocal cords to achieve a desirable tone.

People who speak in a deeper voice are considered to have more authority than others according to research done by the University of Pittsburgh. Some theorize this connection comes from when physical power was used as a measure of authority and a deep voice generally went hand in hand with a stronger body. So, when you're looking to command the attention of others it's important to use the lower range of your voice, without going so far as to

put on a cartoonish voice.

Speaking deeply doesn't mean speaking flatly though. It's important to change your tone as you speak to maintain interest and convey emotional information. Without a variance in tone, it becomes nearly impossible to communicate your excitement and enthusiasm.

Perhaps the easiest technique for holding people's attention is to simply speak slower and to emphasize the most important words in each sentence. Not only does it give you more time to think through what you're saying, it gives the listener more time to let your message sink in and truly understand it. It takes effort to actually listen to what someone is saying, so giving your listener more time will help both of you immensely.

Don't be afraid to take a long pause between thoughts as well. A silent moment expresses confidence much better than attempting to fill the silence with "um" or "uh".

When prepping for your test, just remember to talk low, slow, with emphasis and with varied tone.

Vocal Warmups

- Breathe through your diaphragm
- Stay relaxed around your head, neck and shoulder areas.
- Make a conscious effort to do this initially, but you'll notice how, as you form the habit, it will become more automatic.

Voice Projection Exercise 1

If you feel nervous when you speak, practise this vocal warmup exercise before.

Focus on volume. Increasing the volume of your voice to a point where you're louder without shouting, is an essential aspect of projecting in English. Your abdominal area should expand outwards as you breathe in, and contract as you breathe out to get the best results.

1. Begin by pronouncing vowel sounds. Starting with “ahh” (as in the word “bar”, pronounced bɑː), begin vocalising the sounds softly, and gradually increasing your volume to be loud.
2. It's important to understand that when you're loud, you should not be shouting. Think of the difference between talking to someone directly in front of you, and someone a few feet away. That should be the difference between your soft and loud voice.
3. Reverse the exercise and go from loud to soft.

If you're feeling a strain on the loud end of things, then you're trying too hard. Remember to be gentle.

Finally, combine the exercises and go from soft to loud and then again from soft to loud, several times for as long as you like.

This exercise can be done with other vowel sounds such as “oo” (as in “boo” pronounced buː), “oh” (as in “hole” pronounced həʊl), “aw” (as in “raw” pronounced rɔː), “ay” (as in “bay” pronounced beɪ) and “ee” (as in “see” pronounced siː). For a pronunciation guide be sure to check out the phonetic chart resource at the end of this book.

Counting to ten is also an effective volume exercise. You can move gradually, starting soft at 1 and ending loud at 10 or vice versa. You can also make a pattern, having every third number spoken loudly or something similar to that. Play around with it and find what works best for you. Have fun and make it part of your routine.

Voice Projection Exercise 2

Using a combination of single words, phrases, and sequences you will learn how to project by intoning words and phrases. This means you will emphasize and lengthen vowel sounds, which should create a richer sound. When choosing words and phrases be sure to use words that start with the same sound (“my moaning mother’s magnificent mistake”). Watch to make sure you don’t tense up the muscles in your head and neck as you perform this exercise. Remember to relax.

Of course, vocal projection can be difficult to master and improper practice of these techniques could damage your vocal cords. If you do not feel confident performing these exercises yourself, or if you begin to feel any discomfort or strain, then stop immediately and find yourself a vocal coach to help you with your technique.

SECRET # 3. Posture



“Body language and tone of voice - not words - are our most powerful assessment tools.” -

Christopher Voss

Your posture is a big part of your speaking, believe it or not. This is because it affects everything you say. Not only does it affect the quality of your voice, but it also affects how others interpret your words. The examiner is not a machine, and will be influenced by your overall communication skills, as well as your English.

Certain habits can make your voice tense, which has a negative impact on your performance as a communicator. If you constantly slouch because you're always looking down at your phone or laptop, this will affect your voice, as you'll be placing extra stress on the neck and voice box area. Try to stand up straight as much as possible and try to monitor and correct your posture as much as possible.

Combine breathing through your diaphragm, and staying relaxed around your head, neck and shoulder areas with a good posture – that means no leaning or slouching regardless of whether you're standing or sitting – and you'll be in a prime position to make vocal projection as easy as possible.

To help keep your posture in check, use an action or event that occurs regularly in your life, such as checking your phone, as a reminder to check in on your posture. Check to see that you're relaxed, your spine is straight, and

you're not accidentally clenching your teeth or unnecessarily straining parts of your body.

It's important to remember that projecting your voice should not be causing any strain on your cords or any other part of your body. If you feel any strain, then you're not projecting, you're yelling. Remember to focus on being gentle with your vocal cords as you practice and to reassess your technique if you start to feel any strain.

SECRET # 4. Eye Contact



It's easy to mess up and really hard to do properly. If you do it too much it becomes threatening; but then, not enough of it can also have a negative effect.

In a study done by Japanese researchers, volunteers watched a video of someone's face whilst solving a word challenge in which they had to think of verbs to match different nouns. For example, if they heard "ball" the word "kick" would be logical.

Amazingly, as soon as the face in the video appeared to be making eye contact with them, the volunteers started having problems with the more difficult nouns. Even with a stranger in a video, eye contact is so powerful that it uses the person's cognitive reserves, leaving him or her unable to effectively concentrate on anything else!

If you feel nervous in English and struggle to make strong eye contact, practice gazing towards your examiner's face to strengthen the connection while you're delivering your message, but don't worry too much about making actual eye contact all the time. A study using eye-tracking technology carried out by ECU researchers gave surprising results as to the importance of eye contact.

During the study, one of the researchers engaged in short four-minute conversations with 46 test subjects. In the conversations, both people wore eye-tracking goggles. For around 50% of the interactions the person conducting the tests looked at the subject's eyes the majority of the time, and

for the other 50% he gazed mostly at the mouth.

Following each of the conversations, the volunteers evaluated how much they enjoyed the interactions. In the conversations where the researcher had been looking mainly at the volunteers' mouths, they reported the same levels of eye contact and enjoyed the interactions just as much as when the researcher made direct eye contact.

This research suggests that gazing at people's face produces the same effects as direct eye contact. So, if you're not 100% comfortable with making confident eye contact all the time don't be too worried.

SECRET # 5. IELTS SPEAKING

PART 1 SECRETS

In this section you'll find a sample speaking test part 1 that we're going to dissect one question at a time. For every question, you'll find some guide notes underneath, with a sample response and some tips.

The examiner will introduce himself or herself at the start of the test and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Tips

Eye-contact

Active listening

Open body language

Speak up

Stay calm and focus on expressing your ideas clearly.

Try to learn small structures and expressions that you can use in different situations. You could categorise the structures by topic and make notes in your notebook or diary together with examples. Try to use these expressions and structures in different sentences. Practise using them in different sentences at home in front of the mirror. Then practice answering IELTS speaking questions and using these expressions so that you get used to speaking them and using them in real English. You will then find it a lot easier to apply these different expressions in the exam and they will make your English sound a lot better. The examiners will get a much better impression of your level of English if you do this.

Focus on speaking freely

Focus on speaking freely on any topic that the examiner asks you about but avoid speaking quickly. Many students speak quickly in the exam because they think that that is what will make them sound more fluent or because they feel nervous. This is very natural, but you should avoid speaking too fast. Instead, you should start the exam by speaking slowly and then maintain that pace for the rest of the conversation.

Warning: the examiner will probably interrupt you during the test.

Don't take this personally, it's perfectly normal. The reason why they do this is because they have to manage time. They only have 11 to 14 minutes and they're not assessing your ideas. So they're not there to listen to your ideas and decide whether you're right or wrong. They are only there to assess your language. So once they realise that you have understood the question and you're able to answer it correctly with correct grammar, vocabulary, structures, organisation and pronunciation, they move to the next question. So don't take it personally, everybody gets interrupted during the test.

