

Easy Ways to Extend Your Part 1 Answers

This document will look at how long your answers should be in Part 1 of the Speaking test and some simple ways to make your answers better.

I am often asked by students how long answers should be in Part 1. There is no definitive answer to this, but they should not be too short and not too long. That's a confusing answer, I know. Let me explain more.

They shouldn't be too short because you want to show the examiner that you can actually use English, so 'I'm a student.' is not really long enough.

However, they should not be too long either, because Part 1 is on familiar topics (family, work, hobbies etc.) and you don't normally talk for 2 minutes when someone asks you where you are from. Also, you will have lots of opportunities to give longer answers in Parts 2 and 3.

As a general rule, if you only give a single sentence with a single clause like 'I'm from Ireland.' then your answer is too short. I also don't think Part 1 answers should ever have more than three sentences. Somewhere in between is just right.

The main point is that you should not worry about length too much in Part 1. Your use of English is much more important.

Below are a few ways that you can easily extend your answers from a short sentence to a more comprehensive answer that will sound better and hopefully get you a higher score.

Feelings and Opinions

You can easily extend your answer by saying how you feel about the question you were just asked. It will also make your answer more interesting.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Short answer: 'I like shopping.'

Longer answer: 'I like shopping because I love trying on new clothes and I always feel more confident when I'm wearing a new outfit.'

Contrasting Details

One of the easiest ways you can extend your answer is to simply use the word 'but' to contrast details.

How long have you worked there?

Short answer: I've worked there for three years.

Longer answer: I've worked there for three years, but I'm going to change careers next year.

Combining Details

Instead of giving a very short answer you can add in some extra details with 'and', 'with' or 'also'.

Do you live in a flat or a house?

Short answer: I live in a house.

Longer answer: I live in a house with my two brothers and my mum. We've also got a dog and a cat.

Past Comparisons

You can talk about what you 'used to' do and how that has changed now in the present.

Do you play sport?

Short answer: I play football.

Longer answer: I used to love basketball, but now I play football more because that's what my friends are in to.

Adding Reasons

Always try to explain why you think or do something in the test. You can do this using 'because' or 'so'.

Do you like your job?

Short answer: Yes, I really love my job.

Longer answer: Yes, I really love my job because I get to help people with their problems everyday.

Future

If something will change in the future, you can use one of the future structures, like 'will' or 'be + going to'.

Do you work or study?

Short answer: I'm at university at the moment.

Longer answer: I'm at university at the moment, but I'm graduating next year and I will hopefully get a job in advertising.

Contrast Opposite Opinions

You might be asked a question where you have to talk about your opinion or another person's opinion. Use 'even so' or 'although' to show that you have considered both sides.

Is your hometown a nice place for tourists to visit?

Short answer: Yes, it has a really nice beach.

Longer answer: Yes, it has a really nice beach, although it is getting really busy these days, so it's not as pristine as it used to be.

Giving Examples

Real life examples are always the easiest things to talk about because you can talk about them naturally and in more detail.

Do you get along with your brothers?

Short answer: No, we're not in to the same things.

Longer answer: No, we're not in to the same things, like when we are both watching TV we always fight about what show to watch.

Frequency

You can use words like 'usually', 'never', 'always' and 'more often than not.' to extend your answers.

What do you do at the weekends?

Short answer: I watch TV and play computer games.

Longer answer: I usually watch TV and play computer games, but sometimes I go out for a drink with my friends.

How can I use these?

The best candidates use English naturally in the Speaking test. They don't think 'Should I extend this with an example or talk about the future?' and then give an answer, they just reply spontaneously.

You can improve by doing something I call practising 'slow and fast.' Practice slowly first with old exam questions and think about how you could extend your answers and even have notes and books in front of you. Think deeply about what structures you need to use and focus on getting your answers perfect.

You can then practice 'fast' with new questions and without any help and hopefully, because you have studied the structures in detail, you will be able to use them naturally without any help.

Can I use more than one?

Of course! They are totally flexible. Combining two or three of the above structures in a single answer is very impressive.

Where are all the complicated structures?

Trying too hard to use 'complex structures' normally leads to mistakes. Remember that the main goal in the Speaking test is being able to communicate effectively and fluently with the examiner. If you are thinking about complicated grammar structures, you probably won't be able to do either of those things.

You do have to use a 'range of structures', but that does not mean that you have to use every complicated phrase and tense in the English language. Focus on real communication and the 'range of structures' will look after themselves.

Main IELTS Speaking Topics

1. **Your Job**
2. **Studying**
3. **Your Hometown**
4. **Your Home**
5. **The Internet**
6. **Your Likes and Dislikes**
7. **Sport**
8. **Food**
9. **The Weather**
10. **Family**

IELTS Speaking Topic 1- Work

1. Do you work or study?
 - I graduated a few years ago and am now in full-time employment.
2. What is your job?
 - I'm currently an English teacher working for the British Council in Ho Chi Minh City.
3. Why did you choose that job?
 - I was previously a lawyer and found it to be really stressful and never had any free time, so after quitting that job, I thought teaching might be the complete opposite of being a lawyer, you know, not as stressful and more time off.
4. Are there lots of English teachers in Ho Chi Minh City?
 - Oh yes! There is such a big demand for English as a second language here, and it's also quite a cheap place to live compared to many other big cities in Asia.
5. Do you enjoy your job?
 - Most of the time. It's very rewarding to be able to help people every day, and the students here are very hardworking and fun to teach, but you sometimes have lessons that do go so well, and the money could always be better.
6. Do you get on well with your co-workers?
 - Yes, fine. I don't really see work as part of my social life, so I don't socialise with them, so I suppose I could be more friendly, but it's just my nature to be a bit colder with colleagues. I think it's more professional to be that way.
7. What was your first day at work like?
 - Many teachers were starting at the same time as me, 10 I think, so we all had a big induction day. The more senior teachers ran workshops with us to familiarise us with their different systems, and then we went for a team dinner in the evening.
8. What responsibilities do you have at work?
 - All of the teachers' main responsibility is to plan good lessons and then teach them to the best of their ability. On top of that, we have several admin. tasks to carry out, like marking homework, filling out attendance sheets and writing reports.
9. Would you like to change your job in the future?
 - Yes, as I said before, I like working alone, so I would like to be my own boss. I'm currently developing my own website, so if it's successful, I will leave teaching and work on it full-time. This will also give me more time to work on other projects.
10. What is your typical day like at work?
 - I normally have 2 or 3 classes in the evening, and I start the day by doing all the

planning at home. This normally takes an hour or two, depending on the lessons. I then take the rest of the day to spend with my family before going to work around 3 to print off my materials, and then I teach all evening.

