

IELTS Test Prep

SPEAKING SECTION



Structure and Timing

11-14 minutes in length

3 sections

This section of the test is face to face with an examiner

Structure and Timing

- Part 1- Introduction and interview
 - This section takes approximately 4-5 minutes
 - The interviewer will introduce themselves and ask you some questions about your life

Structure and Timing

- Part 2- Individual long turn
 - This section takes approximately 3-4 minutes
 - You will be asked to prepare a short talk and speak about a topic for 1-2 minutes

Structure and Timing

- Part 3- Two-way discussion
 - This section takes approximately 4-5 minutes
 - The interviewer will have a longer discussion with you about the topic from Part 2

Scoring

There are 4 criteria for this section:

- Fluency and coherence
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range and accuracy
- Pronunciation

Each criteria is scored from 0-9

Subject matter

Some of the common topics covered on the Speaking section include:

- Family life
- Sports and recreation
- Education
- Tourism and travel
- The environment
- The internet
- Advertising

Fluency and coherence

Meaning: how clear and structured your speech is

To increase your score:

- Avoid repetition
- Connect your sentences with linking words
- Pause appropriately
- Answer with fully developed answers with appropriate detail

Lexical resource

Meaning: vocabulary usage

To increase your score:

- Show knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary
- Show that you can discuss a variety of topics comfortably
- Try not to speak too informally
- Use idioms appropriately

Grammatical range and accuracy

Meaning: having correct grammar and using a variety of structures accurately

To increase your score:

- Avoid making grammatical errors
- Use a variety of grammatical structures

Pronunciation

Meaning:

- Saying the words in the correct way
- Using correct word stress
- Having clear speech

To increase your score:

- Speak clearly, being sure to enunciate your words
- Use proper word stress
- Ensure that the evaluator will be able to understand you without difficulty

Part 1- Overview

Introduction and interview

The examiner will introduce him/herself

They will ask you some questions about yourself

Part 1- Types of questions

What do/did you study?

- What do you find difficult about it?

Where do you work?

- What are your working hours like?
- Are you thinking of changing your job?

Do you have a big family?

- Can you tell me something about them?
- Do you get on well with your family?

Part 1- Types of questions

Where is your hometown?

- Do you like your hometown?
- Do you often visit?
- What can visitors do there?
- How could it be improved?
- Has it changed a lot since you were a child?

What do you suggest that a visitor should see or do in your country?

- Are there any traditional arts or music you would recommend?
- In what ways has tourism changed your country?

Part 1- Types of questions

What kinds of food do you like to eat?

- What kind of new food would you like to try?
- Do you like cooking?
- Do you prefer home-cooked food or food from restaurants?

Do you have any hobbies or interests?

- How did you become interested in ____?
- How do you usually spend your holidays?

Part 1- Types of questions

Do you like reading books?

- What kinds of books do you like to read?
- Do others in your family like to read too?

What would you like to change in your daily routine?

- Tell me about your typical weekday and your typical weekend
- What's the balance of work/study and free time in your normal day?

Part 1- Tips

Don't repeat the question back to the examiner

Try to speak as though it is a real conversation (but in a formal setting)

DO NOT answer with just a yes or no

Try to give reasons, examples, and details for your answers

Part 2- Overview

Individual long turn

You will be given a topic on a task card

You will have 1 minute to prepare

You will speak for 2 minutes on this topic (without any input or questions from the evaluator)

Part 2- Types of questions

Describe a festival that is important in your country

Talk about your favourite shop or store

Describe an interesting historical place

Describe a memory of your childhood

Describe a tourist attraction you have visited

Describe a challenge you faced recently

Talk about your favourite writer

Describe a friend who you admire very much

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Describe a festival that is important in your country

- What is the festival
- When does it happen
- What happens during the festival
- Why you enjoy it
- Why it is important

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Talk about a favourite shop or store

- Where the shop is
- What it sells
- What you like to buy there
- Why you like the shop so much

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Describe an interesting historical place

- What it is
- Where it is
- What it is like now
- Why it is interesting

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Describe a memory of your childhood

- When it happened
- What happened
- If it is a good or a bad memory
- How it affected you

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Describe a tourist attraction you have visited

- When you went there
- Where it is
- Who you went with
- Why you enjoyed it (or didn't enjoy it)

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Describe a challenge you faced recently

- What was the challenge
- When it happened
- Where it happened
- How you overcame it

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Talk about your favourite writer

- Who the writer is
- What they write about
- Your favourite book that they've written
- Why you like them

Part 2- Questions- what to cover

Describe a friend who you admire very much

- Who is the friend
- How long have you known them
- What you like to do together
- Why you admire them

Part 2- Tips

Take time to prepare

- Write ideas, not full sentences
- Think of your main reasons/examples
- List things in the order you want to discuss them

Don't worry about covering all of the questions or points on the card

- You will not be penalized for not covering everything

Don't worry if your answer isn't 100% true

Part 2- Tips

Practice using some words and phrases that help you to introduce your ideas

- First of all
- Secondly
- Additionally
- Another reason why

This topic will be continued in the
next video!

Part 3-Two-way discussion

Overview

You will have a discussion with the examiner about the topic from Part 2

This lasts 4-5 minutes

The examiner will likely ask you approximately 4-8 questions

Part 3- Additional questions

Describe a festival that is important in your country

- Do you think that new festivals will be introduced in the future? What kind?
- Would you agree that the original significance of festivals is often lost today?
- How may globalization affect different festivals around the world?