UPGRADE your IELTS Speaking

Talking about things you like and dislike

If the examiner asks you about something you like or dislike, instead of saying *'I like football'* or *'I don't like golf'* you could say something like

'football appeals to me because...' or *'golf doesn't appeal to me because...'*.

This will instantly give a better impression because you're still keeping it semi-formal and you're still using natural language, but you're showing that you know expressions that native speakers use all the time.

Another way of talking about things that you like or don't like is to say something like

'I get a lot of pleasure out of watching football',

or *'I get a lot of pleasure out of playing football'.*

In the negative

'I don't get much pleasure out of playing golf',

or *'I don't get much pleasure out of watching golf'.*

If you're talking about a routine that you like for example, you could say something like *'I'm fond of'.. 'I'm fond of'* just means *'I like'* basically, and *'I'm not fond of'* is *'I don't like'*.

So for example, you could say,

'I am quite fond of walking in the park on sunny days. I like to sit and read on a bench and enjoy the sunshine. It makes me feel relaxed and it helps me to unwind'.

If you are talking about something that you have enjoyed for a long period of time you can talk about something that you *'have grown fond of'*.

So you could say for example,

'I've grown fond of my car and I don't want to change it'

or *'I've grown fond of my phone and I don't want to upgrade it'*.

What to say when you don't understand.

If you say *'what?'*, that comes across as a little bit rude in a semi-formal situation, and if you say *'I didn't understand. Can you repeat please?'* it sounds unnatural, as it's not something that a native speaker or somebody who has a high level of English would normally say in a conversation.

When you don't understand what the examiner has just said, it's better to say something like

'Sorry, I didn't quite catch that'

'Sorry, could you say that again please?'

'Could you explain what you mean by...?'

This last example is perfect when you don't understand some of the vocabulary the examiner has just used. So for example, if the examiner asks you a question and you don't understand one of the words, you could say *'sorry could you explain what you mean by redundancy?'*. While you should know what redundancy means in the exam it's always better to ask the examiner if you don't know and by asking him or her with this phrase, you're proving that you have a high level of English. These structures are also more natural and politer at the same time.

Speed

The examiner will not mark you down for speaking slowly, the only time when they might penalise you is if you stop or pause constantly because you

don't know the word that you want to say. So, focus on speaking freely and slowly, staying calm and keeping a constant level of interaction with the examiner.

Remember that some people speak quickly, and some people speak slowly. The examiner does not know if you normally speak very quickly or if you normally speak very slowly, so take advantage of this and take your time.

EXAMPLE PART 1 with Notes and Sample Answer

Let's talk about your outdoor hobbies.

Do you prefer indoor hobbies or outdoor hobbies? Why?

Notes:

Do you prefer indoor hobbies or outdoor hobbies? In this question they're just asking for an introduction to your daily activities or your hobbies. You don't need to expand too much on the answer. You just need to give a reasonably complete answer.

So, for example, you could say something like 'Well, that's an interesting question. I actually enjoy both indoor hobbies and outdoor hobbies. I think that it's very important to have a balance of both, so that you can spend some time in the fresh air, do some exercise and stay healthy. For example, I to play football once a week. I also think it's important to spend some time indoors and be able to relax and read, or maybe pursue some sort of learning. For instance, I like to learn English and Spanish.'

What kind of outdoor hobbies do you enjoy? Why do you enjoy them?

Notes:

What kind of outdoor hobbies do you enjoy and why do you enjoy them? In this question they're asking you to expand a little bit further. What you need to do here is choose perhaps one, two or maybe a maximum of three hobbies to talk about and you need to give them a substantial reason why you like each one of them without talking for too long. You could say something like;

'Wow, I enjoy a lot of different things, but two hobbies that spring to mind are watching football and practicing scuba diving. I like to watch football every week with my friends. We all meet up in a bar or a cafe and we sit there and watch the football and catch up. It's a really important part of my week because it's the only chance I get to see my friends and share a few laughs. It really helps me unwind. Another hobby I really enjoy is scuba diving. Unfortunately, I live quite far from the beach! So, it's not always possible to

go diving every week, but I do try to get to the beach once or twice a month. I really like scuba diving because it's almost like a different world when you're down there. It's unlike any other sport I've ever tried. It takes you to a place where you can just look at the fish, listen to the sounds of the water and completely forget about your problems. It's a completely alien landscape and it's just mesmerizing. It's just marvellous to unwind under the water like that.'

What outdoor activities do you want to try in the future? Why?

Notes:

Are there any hobbies that you'd like to try in the future? This is typical style of question for this part of the exam. What they want to know here is whether you can use modal verbs correctly and whether you can speculate about things that you have thought about doing.

For example: *'Actually, it's funny you should ask me that, .. I have been **itching to try** something like paragliding because **I've always been drawn to** extreme sports, but I've never had the opportunity to try one. I **AM** a little bit scared of trying but I think I would be brave enough to do it if I went with friends.'*

I'm itching to try = I really want to try

I've always been drawn to = I've always been attracted to

Let's move on to talk about hobbies in general.

Why do people say that it's important to have hobbies?

Notes:

As the examiner asks you more questions in part 1 you might find yourself repeating some of the same answers in different ways, but don't let this distract you. Continue to focus on being natural, relaxed and chatty.

Why do people say that it's important to have hobbies? You could say something like: *'I think people say it's important to have hobbies because nowadays many people work long hours and in many cases they struggle to switch off when they get home, partly due to communication devices like*

mobile phones. I believe it's essential to be able to unwind and find things that distract you from your daily routine, as it can prevent burnout and other stress related issues. It's also crucial to have some physical as well as intellectual hobbies, as it provides balance and stimulation, and enables people to maintain good physical and mental health.'

Tell me about your favourite hobby. What's the most interesting thing about it in your opinion?

Notes:

Tell me about your favourite hobby. What's the most interesting thing about it in your opinion? You probably answered this already in the first question. If this was a real exam the examiner might skip this one and go to the next question instead. But if they do ask you, you could say something like:

'Well, if I had to choose, I'd probably say that my favourite hobby is scuba diving. As I mentioned earlier, I don't always have the opportunity to go every week. It's usually once a month or twice a month maximum, but I find it really therapeutic. I always manage to de-stress every time I go, and I always really look forward to it. It allows me to clear my head and be in real contact with nature. I always get my best ideas after I've been scuba diving! '

Is it easy to find time to practise your hobbies? (Why-Why not?)

Notes:

Is it easy to find time to practice your hobbies? You can say yes, or you can say no, it doesn't really matter. There are no wrong right or wrong answers in the speaking test. You do need to provide a natural response and you need to show that you can express your ideas clearly.

For example: 'It depends on the time of the year because sometimes I have more work than others (obviously like everyone) and sometimes I have more exams than others. If I don't have any exams and I'm just going to class and working, I get to practice my hobbies. As I said, I go scuba diving once or

twice a month and I watch football with friends. I also play a little bit of tennis sometimes and I also like to go to concerts and live gigs. However, when I have exams It's impossible for me to pursue any of my hobbies, as I'm WAY too busy!

8.5 Level Speaking Phrases for IELTS Part 1

Please don't try to learn all these, just read through the list and choose a few that you like and that you feel comfortable using. Make a note of these and use them in your practice answers.

Opinion

As far as I'm concerned,

As I see it,

From my point of view,

In my humble opinion,

I'd say that...

Personalise

Speaking from personal experience,...

For me personally,..

This is a topic that is particularly close to my heart...

It's funny I was just thinking about this the other day.

My gut/initial reaction is...

Likes/dislikes

I'm into...

I'm a keen/avid (surfer)

I'm keen on/fond of (surfing)

I (go surfing) to unwind, to escape the stresses and strains of my day to day life.

I like nothing more than (to go surfing)

I'm itching to try/go.... (I really want to)

Agree

We see eye to eye.

Yeah, I'd go along with that.

Absolutely!

You took the words right out of my mouth.

I couldn't agree more.

You have a point there.

I'm with you 100% on this one.

Disagree (*try not to argue or disagree with the examiner!)

I tend to disagree with that.

That's not always the case

Isn't it more a case of...

Impressive structures (don't overuse these)

Another point I'd like to add about ... is...