11. What would you change about your job?

- As with most English teachers, we have to teach what is on the curriculum, and this can mean that you are teaching some things that are quite boring or not very useful for your students, so I would like to have more freedom to teach outside the syllabus.

IELTS Speaking Topic 2- Study

1. Do you work or study?

- I'm currently a student at Queen's University, Belfast.

2. What do you study?

- I study law because it's a really well thought of degree, and I'm hoping to pursue it as a career in the future.

3. Is it a popular subject at your university?

- Very popular; in fact, it's one of the most sought-after courses. I think there are about 350 people reading law at Queen's. I think lots of students' parents want them to study law so they can get a good job after they graduate.

4. Do you enjoy studying it?

- It's such a huge subject that there will always be parts you like and parts you don't like. I find Human Rights fascinating because they can really make a difference in people's lives. On the other hand, modules like Land Law and Equity are really boring.

5. Do you get along with your classmates?

- Yes, they are all really great. Most people like to socialise together in the evenings and this makes us a very tight group. If you know someone socially, it is much easier to work together in class.

6. If you could change to another subject, what would it be?

- I planned to study medicine, but then when I went on work experience I fainted at the first sight of blood, so definitely not that. I'm a real history buff and read books about World War 2 all the time, so I suppose it would have to be Modern History.

7. Do you plan to use the subject you are studying in the future?

- Yes, I've already started to apply for jobs as a lawyer. We normally have to secure a job a year before we graduate and then work very hard to get a high overall mark. After that, I will probably do a Masters in law to become a specialist in one particular area.

8. What is the most difficult part of your subject?

- You have to remember lots of legislation and cases and not only remember their names but also how they affect each part of the law and how they interact with each other. Physically it can also be exhausting because we have to read very dense texts for a few hours every day.

9. What would like to study in the future?

- As I said before, my favourite type of law is Human Rights, so I would like to do a Master's in International Human Rights Law. It's right at the cutting edge of my field and there are also lots of very high-profile cases in the media, so it's really exciting and something I would like to become an expert in.

10. Why did you choose your university?

- Mostly because it is close to my hometown and most of my friends were going there. I kind of regret it now. It's a great university, but because it's so close to home, it doesn't give you much of a chance to experience new things and meet new people. If I were to choose again, I'd study abroad.

IELTS Speaking Topic 3- Hometown

1. Where is your hometown?
 - My hometown is on the southeast coast of Northern Ireland. It's called Dundrum and it's about 1 hour south of the capital city.
2. What do you like about it?
 - It's an area of outstanding natural beauty and, for me, one of the most beautiful places on earth. It has everything; fantastic beaches, rolling mountains, dense forests and picturesque countryside.
3. What do you not like about it?
 - It can be a little bit boring because it's really tiny. There are only a few small shops and a couple of pubs, and that's it! In the summer, it's OK because you can enjoy the outdoors, but it would be nice to have a few more indoor facilities for the winter.
4. How often do you visit your hometown?
 - Not as much as I should. I only visit about once a year to see my family because I'm really busy with work and it's quite far away, but I hope to visit more in the future.
5. What's the oldest part of your hometown?
 - There is an old Norman castle that sits on top of the highest hill in the town. It's a ruin now, but there are some breathtaking views from it, and it's easy to see why they chose that site for a castle because you can see for miles around.
6. Do many people visit your town?
 - Thousands of tourists visit every summer. They mostly come from the capital city to get away from the hustle and bustle and enjoy the peace and quiet. More and more international tourists are visiting because many scenes from the TV show 'Game of Thrones' were shot just outside the village.
7. Is there any way your hometown could be made better?
 - As I said before, the best thing about the town is its rural beauty; you can't improve that. If I had to say something, it would be to improve the roads, they are in a terrible state and cause a few car accidents every year.
8. How has your hometown changed over the years?
 - Since I was a child the town has almost doubled in size and population. It used to consist of just one main street, but now there are many new housing developments and apartments next to the water. All these new people moving in, it has changed the town's character a little bit; people are not as friendly as before.
9. Are there good transportation links to your town?
 - The public transport system consists of just buses that pass through the town on an hourly basis. One bus goes north to the capital city, which is really convenient if you need to do any shopping and the other bus goes south, where you can switch buses and go across the border to the Republic of Ireland, so you could say we have international transport links which are not bad for a little town like ours.
10. Would you recommend the town to people with children?
 - Yes and no. It is obviously a great place to bring up kids because there are so many things for them to do like swim in the sea, play in the forest and run on the beach. However, the good schools are pretty far away, and I remember having to get up really early every morning to catch a bus to school that was 20 miles away.

IELTS Speaking Topic 4- Your Home

1. Where do you live?
 - I live on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, in a district called Tan Phu, about 15 km from the city centre.
2. Do you live in a house or a flat?

