

# THE NC GUIDE TO THE IELTS SPEAKING TEST

INTERMEDIATE - ADVANCED

All you'll ever need to know  
about the IELTS Speaking Test



## Some basic information about the IELTS Test

The **IELTS Test** consists of 4 components:

- **Listening Test**
  - **Reading Test**
  - **Writing Test**
  - **Speaking Test**
- In order to receive a Test Report Form (TRF), candidates have to attempt **ALL** four components. The first three components: Listening, Reading and Writing usually take place in one session. The Speaking Test is usually done on the same day as the other 3 components, but it can be conducted either before or after the day of the written parts.
- There are 2 versions: **General Training** and **Academic**: you will need to find out which version you need to sit prior to registering for the test.
- You can choose to do the first 3 components (Listening, Reading and Writing) either on the **computer** (computer-delivered or c-d) or in **paper-based mode** (p-b). Whether you choose the c-d or the p-b option, the Speaking Test is the same: face-to-face with a Speaking Test examiner.
- There are 2 different registration possibilities: **Regular IELTS** and **IELTS for UKVI**

**IELTS** and **IELTS for UKVI** are the same in terms of format, content, scoring and level of difficulty. However, the **Test** Report Form which contains your results is slightly different to show that you have taken the **test** at an official **IELTS for UKVI** location, which is approved by the UK Home Office.

The **IELTS UKVI** is only required for UK Visa Immigration. It is the exact same test, the only **differences** are: It is more expensive and there are surveillance cameras **in the** examination halls, entrance corridor and speaking test room to provide enhanced security and registration procedures.

- **Results** will be issued **13 days** after sitting the p-b test, or around **5 days** after sitting the c-d test.

*N.B. For candidates under the age of 18, a written consent form must be provided, signed by a parent or guardian, prior to entering the test room (both written components and Speaking Test). For the Speaking Test, a 'chaperone' must be present during the interview.*

**For more details about the IELTS Test, scan the QR code**



## Format and content of the IELTS Speaking Test: Overview

	<i>Time</i>	<i>Who speaks?</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>TIPS</i>
<b>PART 1</b>	4-5 mins	<b>Examiner</b> asks candidate questions.  Examiner can <b>REPEAT</b> not <b>PARAPHRASE</b>	<b>Either:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your home</li> <li>• The area you live in</li> <li>• Your job</li> <li>• Your studies</li> </ul> <b>+ (2 others) incl.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hobbies</li> <li>• Festivals</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Shopping</li> <li>• Daily routines</li> <li>• TV</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Flowers</li> <li>• Cooking + food</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	Each topic has 3-4 bullet-points for examiner to use.  Don't give short answers only.  Responses should be around 15-20 seconds in length  Observe examiner's body language: does he want you to continue?
<b>PART 2</b>	3-4 mins	<b>Candidate</b> speaks; examiner might ask prompting questions or rounding-off questions	Something relating to your own personal experience as a child;  Favourite part of town / restaurant / holiday spot  Someone you know well  A visit to a famous place  A famous person	Try to speak for the full 2 mins  It's OK if the examiner interrupts you: that's a good sign  Don't speak too quickly: 2 mins is a long time
<b>PART 3</b>	4-5 mins	<b>Discussion</b> between examiner and candidate	Based on the Part 2 topic  Candidates have to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe events</li> <li>• Compare</li> <li>• Give examples</li> <li>• Predict</li> <li>• Suggest solutions to problems</li> </ul>	Candidate can ask for clarification; examiner can paraphrase

## Format and Content of the IELTS Speaking Test: in detail

### Introduction

Before your Speaking Test, you need to register using the identification document which you used for initial registration (usually a passport for UKVI; a passport or national ID for the regular test). The registration process takes a few minutes and so you should arrive at the test centre well before your scheduled test (at least 30 minutes before the test). After registration you will be asked to sit at a designated place while waiting for the examiner or an IELTS admin officer to show you to the room.

*You are not allowed to take anything with you into the test room except your identification document.*

Before the Speaking Test starts your examiner will read a scripted introduction to the interview to introduce himself and the candidate, as well as the chaperone, if there is one. The examiner will also inform you that the interview is being recorded on mp3 (and also on video for UKVI). The mp3 and video will be running for the whole duration of the Speaking Test from the moment you enter the room until the time when you leave the room.