It's also worth bearing in mind that...

I'd also like to point out that...

I think it's important not to forget that...

The vast majority of people tend to think that...

At the end of the day...

When all's said and done...

SECRET # 6. IELTS SPEAKING

PART 2 SECRETS

In this section you'll find a sample speaking test part 2 (long turn) that we're going to analyse one question at a time. For each question, you'll find some guide notes underneath, with a sample response and some tips.

Key Information about part 2:

- In part 2 of the speaking test you have to speak for 1 to 2 minutes.
- Try to speak for the full 2 minutes until the examiner interrupts you once you reach the 2 minutes maximum.
- The examiner will interrupt with a follow-up question or by saying 'thank you' and then he or she will go into the follow-up question usually.
- It's important that you speak for the two minutes if you want to get the higher grades, because it shows that you have the fluency and the ability to expand your answers.
- You have the question card with some sub points that give you some guidance as to what to talk about. You can change the order of these, or you can adapt them if you want, it doesn't really matter, but it's normally better to follow them, because it's one less thing to concentrate on.

Don't try to be too formal.

A very important rule in the IELTS speaking test is don't try to be too formal. Remember that the IELTS speaking test is a semi-formal exam. By that I mean you should be respectful towards the examiner, but you always need to bear in mind that you're not in an academic presentation to a lecturer, you're in an exam that wants to test your real level of English speaking. Don't use slang or talk about controversial topics or topics that could be offensive to people. Keep your language neutral and try to be semi-formal in your approach.

Speak slowly

Speak slowly and with purpose.

*This will allow you to feel calmer.

*It will allow you to express yourself better.

*It will allow you to think

* It will allow you to pronounce and emphasise your sentences far better.

Keep it simple

One of the most important things you can do to improve your IELTS score in the speaking test is not to try to sound as smart as possible and use complex structures, complex sentences or obscure words to explain simple things. Try to keep things simple because that's what natural, native-level communication is about. Learn alternative words and structures to use but you should practice those structures and those words so much at home, that they come out naturally when you do the test. In the test you should be focusing on being natural and being talkative, not on using complex vocabulary or using complex sentences. When candidates try to use complex sentences to impress the examiner, what usually happens is that they make more mistakes and they sound less natural in English. When native speakers who are educated to degree level, or Masters level , or PHD level speak, they don't usually try to complicate their language as much as possible, because it would be unnatural and would make communication worse. Study vocabulary and structures the way I mentioned in the introduction and then focus on keeping it simple and being chatty and sociable in the test. This will get you an 8.5.

Part 2 Exam Trick

A special IELTS speaking trick for part two of the test is to use the Past/Present/Future method. In the IELTS speaking test you are not graded on answering the question exactly the way they say, so you do have a little bit of flexibility. It's not the same as the writing where you have to answer the task exactly the way the exam sets it. So if you struggle with speaking for 2-minutes about a topic, what you can do is use the past, present, future method. This method is basically like this: if you are presented a task like this:

Instead of answering the task exactly the way the examiner presents it, you can talk about

1. One example from the past where you answer the whole task in about 30 seconds or 40 seconds
2. Then you choose one example from the present where you answer the task again in about 30-40 seconds
3. Then another example from the future where you answer the whole question again in 30 to 40 seconds.

EXAMPLE PART 2 with Notes and Sample Answer

Candidate Task Card

Describe your ideal outdoor place.

You should say:

Where it is

When did/will you go there

What activities you can do there

and say why is it ideal for you

Remember:

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

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

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

Ok, so for this method what we're going to do, is first we're going to talk about an ideal place in the past. Something that was an ideal outdoor place for me in the past.

We're going to say:

-where it was

-when I went there or when I used to go there

-what activities I used to do or I did there

-and why it was ideal for me

Then, we're going to talk about an ideal outdoor place I currently enjoy.

-where it is

-when I go there

-what activities I do there

-and why it's ideal for me

Then finally, we're going to take the last 30-40 seconds to talk about an ideal outdoor place for me in the future. So, somewhere I would like to go or where I plan to go in the future.

-where it is

-when I will go there

-what activities I can do

-and say why it will be ideal for me

So, in this particular example, we could say something like:

'Ok. The ultimate outdoor place for me when I was a kid, was a football pitch near my house. It was about half a mile away from my house. I used to go there every day to play football after school. I used to really enjoy playing football there with my mates. it was ideal for me because it was a way of unwinding and forgetting about school. I remember I would completely lose track of time and forget all of my worries. It allowed me to get some fresh air and share some laughs with my friends.

However, a perfect place for me now, would be, maybe the beach. I live

near the beach now and I really enjoy going to there after the gym and getting in the sea. After I get in the water, I usually chill out under the sun and have a quick read. The reason why it's ideal for me is for the same reason as my first example. I think it allows me to de-stress and forget about my schedule. It helps me get fresh ideas, go back to work and be more productive.

An ideal outdoor place for me in the future might be somewhere like a villa by the sea. There are some stunning villas in my area.

I would like to have my own villa with a swimming pool in the future, so I can work from home.

The reason why this would be perfect for me, is it would allow me to disconnect and really focus on work when I need to. I think that I would be more productive and that I would also be able to enjoy a little bit of leisure time. I could have friends come round to my house for BBQs and drinks, and I could organise family get-togethers.'

Why is this method so effective in the IELTS Speaking Test?

1. The first reason why this method is so effective is that it allows you to divide the question into three sections, which gives you a lot more to talk about. It will give you more ideas and it will make it easier for you to carry on talking for the full 2 minutes. Basically, when you have 3 examples to talk about, there is a lot less pressure and you will feel less nervous.

2. The second reason why this is so effective is that because you're speaking about three examples from different times, (one from the past, one from the present, and one from the future), it allows you to use different tenses and different constructions that you would not normally use if you were speaking about one example. This allows you to show the examiners more of your English and allows you to keep your answer more organised.

3. The third reason why this method is so good, is because when you're using three different examples, you have the to talk about three different topic areas, which will enable you to show the examiners that you have a wide range of vocabulary.

The Rounding off questions

If the examiner asks you a follow-up question you should provide a short natural response. Don't go into any long explanations or details about anything. Just provide a natural response to the question, as if you were having a relaxed conversation. The whole point of this question is simply to finish this part of the exam. It's the end of part 2.

SECRET # 7. IELTS SPEAKING

PART 3 SECRETS



In this chapter you'll find a sample speaking test part 3 (discussion) that we're going to go through one question at a time. You'll find some notes under each question, with a sample response and some tips.

Clear Communication Checklist

1. Keep your sentences simple and direct
2. Remove unnecessary words to make your communication more effective and powerful. Remember that no matter who you're speaking to, they are human, so relate to them as a human.
3. *Be as specific as possible.*
4. Avoid the Passive Voice like the plague, unless you have no choice. Instead of saying "*the project was launched by the government*" use an active sentence like "*The government launched the project*". Active sentences tend to sound more alive and as a result more interesting.

When the examiner asks you a question you've already talked about.

Don't be surprised if the examiner asks you a question which you've just answered in your previous response. Sometimes when you respond to a question you will inadvertently answer the next question that the examiner was going to ask. The examiner might just ask you again anyway. Don't be surprised and don't feel bad. Don't assume that the examiner hasn't understood you or hasn't listened, just answer the question as if you hadn't answered it before. If you want, you can try to answer in a slightly different way by paraphrasing, but don't feel nervous, don't feel bad and don't feel like the examiner didn't understand, it's just part of the process.

Socially Strange questions.

This is a little bit controversial but in the IELTS speaking test they often ask weird or strange questions that catch students off guard. The reason why they do this, is so they can focus their assessment on language rather than ideas and background knowledge of a particular subject. This is why you often see generic and obvious questions that you wouldn't normally talk about in your own language. Forget whether you think the question the examiner is asking you is stupid and just play the game to get your band score. Tell the examiner what he or she wants to hear, and you'll be laughing, singing and dancing all your way to university or your new country of

residence with an 8.5.