- I live in a 3 bedroom flat on the 11th floor of a big apartment building.
3. Who do you live with?
 - I live there with my wife and baby son.
 4. Is it a big place?
 - It's pretty big for a flat. It has 3 large bedrooms, one for my wife and me and one for my son when he gets older. It also has a smaller bedroom that I use to study and store things in. The kitchen is small, but it is part of a big open-plan living room, so there is lots of space for the family.
 5. What is your favourite room?
 - That would have to be my study because it's the only room in that I can get peace. When I'm in there, my wife knows I'm working, so she leaves me alone, and I can concentrate on my work.
 6. How is your apartment decorated?
 - I don't like lots of over-the-top decoration, so I guess you would describe it as minimalist. The walls are all white, and the furniture is also either white or black. There are very few ornaments or pictures because, again, I like to keep things quite minimal, and I hate clutter.
 7. Is there anything you would like to change about your flat?
 - I would like to have a big balcony. We have a sort of balcony at the moment, but we mainly use it for washing and drying clothes. It would be really nice to have some tables and chairs on a proper balcony, with maybe a few plants, so we could sit there in the evenings and relax.
 8. Do you plan to live there for a long time?
 - I really like where I live, but it is really far from where I work in the centre of town. It takes around 45 minutes to drive there by motorbike and in the hot season and wet season it can be really uncomfortable, so we will consider moving closer to the centre in a year or so.
 9. Do you have a garden?
 - That's the best part of where we live; we have a huge garden. It takes around 40 minutes to walk around it. It has a few play parks for the kids, several gyms and four small lakes. We are really lucky to have it, and I try to go for a walk around it every day if I have time.
 10. Are there many amenities?
 - Not really, because it is on the edge of town. If you want to go for a nice meal, use a swimming pool, go shopping or head out for a drink, you really have to drive for about 30 minutes. That's a major drawback, but if you are organised and buy everything when you are in the centre of town, it's not so bad.

IELTS Speaking Topic 5- Fashion

1. Do you care about fashion?
 - I used to in my younger days, I remember always looking to see what my favourite musicians were wearing and then trying to copy them, but now that I'm older, I don't really care as long as I look smart.
2. What kind of things do you normally wear?
 - It depends on what I'm doing, really. If I'm working, I always wear a dress shirt and trousers, but we don't have to wear ties. Going out will be more casual, like a polo shirt and jeans and if I'm at home, it will be relaxed, just a t-shirt and shorts.
3. Are there any traditional clothes in your country?
 - I have no idea. There might be, but I can't recall ever hearing anyone talking about them or seeing someone wearing them.
4. Where do you usually purchase your clothes?

- I used to go to the trendy shops when I was a student, but now I'm older and have little time, I like to go to a big shopping centre or department store and buy everything there. It's more convenient that way, so I don't have to run all over town just for a few clothes.
5. Have you ever bought clothes online?
 - No, because I don't trust their clothes to always fit me. I know a few people who order lots of clothes online, order a few different sizes, and then send the ones that don't fit them back, but I can't be bothered with all that. It's much quicker to go into a proper shop and try the clothes on there and make sure they are a proper fit.
 6. Do people from your country think fashion is important?
 - More so these days. Our country wouldn't be very high on the international fashion hot spots list, but I notice people following certain trends more. Last year, there was a red trouser craze, and everywhere you looked, people had red trousers on.
 7. What is your favourite item of clothing?
 - Probably my leather jacket. It cost a fortune and makes me feel confident when I go out in it. I normally get a few compliments also because it is quite slimming.

IELTS Speaking Topic 6- The Internet

1. How important is the internet to you?
 - Extremely important. I depend on it for work, research, study, and entertainment, so without it I'd be completely lost.
2. How often do you use the internet?
 - I use it constantly throughout the day, every day. I check my emails when I get up in the morning, I use it for work all day, and then I watch videos, read books or listen to music through it at night.
3. Do you use it more for work or in your free time?
 - I'd say both really. About 50% of my job involves researching and writing on the internet so I would use it for about 4 hours a day. When I get home, I'm normally too tired to go to the gym or play sports, so it is really easy to download a movie or stream some music, and I normally do that until I fall asleep.
4. What are your favourite websites?
 - For work, my two favourite sites are WordPress and Google. WordPress is a blogging tool that allows you to publish blogs easily and maintain a professional-looking website. Google, of course, allows me to find the information I need quickly and accurately. In my spare time, I use Facebook like everyone else in the world, but my favourite site is The Guardian because it allows me to keep up to date with everything that's happening.
5. Do you use apps?
 - I'm a bit of an app addict. My favourite app at the moment is one called Stitcher. It allows you to listen to podcasts and helps you discover new podcasts. You can download them and then listen to them whenever you have time.
6. Do you think you use the internet too much?
 - I think most people do these days. My problem is that there are so many sites and apps that you end up checking them way too often, which wastes lots of time. It can also be a bit anti-social if you check your phone when you are with other people.
7. How will the internet develop in the future?
 - I think it will be more on mobile phones than computers. Smartphones are becoming more powerful and more affordable all the time, so I think we will see a shift from people using the internet on desktop computers to mobiles and apps rather than

traditional websites.

8. Are there any negative things about the internet?
 - Being connected all of the time is not a good thing. Before, you had to sit at your computer and log on, which took time, so you didn't do it so much. Now all people have to do is look at their phones, which is too much for me. I've been trying to leave my phone at home when I socialise with friends and family to stop myself from focusing too much on the phone rather than them.

IELTS Speaking Topic 7- Weather

1. How is the weather today?
 - It's really lovely today. There were a few showers this morning, and it was a bit chilly, but it has brightened up this afternoon, and I think it will stay that way for the rest of the day.
2. What's your favourite kind of weather?
 - It depends on what I'm doing, really. If I'm doing something outside, I like the weather to be sunny but not too hot because it gets a bit uncomfortable after a while. If I'm inside, I love listening to the rain beating against the window and the wind howling outside.
3. What is the climate like in your country?
 - I'm from Ireland, so people always complain about the rain. It is right on the edge of Europe, so we get lots of rain rolling in off the Atlantic. However, because we are an island, it means that we don't get very harsh winters, and it hardly ever snows. I think temperate is the word to describe our climate- not too hot, not too cold.
4. Does the weather affect people's lives in your country?
 - Yes, very much so. In the winter, it is really grey all the time, and it gets dark very early in the afternoon. The lack of sunlight makes some people a bit depressed, and I imagine that's why people drink much more wine and whiskey in the winter to cope with how dull everything is.
5. Do people change in the summer?
 - Absolutely; as soon as the sun starts to shine and it gets warmer, people start to have barbecues, do more outdoor activities and are generally happier. Unfortunately, it doesn't last very long, but people definitely make the most of it while the weather is good.
6. Is there any weather you really don't like?
 - I don't mind when it's raining or windy, and I don't mind when it's cold, but when it's windy and raining all that at the same time, well, that isn't very pleasant, especially if you have to work or do something outside. I remember when we were at school, we would have to go outside in horrible weather to do P.E., and I detested every minute of it.
7. Does bad weather ever affect transport in your country?
 - As I said before, it rarely snows, but the transportation system collapses when it does. People are just not used to driving in the snow, and the whole country pretty much grinds to a halt. Buses and trains normally stop running completely until the snow thaws.