Part 3- Additional questions

Talk about a favourite shop or store

- How do people decide where to shop from in your country?
- Are large supermarkets a threat to smaller shops?
- In what ways can shops improve their service quality?

Part 3- Additional questions

Describe a tourist attraction you have visited

- Why do you think tourism is so developed now?
- How do people choose their destination for a vacation?
- Do you prefer travelling alone or in tour groups?

Part 3- Additional questions

Describe a challenge you faced recently

- What challenges does the world face currently?
- Can parents reduce the challenges that kids have?
- Do you think it's necessary to challenge yourself, pushing the boundaries and getting out of your comfort zone?

Part 3- Additional questions

Describe a friend who you admire very much

- What do you think are the most important qualities for friends to have?
- What do you think causes friendships to break up?
- How important do you think it is for a person to spend some time alone?

Part 3- Tips

1. Have detailed responses instead of short ones
2. Give reasons for everything you say
3. Try not to speak too slowly or too quickly
4. Stick to the topic
5. It doesn't matter if what you are saying is 100% truthful. Your English is what matters
6. Don't worry if you make mistakes. Just keep going

Strategies

1. Avoid mumbling!
Always be sure to open your mouth enough when speaking
2. Study enunciation and be sure to enunciate
3. Study some linking words that you can insert into your answers
4. Try not to stress if you make a mistake. Just keep talking!
5. Memorize new words, but don't try to memorize sentences. You need to sound natural!

General Tips

General Tips

Never answer a question with just yes, no, or a very short answer. Be sure to explain your answers.

General Tips

Try to speak at a pace that sounds natural

General Tips

Stick to the topic

- Try not to get distracted and lose focus

General Tips

Always give reasons for what you say

- Don't just say "I like classical music"
- Say "I like classical music because I can play it while I am studying and it helps me to focus. It doesn't have lyrics that can distract me from my studies, so that is very helpful. Also, I find it very relaxing, regardless of when I listen to it."

General Tips

Don't give short answers

- Don't rely on the examiner to give you prompts
 - They might ask "why" sometimes, but don't make them ask this often. Always tell them why.
- Try to give complete answers on your own, without input from the examiner
- If you give short answers for everything, the test will end too quickly and they won't get to hear enough from you

General Tips

If you don't understand a question, ask them to repeat it

- It's better to ask them to repeat it than to misunderstand the question
- You won't lose marks for asking for them to repeat the question

General Tips

Don't use words and phrases you don't understand

- Learn new vocabulary for the test, but don't try to use lots of new, fancy sentence structures, words, and sentences if you're not sure about how to use them
- It can bring your score down if you use things incorrectly
- Don't just memorize entire sentences
 - Memorize words and short phrases and their meaning and usage
 - Don't try to insert memorized sentences into your speech, as it can sound very unnatural

General Tips

Make eye contact with the examiner

- Try to make as much eye contact with the examiner as you would in a regular conversation
- Don't stare the whole time, but don't avoid looking at them the whole time either!

General Tips

The content of what you say matters more than your accent

- Pronunciation is evaluated, but that doesn't mean that you have to have a perfect accent
- It takes a long time to eliminate an accent completely
- Don't worry about having an accent when you speak. This is expected
- Concentrate instead of saying words correctly and clearly

General Tips

Take a moment to think when necessary

Some phrases that can be used when you are thinking about your answer include:

- Let me see...
- That's an interesting question
- I've never thought about that, but...
- That's a difficult question, but I will try to answer it

General Tips

Try to avoid filler words

These are very common in most people's speech, but if you can reduce them, it will make your answers sound more clear and confident

Here are some sample filler words to avoid:

- Like
- You know
- Umm

General Tips

Try to structure your answers to avoid going off on a tangent or failing to answer part of the question

General Tips

Sample structure for a question about your favourite sport:

- Opening:

 - That's hard to say, because I like so many different sports.

- Answer

 - I would have to say that basketball is my favourite sport.

- Reason

 - I enjoy playing basketball and I love watching it on tv because it's really fast-paced and exciting. I love following my favourite team...[insert a little more about the topic here]

- Closing

 - So, if I had to choose my favourite sport, it would have to be basketball.

General Tips

Answer every question

Even if a question is difficult, give an answer

Using the favourite sport example from earlier, if you don't have a favourite sport because you hate sports, tell the examiner why you hate sports. The answer doesn't matter as much as the way you describe it.

General Tips

Remember that the examiner has a script to read from and won't say much outside of that script

You may not be able to get clarification about the questions

General Tips

For example, if they ask about your home or your country, and you live in a different country now than the one you spent your life in, which should you talk about?

For things like this, you should just make the decision yourself, and clarify in your answer

For example, you can start your answer with:

- I will talk about my home country, since it is the country I am the most familiar with.

General Tips

Use the first part of the test as an opportunity to use some verb tenses and/or phrases that you can prepare in advance

You will be asked about your home, family, work, or studies

They present perfect can be used for some of these answers, such as:

- I've lived in my apartment for 3 years
- I've been studying English for 4 years
- I've been living here for 6 months

General Tips

Don't spend your final minutes before the test studying

If you have been studying for an appropriate amount of time before the test, you should try to give yourself a break on the day of the test, and maybe the night before

Try to find a way to relax on the day of the test

Last minute cramming will likely make you more nervous and stressed

Other ways to prepare

Listen to a lot of content in English

Try to repeat phrases in English after hearing them, copying the native speaker's pronunciation

Speak in English often (even if it's to yourself!)

Try to get practice speaking with native speakers to become less nervous during the test

Learn lots of vocabulary

Practice, practice, practice

Please join us again for our next
video!