Don't let strange questions spoil your good vibes in the exam. Focus on being open, friendly and chatty, whatever question the examiner asks. Don't limit yourself to speaking about things that are 100% true for you either, remember the examiner doesn't know you and doesn't care if what you're saying is true! If you don't know what to say, just invent an answer, nobody cares!

To clarify what you just said

If you want to clarify what you just said you can say

'to put it another way...'

or you can say

'what I mean is...'

or

'what I'm trying to say is...'

What to say if you need time to think in the exam

If you need time to think in the exam because you're not sure of what to say, you can start by saying:

'it's quite a difficult question, but I suppose/guess...'

Or you can say

'that's a really interesting question .. I suppose/guess'

or you can say

'I've never thought about it before, but I suppose/guess...'

EXAMPLE PART 3 with Notes and Sample Answer

Let's consider first of all how people's values have changed.

What kind of hobbies are popular among teenagers in your country? Why do you think these hobbies are so popular?

Notes:

What kind of hobbies are popular among teenagers in your country and why do you think these hobbies are so popular? This type of question is typical. They like to ask you what type of things are popular with young people or teenagers or people your own age in your country or in your area.

For this particular question an example answer might be something like this: *'Most teenagers in my country like to go out and socialise, they like to play football and they like to listen to music. I think these are very popular because they are easy activities to pass the time. Music is available at the touch of a button on your smartphone and you can listen to it anywhere, pretty much. Football is fairly inexpensive to practice and is the most popular sport (in my country) not just among teenagers, but among adults as well. Finally, going out and socialising are also something that I think people of all ages like to do. We have great weather most of the year, so people are always up for a drink or a coffee outside with friends. Being sociable outside is a very big part of our culture, it helps us connect with each other.'*

How do you think things have changed since your grandparents' time?

Notes:

Another typical exam-style question. The exam often includes a question about how things have changed in some way (comparing past and present habits or behaviours). The key language you need to dominate here is 'used to', past simple and present tenses. Beyond that, you need to be comfortable with speculating.

Here is a simple example:

'Wow, that's a difficult question! I'm not entirely sure how things have changed since my grandparents' time, but if I had to guess I'd probably say that teenagers spend more time in front of screens with technology now. They communicate online a lot, whereas this wasn't an option in my grandparents' time. They probably listen to a lot more music and they play a lot more computer games as well!

They probably play a wider range of sports because I mean, let's face it, the only sport people played 60- 70 years ago was probably football (soccer). With globalisation, a lot of different hobbies and sports have spread all over the world, so I think more people play sports like tennis now and perhaps 70 years ago this was only for the elite. Many teenagers also play basketball now, but they probably didn't used to 70 years ago.'

Finally, let's talk about the role of peer-pressure.

Do you think peer-pressure influences the kind of hobbies people choose to practise? How or Why?

Notes:

A possible answer might be:

'I think to a certain extent it does. Peer pressure is much more pronounced when you're in your teens, but even adults feel peer pressure in my opinion. It does influence the kind of hobbies that people choose, because when you see that other people practise a sport or practise a particular hobby, it automatically becomes more attractive to you. So, you are more likely to do something that you see other people enjoying. There's also added pressure for you to join in if your friends practice a particular hobby, as the alternative is often to stay at home and not see them'

8.5 Level Speaking Phrases for IELTS Part 3

OK, so here is a long list of possible phrases, structures and words you could use to add a bit of salt and pepper to your speaking in part 3 and get an 8.5 or even a 9.0. HOWEVER, you do not need to use any of them to get an 8.5. These are just extra phrases for you to choose the ones you like and are comfortable using and think about adding them to your practice. Do not stress, and do not start writing them all down and studying their definitions please. Focus on 3 or 4 that you like and that you're comfortable using, and then introduce them into your answers when you do the practice exercises later on in this book.

USEFUL PHRASES

If you consider X... you could be convinced by an argument in favor of...Y

But you have to think about another aspect of the problem...

I do not feel this is a direct cause of...

Of course it goes without saying that...

There has been a growing body of opinion that..

... the situation can be addressed by adopting the methods mentioned above...

While I admit that... I would argue that...

One approach would be...

A second possibility would be to...

Obviously,...

However,

This suggests that...

In addition...

To sum up...

In fact..

I tend to disagree...

I am unconvinced by...

Overall,...

In the final analysis...

Ultimately,...

To conclude...

In conclusion...

On the other hand...

There is no doubt that...

This could involve...

Thirdly...

EXPRESSING VIEWS

I would argue that...

I firmly believe that...

It seems to me that..

I tend to think that...

People argue that..

Some people think that...

Many people feel that...

In my experience...

It is undoubtedly true that..

It is certainly true that....

REFUTING AN ARGUMENT

I am unconvinced that...

I don not believe that..

It I hard to accept that...

It is unjustifiable to say that...

There is little evidence to support that...

PROVIDING SUPPORT

For example,...

For instance,...

Indeed,...

In fact,...

Of course,...

It can be generally observed that...

Statistics demonstrate...

If this is/were the case...

Firstly,...

Naturally,...

In my experience...

Let me illustrate...

DEFINING/EXPLAINING

I would argue that...

By this I mean...

In other words..

This is to say...

To be more precise..

Here I am referring to ...

USE SPARINGLY (=a little)

First/second, etc...

Moreover..

In addition...

Furthermore,...

Nevertheless/nonetheless...

On the one/other hand...

Besides...

Consequently...

In contrast...

In comparison...

USE MODERATELY

While...

Meanwhile...

Although...

In spite of.../ Despite the fact that...

Even though...

As a result...

However...

Since...

Similarly...

Thus...

In turn

OTHER USEFUL PHRASES

My response to this argument depend on what is meant by...

There is surely a difference between.... and....

I intend to illustrate how some of these differences are significant to the argument put forward.

However, whilst I agree that... I am less convinced that...

I certainly believe that...

One of the main arguments in favour of.... is that...

In other words...

Admittedly, in some ways...

Surely...

Arguably..

Either way...

In any case...

The most important point is that...

Another point is that...

Of crucial importance , in my opinion, is...

There is , however, another possible way of defining...

...that I am in favor of , although I also realize that...

Therefore...

There is no doubt that...

However, it is possible to tackle this serious issue in a number of ways.

One approach would be..

...would be particularly beneficial.

A second possibility would be to...

...this could involve...

Many people feel that this is unacceptable because...

Opponents of... point out that ... and argue that...

On the other hand it cannot be denied that...

Supporters of...argue that...

INTRODUCING A FALSE ARGUMENT

It could be argued that...

Some people would argue that...

There is also the idea implicit in the statement that...

It is often suggested that...

DEMOLISHING A FALSE ARGUMENT

This is partly true, but...

To a certain limited extent, there is some truth in this...

However, the implication that... is oversimplification.

This argument has certain specific logic, but...

PROPOSING A CORRECT ARGUMENT

It is clear that...

The real situation...

Obviously...

I think it is therefore quite wrong to suggest that...

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 1

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about your outdoor hobbies.

Do you prefer indoor hobbies or outdoor hobbies? Why?

What kind of outdoor hobbies do you enjoy? Why do you enjoy them?

What outdoor activities do you want to try in the future? Why?

Let's move on to talk about hobbies in general.

Why do people say that it's important to have hobbies?

Tell me about your favourite hobby. What's the most interesting thing about it in your opinion?

Is it easy to find time to practise your hobbies? (Why-Why not?)

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe your ideal outdoor place.

You should say:

Where it is

When did/will you go there

What activities you can do there

and say why is it ideal for you

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

Are you planning on going back there soon?

Is it easy for you to go there?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's consider first of all how people's values have changed.

What kind of hobbies are popular among teenagers in your country? Why do you think these hobbies are so popular?

How do you think things have changed since your grandparents' time?

Finally, let's talk about the role of peer-pressure.

Do you think peer-pressure influences the kind of hobbies people choose to practise? How or Why?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 2

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about your home town or village.

Can you describe what kind of place it is?

What's special about your town/village?

What kind of free-time activities do the people in your town/village usually enjoy?

Would you say your town/village is a good place to live? (Why?)