IELTS Speaking Topic 8- TV

1. Do you like watching TV?
 - I don't get time really to watch TV, and I don't like the fact that you have no choice about what to watch, so no, I would say I don't really like watching normal TV; I much prefer streaming something on my iPad and watching it when I like.

2. How often do you watch TV?
 - I'd say maybe only a few times a month when there is a good football match on. I prefer watching football on TV with other people around because it's a great atmosphere, but if it's a normal TV show, I will watch it alone at home on my tablet.
3. What kind of TV programmes do you like to watch?
 - I like dramas and thrillers. I don't really like anything that is not set in the real world, so I'm not a big fan of sci-fi or fantasy, although I have been getting into the latest season of Game of Thrones. I also like to watch documentaries about military history, especially about the Second World War.
4. What are the most popular TV shows in your country?
 - The two most popular genres are soaps and reality TV. Soaps like Coronation Street have always been popular because people get to know the characters really well, and the storylines can be quite gripping. I've no idea why reality TV is popular; I can't stand it, all those C-list celebrities trying to become popular again. I would rather watch paint dry, to be honest.
5. Do you like watching TV shows from other countries?
 - Yes, most of the programmes I watch are from the United States. Networks like HBO and Netflix have the biggest budgets and, as a result, can make some really high-quality shows. I don't think Game of Thrones could be made without a huge budget, and America is probably the only country to make a TV show on that scale.
6. Has the internet affected your viewing habits?
 - Absolutely, I watch most TV shows on the internet now, rather than a normal TV. There are so many streaming services, like Netflix offering on-demand TV, and it suits me to be able to watch what I want when I want. I also binge-watch a series of TV shows and watch a whole series in a day rather than waiting for the next episode.
7. What is your favourite TV show?
 - There was an American show called Fargo that I really loved. It was an adaptation of a film made about 15 years ago. The plot lines and characters were really interesting, and the dialogue was well-written. Unfortunately, there has only been one season of it so far, so I have to wait another year to see the next season.
8. What was your favourite show when you were a child?
 - I was a bit of a strange child because I didn't like cartoons like most other kids. But I loved a few shows, like The A-Team, Knight Rider, and Air Wolf. They were so cool and always had great action scenes. I was a bit obsessed with violent action films when I was a kid. When I think about them though, they weren't really all that violent compared to shows these days, I don't think one person was ever killed in any of those programmes.

IELTS Speaking Topic 9- Sport

1. Do you play any sports?
 - Not as much as I should. I'm really busy with my job these days, so I don't get the chance to do as many sports as I would like. I try to play basketball on Saturdays for a couple of hours and I occasionally play golf.
2. Have you played basketball for long?
 - Since I was about 10 years old. I remember playing a computer game about basketball when I was about 10 and it made me obsessed with the sport. From then on I played basketball every day until I went to university and then other things took priority, but I regret not maintaining it because it was something I loved doing.
3. Do you watch sport on TV?
 - Football is my favourite sport to watch on TV. I'm terrible at football but I love watching it on TV, especially big games like the Champions League. I follow

Liverpool Football Club and so do a few of my friends, so we normally go the pub every weekend and watch whoever Liverpool are playing and a few of the other big games in the Premiership.

4. What is the most popular sport in your country?
 - In my country, there are two dominant sports Gaelic Football and Hurling. Gaelic is a little like soccer but you are allowed to pick up the ball with your hands and you can kick the ball over the bar for one point or in the goal for 3 points. Hurling is played with sticks and a smaller ball and involves hitting the ball over the bar or in the goal. Both of them are really fast-paced and a bit brutal at times. You can tackle someone much harder than you can in soccer.
5. How do people in your country stay fit?
 - We are blessed with beautiful countryside and a nice temperate climate so most people either go running or walking. Lots of young people play field sports, but more and more people are joining gyms. Gyms have really taken off recently as people worry more and more about their appearance. I think it has much more to do with how good people look rather than actually keeping fit.
6. Is it important for children to play sports?
 - Definitely. Sport not only keeps them healthy, but it also teaches them discipline and keeps them out of trouble. For instance, in my school, the kids who were dedicated to sport also achieved the highest grades in school and went on to good universities where they continued to work hard.

IELTS Speaking Topic 10- Food

1. What's your favourite food?
 - I would have to say that it's definitely steak. It's quite expensive, so it's a real treat when I get the chance to have steak and I love all the things that come with it like pepper sauce, chips, mushrooms, and onions.
2. Have you always liked steak?
 - I didn't really like meat when I was younger. My mum said that I only liked to eat sweet things or breakfast cereal when I was a child. Naturally, Coco Pops were my absolute favourite.
3. Are there any foods you dislike?
 - I like most foods, but if I had to pick some I don't like, it would have to be vegetables, especially green ones like broccoli or cabbage. They either taste of nothing at all or really bitter. Although, I try to force them down when I have to because they are very healthy.
4. What are some traditional foods in your country?
 - Everything seems to revolve around the potato where I'm from, but there's much more to Irish cuisine than just one vegetable. If you come to Ireland you have to try a full Irish breakfast. It's made up of lots of fried meats, plus a range of bread like wheaten, soda and potato bread, of course.
5. Do you have a healthy diet?
 - No, not at all. I like all of the things that are unhealthy like sweets, fatty foods, and junk food. I don't really have a lot of discipline when it comes to my diet, which is probably why I'm a little overweight.

IELTS Speaking Part 2 Strategy

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IELTS Speaking Task 2 Strategy:

- *Make notes under the headings 'introduction', 'past', 'description', 'opinion' and 'future'.*
- *Use the correct tenses and vocabulary.*
- *Talk about what you're comfortable with – you don't have to cover everything on the card.*
- *Be confident! If you need the examiner to repeat something, just ask.*
- *Practise this structure at home. Find official Speaking questions and improve your skills.*

This post will help you give better answers in part 2 of the IELTS speaking test.