Let's move on to talk about accommodation.

What kind of accommodation do you live in?

How long have you lived there?

What are the advantages of living there?

What sort of accommodation would you like to live in? Why?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

***Describe an occasion
when you lost something.***

You should say:

what you lost

how you found it

*and how you felt when you
found it.*

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

Why do some people repeatedly forget things?

What can people do to become less forgetful?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's consider how people value possessions.

What's the best thing to do if you find something valuable on street?

What types of possessions are considered important in your country?

Has this always been the case, or did people value different things in the past?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 3

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about yourself.

Are you currently a student or do you work?

Why did you choose to do this course/job?

Tell me a little about your daily routine.

Is there anything you would like to change about your routine?

Let's move on to talk about shopping.

Who does the majority of the shopping in your household?

*Is shopping a popular activity among young people in your country?
(Why/why not?)*

What type of shops do young people like best in your country?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe a meaningful event in your life so far.

You should say:

When the event happened

Who you were with

What happened

And explain why you feel it was special or meaningful.

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

How often do you think about this event?

Is there anything you would change about this event?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's talk about important events in your country.

What are the most important events in your country?

Why is it important to have national celebrations?

Has the way people celebrate important events changed over the years in your country? Why?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 4

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about the place where you live.

Tell me a little bit about the place where you live.

What do you like about it?

Is there anything you would change about it?

Describe your ideal place to live.

Let's move on to talk about clothes.

Do you enjoy shopping for clothes?

What sort of clothes do you like to wear?

Is fashion important in your country?

Have you ever had to wear a uniform?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe something you have learnt recently that you found useful.

You should say:

What you learnt

What you enjoyed about learning it

What you would change about the experience

And explain why it was useful to you.

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

How often do you think you will use this knowledge in the future?

Is there another skill you would like to learn? (What is it and why?)

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's talk about education.

Is the pursuit of higher education important to people in your country?

Why is it important to complete higher education for some people?

Has people's attitude towards higher education changed since your parents' time? Why?

Does education guarantee a good job where you live?

Now let's talk about technology and education

How important is it for educational institutions to have computers for their students?

How valuable is the internet as an educational tool?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 5

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about food.

Tell me about your favourite food.

What's your least favourite food?

How has your taste changed over the years?

Describe your ideal meal.

Let's move on to talk about going out.

Do you eat out often?

What's the most important thing for you when you go out?

Where do young people like to go out where you live?

Do you like to go out on your own or do you prefer to go out with friends?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe somewhere you like to eat.

You should mention

Where is it

What kind of food you can eat there

Why do like to eat there

and how often you eat there

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

How important is it to eat a healthy, balanced diet?

Do most people in your country eat a healthy diet?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's talk about diets.

Why do you think some people choose to be vegan?

How has people's diet changed in your country over the last twenty years?

How do you think the way people eat will change in the future?

What is a typical meal in your home town?

Do you think that a region's food defines its culture? If so, how?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 6

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about leisure.

Tell me about the things you enjoy doing in your free time.

What did you used to enjoy doing in your free time when you were younger?

How many days off do most people get in your country?

How important is leisure time for you?

Let's move on to talk about music.

How often do you listen to music?

What's your favourite kind of music?

What's a traditional type of music in your country?

Why is music important to so many people?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Talk about an exciting experience you have had.

You should mention

when the experience took place

where it happened

what happened

and explain why the event was so exciting.

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

How important is it to experience different things in life?

Do most people you know like to experience different things?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's talk about risks.

In what ways is life becoming riskier?

In general, is life easier or more difficult than it was in your parents' time?

Is taking risks a positive or a negative?

Do you think people in general take less risks as they get older? Why-Why not?

Now let's move on to talk about adventure

How important is it for people to experience adventure?

Are young people in your country adventurous?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 7

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about your home town.

Tell me about your hometown. What is it like?

Has it changed since you were younger? If so, how?

What do people there usually do for entertainment?

Let's move on to talk about reading.

How often do you read?

Do you prefer reading fiction or non-fiction? Why?

What kind of news do you usually follow?

How do most people get the news in your country? Why?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe a news website, newspaper, magazine or blog you enjoy reading.

You should say:

what kind of news website, magazine or blog it is, e.g. technology

how often you read it

what kind of topics it usually discusses

and explain why you enjoy reading it.

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

Do you prefer reading online or offline sources? Why?

Do you think it's important to encourage children to read? Why-Why not?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's talk about newspapers.

What advantages do newspapers have for finding out about the news compared to listening to the radio or watching tv?

Do you think newspapers and news websites should be free to publish what they want? Why?

Now let's move on to talk about reading and online news.

What are the advantages of online newspapers?

Do you think it's important to follow the news every day? Why?

Is reading becoming increasingly important? Why?

Extra questions:

What kind of stories do the mainstream media publish about famous people in your country?

Should they be allowed to release stories about people's private lives? Why-Why not?

Do you think online newspapers will one day replace traditional newspapers? Why-Why not?

PRACTICE SPEAKING TEST 8

Note: The examiner will introduce himself or herself and then ask you for your name and ID before you start.

Part 1:

Let's talk about your lifestyle.

Would you describe yourself as an active person?

What kind of things do you like to do to unwind? Why?

Is it important to have a variety of free-time activities? Why?

How important is it to have an active lifestyle?

Let's move on to talk about sport.

Did you practise a lot of sport as a child?

What is your favourite sport now as an adult? Why?

How often do you follow sports on tv?

How do most people keep fit in your area?

Part 2: – Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe a special sporting event or competition you have either participated in or watched.

You should say:

what type of event or competition it was

when and where it was

what happened

and explain why it was interesting or special.

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

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

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

Rounding off questions

How did it make you feel?

Part 3: Two-way discussion

Let's talk about exercise and fitness.

What advantages of regular exercise?

What are the best ways to keep fit?

Should everyone be encouraged to exercise? Why-Why not?

Are people in your country less healthy than they were in your parents' time?

Now let's move on to talk about sport.

What is the most popular sport in your country? Why do you think this is?

Is sport a part of the culture of a country? Why-Why not?

Extra questions:

Should sport and fitness be given more importance in schools and universities? Why-Why not?

How can young people be encouraged to stay healthy?

Should governments take action to ensure people are physically healthier? Why-Why not?

IELTS PRACTICE CARDS



Goals

What's your biggest goal at the moment and how do you plan to achieve it?	What is something you've never learned but wish you had?
What "short-term" goals do you have at the moment?	What "long term" goals do you have?
Think of a time when you didn't achieve one of your goals, describe the situation and how you felt.	Why are goals important? In your opinion, is it essential to have goals in life?
Have you got any goals that you think are unrealistic?	What is success to you? (What would be your definition of success?)

Restaurants & Food

<p>What's your favorite type of food? (Italian, Spanish, French, American, Mexican, Chinese, Thai etc..?)</p>	<p>Do you like to eat in restaurants? Describe the best restaurant you remember going to.</p>
<p>Are you a good cook? What's your star dish?</p>	<p>Describe the worst restaurant you remember going to.</p>
<p>Do you like 'junk food'?. Do you think 'junk food' should be more regulated by the government?</p>	<p>Have you ever eaten at an 'all you can eat' restaurant? Was the food as good as a normal restaurant?</p>
<p>What's the most important thing in a restaurant? 'Value for money', taste, atmosphere or décor?</p>	<p>What do you think about children crying in a restaurant when you are trying to eat? Does it bother you?</p>

Work

At what age would you like to retire? What do you think you will do after you retire?	What's the worst job you have ever done?
On a scale of 1-10, how would rate your job? (10 the best and 1 the worst scores).	What changes would you introduce to improve your current job?
What's your dream job? (If money was not an issue, what job would you choose?)	If you won 'a gazillion' dollars in the lottery tomorrow, would you retire? How would you spend your time?
What jobs give people a high status in your country?	Would introducing a 4-day work-week be realistic in your country? Why or why not?