In IELTS speaking part 2 you will be given a topic or cue card similar to this:

- Describe a plant grown in your country. You should say
 - what the plant is
 - where it is grown
 - why you like or dislike it
 and explain why it is important to your country.

You will have 1 minute to make notes and then will be asked to speak for between 1-2 minutes.

Speaking for 2 minutes on an unfamiliar topic scares most IELTS students and that's why IELTS speaking part 2 is one of the most feared parts of the exam. The problem seems to be running out of things to say or not knowing what to say because you are unfamiliar with the cue card suggestions.

To overcome this problem, I have developed a strategy to help students and it has proved very successful.

A common error is thinking you have to talk about exactly what is written on the card. You don't! Having spoken to several IELTS examiners and students who achieved very high marks in their speaking test, I can assure you that you don't have to cover everything on the card. The band descriptors also don't mention anything about answering all the suggested parts of task 2.

Following the suggested sentences on the card is fine and many candidates do very well following them but others run out of ideas. More importantly, if you have a structure to follow for every question you can practice and prepare more effectively.

My strategy is to talk about what you feel comfortable talking about. In other words, talk about the things you think will get you the highest marks. If you like the suggestions on the card, then talk about them. But if you don't, or you want some extra things to talk about, then follow the strategy below.

When you get the cue card you will be given one minute to write down some ideas. You are going to use this time wisely by using the following structure. On the piece of paper provided write down five headings with a little space between each one.

Introduction
 Past
 Description
 Opinion
 Future

Now you will start to write keywords beside each of these headings. Let's look at each in a little more detail.

Introduction

Start off by saying ‘I’d like to talk about (X).’ Then say ‘I chose this topic because...’ and you will be able to say why you choose this topic. If you can’t think of a reason just make one up, although it’s always better to talk about real experiences.

Past

Now pause and use a linking word like ‘anyway’ or ‘anyhow’ to transition into talking about the past. This will allow you to demonstrate that you are confident using a range of past structures. For example-

Used to + infinitive to talk about past habits or states that are now finished.

Would + infinitive to describe past habits.

Past simple to talk about things you did in the past that you no longer do or are no longer true.

Past continuous to talk about the background of a story or how you felt at a particular time.

Past perfect to say something happened before something else in the past.

Description

Now pause and say ‘So let me tell you about (X) in a little more detail.’ This is your opportunity to impress the examiner with specific vocabulary. Get to know the common topics and have some specific adjectives ready. If you use an adjective to describe something, make sure you expand on it or explain it with examples. Again, if you can’t think of specific examples, it is fine to make these up. Make sure your examples match the adjective and you will be fine.

Opinion

Now you can pause and say ‘If you ask me/In my view/I would say + (opinion on topic). This gives you a chance to express how you feel about the topic. It could be your personal opinion or it could be a comparative or superlative. Using a wide range of phrases to express your opinion will help you get a higher mark. If you want to give a stronger opinion you could say:

I strongly believe that...

As far as I’m concerned...

I’m strongly against...

I’m strongly in favour of...

I’m skeptical of the idea that...

I must admit, I think....

Future

Finally you can display your ability to use future tenses. Start off by saying ‘With regards to the future....’ A range of tenses will help you gain extra marks. For example you could use:

Present continuous to talk about fixed arrangements.

Be going + to + infinitive to talk about future plans.

Will or won’t + infinitive is used with predictions based on opinions or experiences. It can also be used to talk about hopes and assumptions.

The future perfect- will have + past participle- is used to say something will have happened or will have been completed by a certain point in the future.

That’s it! Five simple headings that will allow you to speak for at least two minutes without any difficulty.

The most important thing is that you practice using this strategy with many different topics. Get some past IELTS speaking part 2 questions and ask a friend or classmate to give you them at random. You can start off slowly by using this post to help you, but after a lot of practice, this strategy will become natural for you and you will be able to answer any part 2 question with confidence.

There is no magic formula or trick to getting the IELTS band you want but there are good strategies

you can use and, more importantly, strategies you can use to help you practice.

Here is an IELTS speaking task 2 question. Try using the strategy above with this question and please post your answers in the comments below and I will get back to you.

Question:

Describe a teacher that you know.

You should say:

what the teacher looks like
what sort of person this teacher is
what the teacher helped you to learn
and explain why this teacher is popular.

Remember, you don't have to talk about what the teacher looks like, what sort of person they are, what the teacher helped you to learn or explain why this teacher is popular. You can talk about these things but you don't have to. Do whatever you feel most confident talking about. All you have to do with my strategy is talk about:

Introduction

Past

Description

Opinion

Future

Top 10 IELTS Cue Cards + Band 9 Answers (2024)

[Home](#) » Top 10 IELTS Cue Cards + Band 9 Answers (2024)

If you are preparing for the IELTS Speaking test and need IELTS cue cards, this article is for you. We have gathered real cue cards from recent tests and compiled a list of the top 10 cards.

We reveal each cue card and provide a step-by-step breakdown of how to plan your answer. Additionally, we will present a Band 9 sample answer for each cue card.

IELTS Cue Card Tasks

Speaking Part 2 checks your ability to:

- talk at length about the topic on the IELTS cue card,
- organize your ideas,
- speak fluently without noticeable effort,
- and express yourself using appropriate vocabulary and grammar.

IELTS Cue Card Tips

1. Practice using real IELTS cue cards. You'll find these below.
2. Use the 1-minute preparation time wisely. See the video below for how I used the IELTS cue card to prepare my answer.
3. You don't have to use every single bullet point. Use the bullet points that help you speak about the topic. You can skip those that you're not comfortable speaking about. You can add more bullet points; as long as you stay on topic.

4. Record yourself speaking for up to 2 minutes. You can then listen back and spot any weaknesses.
5. Practice with a stop watch. Get used to speaking for up to 2 minutes. Don't worry, the examiner will stop you when you get to around 2 minutes.

IELTS Cue Card 1

Talk about a time you received good news.

You should say:

- **When it happened**
- **How you got the news**
- **What the news was about**
- **and explain why the news was special.**

So I received amazing news just before Easter this year. My wife got her new passport. Now, for most people, that wouldn't be great news. But for my wife, because she's not from the UK, that was her first passport, so it was an amazing thing to happen.

Just to give you some background on why it was so important and so special, if you're not from the UK and you get married to a citizen from the UK, it takes between five and six years before you can get an actual passport. You can live in the UK, but you're not allowed to get a passport.

You have to apply multiple times, send them mountains of information, and spend thousands of pounds trying to get that done. And what that does is it creates a huge problem because if you have what's called a spouse visa for the UK and you don't have one of the premium passports that allows you to travel around the world, it means you're stuck in the UK.

So for about five or six years, we were living in the UK, but my family could only travel to my wife's home country. She couldn't travel to Europe, she couldn't travel to America without going through a very stressful process of applying for visas there.

So getting this passport was amazing news because it means that we can go on holiday, we can travel anywhere pretty much in the world visa-free. And it just literally opens up the whole world to my family.

And to celebrate, I booked a holiday to Portugal. It was the first time my wife had ever been to Portugal, and we were able to just breeze through immigration with her British passport.

Cue Card 2

Describe an outdoor activity you took part in.

You should say:

- **What activity it was**
- **Where you did it**
- **When you did it**
- **and explain whether you liked it or not.**

An activity that I took part in outdoors recently, well, a few months ago actually, was snorkelling. So I've never been snorkelling before, and in August 2020, we went on holiday in Barbados, and we had a house right on the beach.

And I went swimming every day because the water was right there. Our next door neighbor, who

was an American guy, every day he would go in snorkelling. And I didn't really think that snorkelling was available.

And then on our last day of the holiday, he said, "Do you want to try my snorkel?" So I put the snorkel on and I was really surprised and disappointed because there was this amazing coral reef right under the sea, a stone's throw away from my house.

So for two weeks I was swimming and could have been watching this amazing scene underneath the water. So we rebooked our holiday to Barbados. We went back again, December last year, and I brought my snorkel with me.

I went to the sports shop and purchased the best snorkel I could buy and brought it in my suitcase with me. When we got there, we discovered that the sea was too rough, so I couldn't snorkel.

The sea was rough and choppy the whole time we were there. So not only could I not snorkel, I couldn't even swim, so I missed that opportunity again.

In the future, I hope to snorkel, maybe somewhere else that has more reliable snorkeling. But I'd also like to try scuba diving because I think weather doesn't really matter so much because you're underneath the water and it's a far more immersive experience, but it does require a lot of training, so maybe I need to do my PADI license.

Cue Card 3

Talk about a situation when you had to wait.

You should say:

- **What you waited for**
- **Why you had to wait**
- **What you did while waiting**
- **and explain how you felt after waiting.**

Recently, I had to wait nearly one week for a flight. So we were flying back from the south of Portugal, the Algarve, from an airport called Faro. I'm probably mispronouncing that, apologies to any Portuguese in the audience.

But what happened was our flight was at 8 PM from Portugal back to Belfast. And at 10 to 8, so 10 minutes before the flight was about to take off, I got a text message saying that the flight was canceled with no explanation at all. I think it was the French traffic controllers. So thanks very much for that.

And what happened in the immediate aftermath was we just said, okay, no problem. We went to a hotel. And it was actually a bonus because we went to a little town in Portugal that we would never normally go to.

And it was amazing because we got to see the real Portugal. They had a fish market and a vegetable market there right beside the water. So it was nice just to go and shop with the locals and have coffee with the locals. So it was actually a blessing in disguise.

Later that day, we needed to decide either we had to get a taxi to Spain because there were no flights available that day from Portugal to Belfast, or take a four-hour taxi ride to Lisbon, the capital, or just wait for the next available flight, which was five days away.

So we decided to do that because when we added up all the costs, it was actually cheaper just to stay an extra five days. And that was an amazing experience because we went back to the same resort that we stayed in.

And because Easter had passed, it was basically just us in the resort. So we got not just five-star service, six-star service. And it was really quiet and beautiful. And having our flight cancelled was

an amazing experience.

Cue Card 4

Talk about a person you want to work with.

You should say:

- Who the person is
- How you know them
- What they do
- and explain why you want to work with them.

I suppose if I had to choose one person to work with, it would be Elon Musk. Elon Musk is one of the most successful business people in the history of the world. He's one of the richest people in the world.

So it's obvious why you would want to work with him because you could learn a huge amount from him. He's famous because not only has he started one successful company, I think he has started more than 10 successful companies.

He's famous for Tesla, which was the first company to successfully start an electric car company. SpaceX. He also bought Twitter, but he also set up PayPal, so he not only has been successful, he has been successful in many different domains.

And the thing that I would really like to learn from him is how he makes money and makes a profit by trying to solve problems for the planet and for people. Because Tesla makes a lot of money, but it is also saving the environment.

SpaceX makes a lot of money, but it could also save humanity. If there was a natural disaster and we all had to get off the planet, then it's probably the only way we could go is to move to the moon or move to Mars.

So his rationale, his modus operandi, seems to be find a huge problem, solve that problem and get paid for it. And I would really, really like to do that. I try and do that in my own business.

So the IELTS test is a huge problem for thousands of people all around the world. We try and make it simple and easier for them to get the scores that they need. But I think there are probably bigger problems that I could tackle now that I've solved that IELTS problem.

Cue Card 5

Describe a time you received money from a family member.

You should say:

- **When you received it**
- **Why you received it**
- **What you did with the money**
- **and explain how you felt after receiving it.**

I don't come from a very wealthy family, so I've never been given a huge amount of money in my life. The only time I can remember being given a significant amount of money was for my first Holy Communion.

I'm Irish, I'm from a Catholic background, and if you grew up Catholic, when you're around seven, eight years old, you do your first Holy Communion. It's like a big milestone in a child's life.

Normally, family members will give you some money. I think at the time I was given between 40 and 50 pounds. So in the late 80s, early 90s, I can't remember exactly when that was, early 90s, that was a significant amount of money.