Job Interviews

<p>Is it important to be good at job interviews? Why or why not?</p>	<p>What skills, abilities and qualities do interviewers generally look for in a candidate?</p>
<p>On a scale of 1-10, how would rate your job interview skills?</p>	<p>Are job interviews a fair assessment of someone's skills and suitability for a job?</p>
<p>What are the most common job interview questions? Pick one and answer it with your partner.</p>	<p>How do you feel when you have to do a job interview?</p>
<p>How could employers make job interviews fairer for candidates?</p>	<p>What 3 pieces of advice would you give someone who is about to do a job interview?</p>

Inventions

What are the most important inventions of the 20th and 21st centuries in your opinion?	How did the invention of the TV change people's lives?
How has the internet changed people's lives? Has it been a positive or a negative change?	What do you think is the worst invention in history?
Which two inventions would you like to see in the next 10 or 15 years? Why?	If someone invented a time machine, what time would you like to visit? Why?
How has the Internet influenced communication, correspondence and access to information?	What would you invent if you were a scientist? Why?

Body Language

Why do you think body language is important?	How do you use body language to communicate?
What type of body language is considered threatening in your culture?	What type of body language is considered threatening in your culture?
What type of body language is not allowed or <i>frowned upon</i> in your culture?	Do you try to use body language when you communicate in English?
In what situations can you misinterpret someone's body language?	Do you use the same amount of eye contact with men and women? Why or why not?

Sports

Do you play or watch any sports?	Do you think everybody should practice sports?
How often do you exercise?	Have you ever tried any extreme sports? Which ones? Which ones would you like to try?
What do you think is the most popular sport in the world?	What is your favorite team sport?
What is your favorite sport team?	Do professional athletes get paid too much? Why? Why not?

Hobbies

What's your favorite hobby and how long have you been doing it?	What hobbies do you have?
Do you think it's important for people to have hobbies? Why or why not?	Is cost an important factor to consider when choosing a new hobby?
Which hobbies are the most popular in your country?	What's your opinion on hunting as a hobby?
Are there any hobbies you would like to try?	What's the most dangerous hobby you can think of?

Music & Movies

What kind of music do you like?	What kinds of music don't you like?
Name one of your favorite songs of all time. What does this song remind you of?	Do you like to watch TV?
What are your favorite kinds of programs or shows right now?	Do you like movies?
What's your all-time favorite movie? When did you first watch it?	Who are your favorite actors or actresses?

Crime

<p>Are some parts of your home-town considered more dangerous than others? Which parts?</p>	<p>Do you ever get apprehensive about walking outside after dark?</p>
<p>Is gun control a good idea? Explain your opinion.</p>	<p>Should people who use illegal drugs be should be put in jail?</p>
<p>Would the legalization of drugs help lower crime rates?</p>	<p>Does prison help rehabilitate inmates? Should it?</p>
<p>What crimes do you think will increase in the future? Why?</p>	<p>What crimes do you think will decrease in the future?</p>

Culture

What sort of things define a culture? E.g. language, beliefs, music etc..?	What advice would you give to a tourist visiting your country for the first time?
In your opinion, what is the most interesting thing about your culture? Why?	Is "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" good advice for someone traveling abroad? Explain.
What do you like about your culture?	Have you ever felt confused by the behavior of someone from another country? Explain.
What don't you like about your culture?	What is the most important thing your culture has contributed to the world?

Manners

Do bad mannered people bother you?	In your opinion, what's the best way to teach good manners to children?
What things are considered bad mannered in your culture? Why?	What things are considered good manners in your culture?
Is it important for children to have good manners, or should they express themselves freely?	Are people in your hometown or city polite on the road (when they drive)?
How can you be more polite when you drive?	Can manners affect your level of success in life? Explain your answer.

Creativity

In your opinion, what is creativity?	Do you consider yourself creative? Explain your answer.
Do you think creativity can be learned or are people born with it?	Do you think more emphasis should be placed on creativity at school?
Discuss ideas for a device that would make people's lives easier.	Do you think you need to take risks in order to be creative?
In your opinion, who are some of the most creative musicians and writers in the last 20 years?	Can creativity help you in your career prospects? Explain.

Dating

Describe your ideal date with someone.	Describe your ideal person to go on a date with.
Do you "go Dutch" when dating, or do you think one of the people on the date should pay?	Have you ever been or would you ever go on a 'blind date'?
Do you believe in 'love at first sight'? Explain.	What's the biggest 'crush' you've ever had on someone? Was it mutual?
Do perfect relationships exist?	What are some good conversation topics to talk about on a first date?

Meaning of Education

Online Education will one day replace traditional schools and universities.	There is too much pressure on students and young employees in your country.
University education should be compulsory for everyone	People should get a job for a year before they go to university.
Voting for a politician who didn't go to university wouldn't be sensible.	Home schooling is better than public schooling.
A 'top class' education guarantees a good job.	Teachers should be paid more!

Value of Education

The government should offer full funding to students who want to study.	Governments of developed nations should offer students from developing nations full funding.
If private universities break the law they should be forced to close.	Schools and universities shouldn't ban mobile phones in class.
Social skills are as important as good grades.	The internet has had a terrible effect on people's level of knowledge and social skills.
Universities should be more practical and offer 'a year in industry'.	Everybody should learn English.

Politics

16-year-olds should be allowed to vote. They are mature and responsible enough.	Multi-cultural societies are dangerous as they can lead to cultural misunderstandings.
Cities like NY, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona & London have high crime because of immigration.	Extremist beliefs are sometimes necessary and good.
Political parties shouldn't be allowed to accept donations from private enterprises.	Voting is a waste of time.
Voting should be compulsory.	All politicians should have a university degree and special training to take part in politics.

Have you ever.... ?

Have you ever cheated on an exam?	Have you ever forgotten someone's birthday?
Have you ever given a false excuse to get out of something? Describe the situation.	Have you ever tried any extreme sports? Which ones would you like to try in future?
Have you ever been to Thailand? Which countries would you most like to visit and why?	Have you ever been stuck in an elevator?
Have you ever received a present that you loved? What was it?	Have you ever received a present that you hated? What was it?

Meeting People

Do you like meeting new people? Why?	What are some good questions to ask someone you just met?
Do you feel nervous when you meet new people?	What are some questions you shouldn't ask people you just met?
How can you quickly create rapport with new people you meet?	What kind of people do you like to meet?
Do people in your country use a lot of body language when they speak?	Describe the advantages of meeting people when you move to a new country.

Living Abroad

Have you ever lived abroad? / How can living abroad change a person?	Which country or continents would you like to live in?
What would you miss most if you had to live abroad for some time?	Why do you think some people live abroad?
What do you believe would be the most difficult part of living in another country?	Do you think everyone should live in another country at least once in their life?
How is living abroad different from having a holiday abroad?	Do you know anyone who has decided to live abroad for good?

Space Exploration

How does space research benefit the people?	Are we alone in the universe? Explain your opinion.
What progress do you estimate space research will achieve over the next two decades?	Would you consider traveling into space?
Is your country involved in space exploration?	Do you think that it is worth spending so much money on space exploration?
What aspects of our universe interest you most?	Should astronomy be taught in schools? What is your opinion?

Food

What is your country/region's traditional dish?	What kind of new food would you like to try?
Why does food play an important role in celebrations?	What are the advantages and disadvantages of Genetically Modified Food?
In what way is food important in our lives?	Would you buy Genetically Modified Food?
How popular is organic food in your country?	What would you say is your favourite kind of food?

Cooking

Do you think that traditional home cooking is a thing of the past?	How much do you like cooking?
What do you think is easier to make: food or desert?	How important is it for men to know how to cook?
Who taught you how to cook?	Do you have home cooked food every day of the week?
Why do you think the most famous chefs are men?	Should cooking be taught at school?

Travelling

How has technology affected the way we travel?	What benefits are there to travelling?
How does travelling contribute to international understanding?	Should we travel our own country before travelling abroad?
Are there any risks to travelling to another country?	Do you prefer to travel in organised groups or independently?
What is the worst experience you have had when travelling?	What is your favourite means to travel very long distances?

Shopping

What's your favourite store for clothes, books, music, etc.? What do you like about it?	Do you shop in small shops, like boutiques, or do you go to the big department stores?
Do you wait for the sales and look for bargains?	Have you found a good bargain recently? What was it?
Why do people go window-shopping?	What is the most expensive item you have ever bought (apart from a car or house)?
Do you feel that global chain stores spoil the character of a town?	How often do you make impulse purchases?

Fashion

What are some of the latest fashion trends where you live?	Do you consider yourself fashionable?
How would you describe the working life of a fashion model?	Why do you think some clothing comes back into fashion again after 20 or 30 years?
Are the prices of some designer clothing justified?	Which city in your country would say is the most fashion conscious?
Who is the best dressed person in your family?	Which fashion accessories are most important to you?

Weather

How has the weather changed in your region over the last few years?	What is the coldest and hottest temperature you have ever experienced?
How can the weather affect a person's mood?	Do prefer to live in a hot or a cold climate?
What is your favourite kind of weather?	How does the weather affect our lifestyle?
Have you ever experienced extreme weather, such as hurricanes, flooding, etc.?	For how many days is the weather forecast in your country accurate? One, three, more?

Animals

What animals, birds and insects can you see where you live – in your garden and in your area?	What would you do if you found an injured animal or bird by the side of the road?
What should we do about endangered species such as the blue whale, the cheetah, and the snow leopard?	Have you ever seen wild animals up close?
Is it cruel to lock up animals and birds behind bars in zoos and safari parks?	Which animal is the best pet to have?
Which animal do you identify with?	What is your country's national animal? Why was it chosen?

Driving

What kind of car do you drive?	Have you ever suffered from road rage?
Why do you think many people prefer driving to using public transport?	Will we all still be driving cars in 30 years' time?
How do you feel about driverless cars?	What is should be the legal age for someone to get a driving licence?
What is the longest car trip you have been on?	How would you describe the driving behaviour of people in your country?

The Human Body

What makes a person attractive?	If you could swap bodies with somebody else for one day, who would it be?
Would you like your body to be cryogenically frozen when you die?	What are the pros and cons of tattoos and body piercings?
Would you ever consider having plastic surgery?	What do you like the most / the least about your body?
What do you do to look after your body?	Which part of your body is the most sensitive to illness or pain?

Colors and Numbers

What numbers or dates are important to you?	Do you prefer colour or black and white films and photographs?
What number do you consider a lucky number?	What colour clothes and shoes do you prefer? Why?
Do you have one favourite colour, or different favourite colours for different things?	How can different colours affect our mood? How?
What do you think it would be like to be colour blind?	Do you think different cultures have different meanings for colours?

Family

How often do you see your grandparents or extended family?	Which member of your family are you closest to?
How important are families to society?	How is family life different now, compared to 100 years ago?
Would you like to know your family tree?	What would say is the ideal number of children for a family?
What roles should different members of a family have in a household?	How would you describe the perfect family?

Home

Describe your dream home.	If there was a fire at your home, what would you rescue first?
What would you do if you lost your home and became homeless?	What is your favourite room in your home?
Many people say that their home is their sanctuary. Is this true for you?	What kind of relationship do you have with your neighbours?
Do you think it is better to rent or to own your home?	How important is it for you to keep your house perfectly clean and tidy?

Free Time

How would you describe your ideal weekend?	What is your favourite activity to do after a long day at work or school?
Do you have more or less free time compared to your parents when they were your age?	Do you think you use your free time wisely?
What activity would you like to try that you haven't tried yet?	Do you prefer to spend you free time on your own, or with others?
What would be the ideal amount of free time per day?	What stage(s) in our life do you think we have the most/least free time?

Public Transport

What is the biggest problem with public transport in your town or city?	How do you think transport will be different in fifty years' time?
What is your favourite mode of public transport?	What is the most popular form of transport in your city/country?
Why do you think not everyone is using public transport?	Do you think that governments should encourage public transportation more?
How safe is it for people to use public transport in your city at all hours of the day and night?	How good is the public transportation in your city?

Hospital

Have you or any member of your family ever been to hospital?	Do you believe that all healthcare should be free?
Which groups of people need to use hospitals the most often?	If a close friend or relative needed you to donate a kidney for a kidney transplant, would you do it?
In what ways can your local hospital be improved?	Would you ever consider going to hospital for non-essential treatment, like cosmetic surgery?
What do you think is the easiest job in a hospital?	What do you think is the worst job in a hospital?

Problems

What is the biggest problem you have faced so far in your life?	Would you rather have ten small problems or one big problem?
What social problems are your country/region facing at the moment?	When did you last help somebody with their problems?
Do you think most people bring their problems upon themselves?	Would you ever write on an internet forum for advice?
Would you consider training to become a counsellor, and helping people for a living?	Is it easier to trust a stranger than somebody close to you to help you with your problems?

Media

If you could keep only one form of media, which would you choose?	Is there such a thing as an unbiased source of news?
Radio is over a hundred years old. Why hasn't it ever been replaced by a more modern form of media?	What would happen if the media just stopped?
How influenced are you by the media?	How can students use different parts of the media to improve their language skills?
Should the government control the press?	Are newspapers becoming obsolete?

Hotels

Would you like to work in a hotel?	What are the advantages and disadvantages of staying in a hotel?
Do you use the spa and leisure facilities when you stay at a hotel?	If you were the manager of an old two-star hotel that was in danger of closure, how would you try to make it profitable again?
How would you describe a typical day's work of a hotel receptionist?	What is your opinion of large, all-inclusive resort hotels?
Do you think it is acceptable to take things such as bathrobes, soap, etc, from a hotel room when you leave?	Does your behaviour differ when staying in a hotel compared to when you are at home?

Languages

What are the advantages and disadvantages of English becoming a global language?	Which language do you think would be the best global language?
What body language do you use in your culture?	Is preserving a dying language as important as preserving an endangered species?
Apart from English, which other language would you like to learn?	Do you agree that English is essential for success in one's career?
What age is the best to start learning a new language?	What is more important when speaking a foreign language: fluency or accuracy?

Technology

Has technology made our lives more complicated?	Do technological advances increase the gap between rich and poor?
Which areas of technology are the most important to teach at school?	Which invention has had a more positive impact on our lives: the mobile phone or personal computer?
Do you agree that technology has made us lazy?	Do you believe that advances in technology causes job losses?
If mobile phones disappeared one day, how do you think people would cope?	In your opinion, which industry has been most transformed by technology?

Art

How would you describe your relationship with art?	What paintings, drawings, or sculptures do you have in your home?
Is collecting works of art a good investment?	What's the point in owning a valuable piece of art if it has to be kept locked away?
Do you go to art exhibitions, galleries, antique markets?	What is your definition of art?
Who is the most famous artist from your country?	Is there any public art in your city?

History

Do you think it is important to have a knowledge of history?	What period of history would you like to learn more about?
Should history lessons focus on politics and war, or on social changes?	Which local historical figure has had the greatest impact on your country?
What do you think of the recent history of your country, the past 30 years?	Which historical figure would you like to meet?
Do you think history repeats itself?	Are you proud of the history of your country?

Books

How important is reading books?	What should be the roles of libraries in modern life?
If you could write a book, what kind of book (genre) would it be?	Would you go to bookshops more often if they were friendly places with comfortable armchairs and coffee shops?
Could you live in a world without books?	What is the worst book that you've ever read?
Have you read more than one book by the same author?	How can we encourage children to read more?

IELTS CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

These instant conversation worksheets are designed to help you:

- develop ideas for the exam
- explore vocabulary you might not have used before
- gain fluency
- and to prepare for a range of possible conversation topics that could appear

They're not laid out exactly the same as in the exam and the style is different, as they are designed to stimulate ideas and give you a chance to practice speaking freely.

They can be used as part of your preparation alone or with a partner.

If you want to make the activity more exciting and more like an exam, you can use a stopwatch and record yourself answering the questions. After you have answered the questions, listen to the recording and analyse your performance. You will find things that you need to correct and things that you did well. The important thing is that you get a little better every time.

1.WORK OR STUDIES

What do you do? Do you study or are you currently working?