But I actually reminded my mother the other day that she took that money from me. I said she stole it from me. And her response was, Well, we didn't have any money, so I stole it from you to buy you food and to buy you clothes.

So I did feel quite aggrieved at the time because a lot of my richer friends were going and buying toys and things like that. It was the first time I'd ever had a significant amount of money, and then it was taken from me right away.

But looking back now, it fills me with gratitude. I'm very grateful that it happened because it shows how much my mother struggled and how hard she worked for me in order to set me up in life.

Recently, my little boy did his first Holy Communion, and he got a lot more than I got. He wasted it on buying things in a computer game. It was a good opportunity for us to teach him about money and teach him about not wasting money.

Now he wants to buy more things in the computer game, but I told him that he has to work for it and he has to do some jobs around the house if he wants that.

Cue Card 6

Describe any law which you like.

You should say:

- What the law was
- How you follow it
- What you like about it
- and explain what should happen if you break that law.

A law that I like is copyright. Copyright protects content creators, people who create things. It protects their intellectual property from being copied without authorisation.

The reason why I like this law is because my job, principally, 80% of my time is spent making original content. So that could be a blog post, that could be a YouTube video, it could be an image, something like that.

And how this law protects me is on a daily basis, definitely a weekly basis, somebody takes my original work and just copies it completely. And what we can do is we can then tell the platforms, or sometimes YouTube tells us, hey, somebody has copied your work.

And what that allows us to do is basically get that taken down. And then YouTube can either ban them from the platform, or what they do is they have a three-strikes policy, I think, where if they do it three times, they're completely banned from the platform.

I do like this law, but I think that it isn't enforced enough and it isn't respected enough by other people. Recently, we had, or not recently, throughout our whole career, we've had a lot of people not only copying our content, the words and the images and the video, but copying things now like our titles and our thumbnail images.

Which are all original and they take a lot of creativity and brain power and time and work. I absolutely hate the fact that somebody lazy and stupid, to be honest, can just come along and take that and steal it.

When we report people stealing our titles, people stealing our thumbnails, YouTube are less likely to take that down because they don't consider that a copyright violation.

When if you follow the letter of the law, it actually is. It's a direct infringement of my intellectual property rights and I believe it should be taken more seriously.

Cue Card 7

Describe an unusual meal you had.

You should say:

- **Where you had it**
- **Who was with you**
- **When you had it**
- **and explain how you felt when you had it.**

An unusual meal I had recently was at a Portuguese restaurant. And for the first time, my wife and I and my two little boys had Portuguese fish stew. I'll not try and pronounce the Portuguese version of it, but basically it comes in a big cast iron pot and it has rice and prawns and other fish and clams and other shellfish in it.

The reason why it was such an unusual experience was it was a restaurant that was completely outside and it was set in a big garden on the Atlantic Ocean and there were cliffs going down to the ocean.

And it was very special because if you have two young boys, they don't want to sit in a fancy restaurant. And this allowed our boys to run around the gardens and go and have a look over the cliffs. Don't worry, it was safe.

And it allowed myself and my wife to take turns playing with the boys or eating our meal. And because this stew was in a big cast iron pot, as I said, it didn't get cold.

So I would eat some while my wife was looking after my boys, and then my wife would come back and she would eat some, and then I would go and play with my boys.

And they didn't really eat it because they think that, you know, prawns and things like that are gross, but we really, really enjoyed it. I would definitely go back to that restaurant again, and I would definitely order that meal.

One thing we did miss out on was we, as we were leaving, we discovered they had a fresh fish counter where the daily catch was brought in and you could actually go and choose your fish.

My wife loves seafood and next time we'll get the fish stew, but we'll also pick a few other things. It was a delightful experience and we're excited to go back.

Cue Card 8

Describe something healthy you enjoy doing.

You should say:

- **What you do**
- **Where you do it**
- **Who you do it with**
- **and explain why it is healthy.**

As you can probably tell from looking at me, I'm not the healthiest person in the world, but one thing I do enjoy, which is quite healthy, is hiking. I live in Northern Ireland and I live in a part of Northern Ireland which is world-renowned for its natural beauty.

Right on our doorstep, we have beaches, we have two beautiful forest parks, we have a beautiful lake, and we've got a medieval castle that you can walk around. That means that there's a huge variety of places, and even within each of those places, like within the forest parks, there are different trails you can go down.

You're always discovering new places and you never get bored. I like to do this on my own because I don't only do it for the physical health benefits, I do it for the mental health benefits.

I have quite a busy, stressful job and being able to just get out in nature, we say it allows you to get your head showered here in Northern Ireland, which means just get out and bathe in nature. Not

literally bathe, but just surround yourself with nature.

And it not only helps you with your cardiovascular health, it can help with stress and destressing as well. The only problem with hiking here in Northern Ireland is our weather is notoriously bad.

During the winter it can snow, but most of the time it is actually just raining. Walking in the rain, especially when it's cold and when it's windy, is not a great experience.

But in the summertime, we often get spells of weather, maybe two or three weeks where it is nice and dry, and that is an amazing time.

I generally work a lot less during those times and try and get out every day onto one of the hiking trails. Despite the challenges with the weather, the benefits I derive from hiking are immeasurable.

Cue Card 9

Describe a place you want to visit for a short period.

You should say:

- **Where the place is**
- **Who you will go with**
- **Why you want to go**
- **and explain why you want to go for a short period.**

So a place I'd love to go for a short period of time is Istanbul in Turkey. There's a very specific reason for that – in a couple of weeks, they have the Champions League final there. My little boy, Tom, who is eight years old, is obsessed with Man City.

We watch all the Man City games here in the house and he especially loves the Champions League. So if they make it to the final, I would love to take him to the Champions League final.

I don't know if we'll be able to go, however, because tickets are quite hard to come by. But if we get the opportunity, I'd love to go. I wouldn't take him there for more than a couple of days.

I know that Istanbul is an amazing place to visit, but I don't think it's suitable for children or not for my kid anyway. The things that I would like to do in Istanbul, such as experience the wonderful food and the historical sites and the religious sites and the cultural things to do there – an eight year old is just not really interested in those things.