What does your job position/course entail?

Can you describe your tasks on a daily basis?

What is your favorite task at work/subject at school?

What is your least favorite task at work/subject?

How would you describe your current job/school?

2. DAYS OFF

How many days do you work/attend class per week?

How many days off do you have a week?

What do you do during your days off?

What do you do during your holiday?

How much leave per year do you think people should have as a minimum? Is the current minimum good?

3. AGE AT WORK

At what age do people usually start working in your country?

What is the ideal age for someone to start working? Why?

What is the ideal age for someone to stop working? Why?

At what age would you want to retire? Why?

4. JOB LOCATION

What jobs are available in your hometown?

What is the most popular city in your country in terms of job hunting? Why?

What is the most sought-after job in your country? Why?

Describe your ideal city or town to work in.

5. WORKING FROM HOME

In your own words, how would you define working from home?

What is a good excuse to work from home?

How do people stay productive working from home?

What are the benefits of working from home?

What are the disadvantages of working from home?

What would it take for you to permanently work from home?

How popular are work from home jobs in your country?

In your opinion, should working from home be an option for all office workers?

6. SCHOOL LOCATION

How far do you live from your college or university?

How many hours do you commute in total per week?

Would you consider renting an apartment near your school?
Why/Why not?

What do you like about the location of your current school?

7. STUDYING ABROAD

Why do you want to study abroad?

In your opinion/experience, what is the best country to study your subject in? Why?

If you were given a chance, which country would you like to work in?

What should people consider before working or studying abroad?

Why do some people prefer to study abroad?

What type of people are ideal for studying abroad?

What type of people do you think would not be successful studying abroad?

8. OFFICE LUNCH

Where do you usually eat out during lunch break? Why?

Why do so many people prefer eating out rather than eating in their office or university?

Why do some people prefer eating home cooked meals in the office rather than eating out?

9. AFTER WORK/SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What do you usually do after work/class?

How often do you stay out with friends after class or after work?
What do you usually do?

Is it important to spend time with your class mates or work colleagues outside of school or work? Why/Why not?

10. REWARDS AND RECOGNITION AT WORK

Why should employers recognize employees' efforts?

How should an employer recognize an employee?

How would you feel if you were recognized for the quality of your work? What reward would you like to receive?

11. TEAM BUILDING

Why is it important to have team building activities when you work for a company? Who benefits the most in team building, employees or employers?

How does team building help a business/company?

12. WORKING HOURS

What do you think about 9 to 5 jobs? Would you prefer a different time-table? Why?

In your opinion, how many hours should someone work in a day? Why?

In your opinion, how many days should someone work in a week? Why?

13. OVERTIME

Should companies be able to force employees to work overtime?
Why/Why not?

Should companies be forced to pay employees for any overtime they work? Why/Why not?

14. TRAVEL

What are the advantages and disadvantages of frequent travel?

Would you like to travel as part of your job? Why/Why not?

When and where was your last trip?

What is your most memorable trip? Why?

Which country would you most like to visit in your next trip?
Why?

15. EXPERIENCE

In your country, how common is it to stay in the same job for a long time? Why?

How important is experience when you're just starting out? Why?

16. JOB PROMOTION

How important is getting a promotion to you? Why?

What is the best way to be promoted in a job?

How can office politics affect promotion?

17. CONTRACTS

How do you feel about the general way companies contract workers in your country?

Who benefits more from contracts, the worker or the company?

If you were a business owner, would you consider hiring workers from third party agencies? Why?

How long should an employee be under probation?

18. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In your own words, how would you define work-life balance?

How important is work-life balance? Why?

How much work-life balance do you currently have?

How can the government help in achieving work-life balance for workers in your country or region?

Describe someone you know who has a great work-life balance.

For you, what activities help in achieving work-life balance?

19. MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

What are the advantages of being a boss/manager or leader?

What are the disadvantages of being a boss/manager or leader?

In your own words, how would you define a leader?

Is there a difference between a manager and a leader? Why?

Is it necessary to be a good leader in order to be a good manager?

20. FREELANCING

How common is freelancing in your country?

Why do some people choose to work as freelancers?

What are the advantages of working as a freelancer?

What are the disadvantages of working as a freelancer?

If you were given a chance, would you work as a freelancer?
Why?

21. DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS

What are some examples of professions that suit your personality?

What is the worst job you can think of for your personality?

What are the most prestigious professions in your country? Why?

Who do you think should be the most well paid in terms of jobs?

Who do you think should be the least paid in terms of jobs?

What was your dream job when you were a kid?

What is your dream job now?

Given the opportunity, would you pursue your dream job? Why or why not?

How well paid are politicians in your country? Is this fair? Why/Why not?

What is the most in demand job in your country?

22. EDUCATION AND JOBS

How important is educational achievement to you?

Which is more important, qualifications or experience? Why?

How important is experience when applying for a job in your country?

In your country, how challenging is it to find a job for newly graduated candidates? Why?

Was it difficult to get your first job?

What assistance do recent graduates get from the government when applying for jobs?

23. PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

What makes you stand out from other applicants when you apply for a course or job? (What are your strong points?)

What's your biggest weakness?

How do you see your career evolving in the next 2 years?

Do you think job interviews are a fair assessment of a candidate's suitability for a job?

24. YOUR AMBITIONS

What do you look for in a career?

Rank the following benefits and perks in order of importance for you. Explain your answers:

- Frequent travel
- Management responsibilities
- Child-care benefits
- Long holidays
- Travel and food allowances
- Frequent social events and activities organized by the company
- The option to work from home

What benefits and perks would you most like to have in your ideal?

25. JOB-HOPPING

How many jobs have you had in the past five years?

What do you think about job-hopping?

Why do some people job-hop?

How can job-hopping affect your career?

26. SALARY

How important is salary in applying for a job?

How important are salary increases for staff motivation?

Would you rather do something you love for a low salary or something you hate for a high salary? Why?

Is it good for governments to introduce laws to guarantee a minimum wage? Why or why not?

27. CLASSMATES/CO-WORKERS AND PERSONALITY

What kind of people do you like to work with? Why?

Would you consider yourself a workaholic? Why?

Would you consider yourself easy going? Why?

What do you think about people who are easy going in their jobs?

28. EMAIL

How helpful is emailing in your life in general?

Why is it sometimes easier to have misunderstandings with people during email exchanges?

Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the number of emails in your inbox? Do you have any tricks to tackle this problem?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using email?

29. TECHNOLOGY

How often do you use your phone to help you in your studies?
Why?

What kind of technology do you use at school?

How has technology changed the way we work?

How has technology changed the way we learn?

Phonemic Chart

single vowels				diphthongs			
ɪ	i:	ʊ	u:	eɪ	ɔɪ	aɪ	
sh <u>i</u> p	sh <u>ee</u> p	b <u>oo</u> k	sh <u>oo</u> t	w <u>ai</u> t	c <u>oi</u> n	l <u>i</u> ke	
e	ɜ:	ə	ɔ:	eə	ɪə	ʊə	
l <u>e</u> ft	h <u>er</u>	te <u>ach</u> er	d <u>oo</u> r	h <u>air</u>	h <u>er</u> e	t <u>our</u> ist	
æ	ʌ	ɒ	ɑ:	əʊ	aʊ	/	
h <u>a</u> t	u <u>p</u>	o <u>n</u>	f <u>a</u> r	sh <u>ow</u>	m <u>ou</u> th		

unvoiced consonants							
p	f	θ	t	s	ʃ	tʃ	k
pe <u>a</u>	fr <u>ee</u>	th <u>ing</u>	tr <u>ee</u>	s <u>ee</u>	sh <u>ee</u> p	ch <u>ess</u>	c <u>oi</u> n

voiced consonants							
b	v	ð	d	z	ʒ	dʒ	g
b <u>o</u> at	v <u>i</u> deo	th <u>i</u> s	d <u>o</u> g	z <u>oo</u>	v <u>i</u> ʒion	j <u>o</u> ke	g <u>o</u>
m	n	ŋ	h	w	l	r	j
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