So we would probably just fly in and stay the night before, go to the match and then come back. I think the matches are held quite late there because of the temperature. So we probably would fly back the next day. I would like to take him back to Turkey, but probably not to Istanbul for the reasons I just said. He doesn't really like big cities, but he does like seaside resorts.

And there are places like Antalya in the south of Turkey, and I'd like to take him there for a lot longer, a week or two, so he could experience Turkey and all the wonderful things there that they have for kids. Despite the challenges, I hope we could make it to the Champions League final in Istanbul for my son's sake.

Cue Card 10

Describe an interesting person you met recently.

You should say:

- **Who they are**
- **How you met them**
- **What they do**
- **and explain why you think this person is interesting.**

So a fascinating man that I met recently back in December, so a few months back. I was swimming

in the Caribbean Sea on the west coast of Barbados. There was an old man who was just lying back, relaxing in the sea.

He started talking to me, and I discovered that he lived in a house right on the beach in the village where I was staying. He was more than 80 years old, and I discovered that he had been in the sea nearly every day of his life.

For me, that location is one of the most beautiful places in the entire universe. And it was quite astounding to meet someone who was doing the thing that I wished that I could do. He'd done that for his entire life.

What struck me about this man was he was so calm, so serene. And when I thought about it, he was kind of a product of his environment. So I often wondered, after meeting him, if he grew up in a, let's say, a poverty-stricken part of the world in a very rough inner city neighborhood, would he be that person?

So it's thinking about that nature versus nurture debate. It was also fascinating to talk to him about the village in Barbados that he grew up in. Because I think his grandmother, he said, owned most of the land around that village.

She was such a lovely woman. And she just gave plots of land to everybody who needed it. So the village grew up around her, and he knew everybody in the village, and they were all very tight because she had just gifted that land to everybody.

The man was a fascinating figure – a testament to his life spent in such a beautiful place and the influence of his grandmother's generosity on the tight-knit community he grew up in.

Conclusion

Excelling in the IELTS speaking test, particularly the cue card section, requires consistent practice and a strategic approach. At IELTS Advantage, we are committed to providing you with top-quality resources that boost your preparation and confidence. Keep practicing with our IELTS cue card samples and embrace the journey to achieving your desired IELTS score.

Speaking Part 3 Tips

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After your 2 minute monologue in Part 2 of the Speaking test, the examiner will ask you around 4-5 more abstract questions about the same general topic you talked about in Part 2. For example, if Part 2 was about mobile phones, they might ask you deeper, more complex questions about mobiles like:

1. How have mobile phones changed the types of relationships people make?
2. Some people think that children should not be allowed to use mobiles, do you agree?
3. How has mobile phone use changed in the last 10 years?
4. How will mobile phones change in the future?
5. If you could add any new feature to a smart phone, what would it be?

As you can see, these questions are trickier than questions like 'Where are you from?' and 'What's your favourite colour?' in Part 1.

Below are some tips to help you get the best score you can possible get in Part 3. Most of these tips are about the psychology of Part 3 because I have found that students are not mentally

prepared for this section and good students often get lower score because of this.

For more information on the linguistic side of Part 3, please check out my [Part 3 guide](#).

1. Don't try to finish quickly

Speaking for up to 15 minutes in a foreign language is tiring. You might not have slept the night before, you are stressed and you might have also done other tests that day. In short, you will be exhausted and your body will want you to take it home and tuck it into bed as quickly as possible.

Lots of students give very short answers because they simply want their test to be over as soon as possible. Know that the examiner will keep asking you questions (and the next ones will probably be more difficult), so it is much better to give a full answer and answer the question to the best of your ability, than to simply give a short answer and hope that it ends quickly.

2. Know that the examiner is trying to stretch you

Part 1 is really just a warm-up and Part 2 is a monologue, so Part 3 is the examiners chance to really test you and stretch your language abilities to the very limit. The main thing to remember is that they will ask you questions you won't be able to answer as well as you hoped. They will often increase the difficulty until you can't answer the question. They are not trying to be cruel, this is just the best way for them to test your knowledge of grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Think about a personal trainer or athletics coach forcing an athlete to perform more and more strenuous exercises to judge their true ability.

If you know this is going to happen you will not get stressed out and you will answer the questions more confidently and get higher scores.

3. Don't be afraid to ask questions

There will be words in some questions that you don't understand. The rule is that you can ask the examiner to explain what one word means, but you can't ask them to explain what a whole sentence means.

You can also ask them to repeat the question, if you didn't quite get what they said.

Please don't abuse this privilege and try to use it for every question.

4. Always give an answer

There will be at least one question that you have no idea how to answer. Don't worry, this is normal- see point number one. The most important thing to do is to at least make an attempt. You have been speaking for 15 minutes and one question is not going to lower your mark for the whole test. However, the worst thing you can do is to simply not attempt an answer. If you have this mindset, then you won't push yourself to the limit of your abilities.

It is also fine to admit that you have no idea. Simply say "I'm really not sure about this question, but if I had to answer, I would say.....". The examiner will be much happier that you attempted an answer, rather than just saying "I don't know" or blankly look at them (which happens more than you would think).

You can also give yourself time to think about the question by saying "That a difficult question, just give me a second to think about that." or "I've never thought about that, to be honest, give me a moment." However, don't do this for every question, only the ones you need to actually think about.

5. Think about what structure the examiner is testing.

The examiner needs to know that you are capable of using a wide range of structures. Don't worry about inserting as many structures as possible into your answers because they will ask you specific questions to test specific grammar structures. Let's look at the examples above:

- How have mobile phones changed the types of relationships people make? – **opinion/past/present**
- Some people think that children should not be allowed to use mobiles, do you agree?– **evaluating someone's opinion**
- How has mobile phone use changed in the last 10 years.- **past to present (perfect tenses)**
- How will mobile phones change in the future?- **future/prediction**
- If you could add any new feature to a smart phone, what would it be?- **hypothetical**

When you know what the examiner is trying to test, you can give them what they want.

When you know all of the above you will be more mentally prepared than the vast majority of IELTS candidates and this will lead to a more confident performance and higher score.