At this point, the **timer** is switched on and the timing of the interview starts. First of all, the examiner will formally introduce himself to the candidate and will ask the candidate to say their name aloud. He may ask you:

*'And what shall I call you?'*

If he does so, just say:

*'You can call me (nickname)'. / 'Please call me (nickname).'*

The examiner may also ask: 'Can you tell me where you're from?' If this happens, the examiner does not expect a long, extended response; just a simple: 'I come from...' will suffice. This part of the interview is not graded so anything you say in this part of the interview will not count towards your score, so keep it short.

The examiner will then ask to check your identification document, which he will then hand back to you, before proceeding to the test itself.

*'Now in this first part of the test I'd like to ask some questions about yourself.'*

**A note about the IELTS Speaking Test examiner (mostly men but there are some women examiners in Thailand)**

- All examiners are native speakers or have native-speaker standard of proficiency in English.
- Examiners will come from a range of countries: UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa,; some may well be bilingual Thai nationals; some may come from countries such as The Netherlands, Singapore, Malaysia or the Philippines, where English is their first language.
- Since the examiners come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, it is important that you have some exposure to a range of different accents during your IELTS preparation and training, so that you can familiarize yourself with some of the regional variations of accent.

## Part 1

The first part of the interview takes between 4 and 5 minutes and consists of 3 frames (each frame is a set of 4 questions about a particular topic). Each frame should take around one and a half minutes to complete.

The first of these 3 frames is called the 'compulsory frame', and will focus on either:

- **the place where you live:** this could include your **home** (house or apartment), the **area** where you are living now, your **hometown** or something similar.  
OR
- **what you do:** 'Do you **work** or are you a **student**?'

*(If you neither work or study, the examiner will probably switch to the alternative compulsory frame about where you live)*

The second and third frames will cover a further two topics. **(See Appendix B)**

There are 4 questions for each topic; each topic should take around one and a half minutes to complete, so the response time for each question would be around 15-20 seconds.

The topics and the questions in Part 1 are quite simple and relate to your own personal experience and preferences. If you didn't catch the question, you can ask the examiner to **repeat** the question:

*'I'm sorry. Could you please say that again / repeat the question?'*

If there is a word you don't understand, you can ask the examiner to explain what it means:

*'Could you explain '....', please? / 'What does' ..... 'mean?'*

But the vocabulary in Part 1 is generally quite simple. If you don't understand something, it may be because you didn't understand the examiner's accent, the way he pronounces the word. If you ask the examiner to explain the meaning, it may be easier to understand this explanation.

As mentioned earlier, Part 1 should take between 4 and 5 minutes to complete. The examiner has to control the timing of the interview and he **must** bring Part 1 to a close before the 5-minute mark. So, if you are still giving an answer to the final question asked by the examiner, the examiner may cut you off in order to proceed to the next part of the interview: Part 2.

*'Thank you. Now I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it....'*

This is not a personal thing and is not a negative sign of your performance. The examiner is merely following standard procedures.

**Strategies for dealing with Part 1: FAQs**

<b><i>What should I say in the compulsory frame if I don't work or study?</i></b>	<i>If you don't work and you don't study you tell the examiner immediately and he will change the topic to the alternative compulsory frame about 'Your home'</i>
<b><i>Should I give long answers in Part 1?</i></b>	<i>As stated earlier the average response time for each bullet point in Part 1 is between 15 – 20 seconds. Some questions require just a short response, however: e.g. 'How long have you lived there?' 'I've lived there all my life.' So some responses can be slightly longer than the 20 seconds suggested. If your responses are <b>too</b> extended the examiner will interrupt you and move on the next question. It is important that three frames are covered so that you speak about a range of topics in Part 1.</i>
<b><i>Can I look at the questions in Part 1?</i></b>	<i>You won't be able to see the examiner's question booklet at any time. The only time you get to see the question is in Part 2, when you receive your topic card.</i>

***Scan the QR code to a Part 1 speaking test sample***





## Part 2

Part 2 of the interview is sometimes referred to as '**the long turn**', because you have to speak for two minutes about a given topic (and that's a long time!).

The standard timing for Part 2 is **between 3 and 4 minutes** and this consists of:

- the **introduction** to the topic, (see notes below)
- one minute for **preparation**, (see notes below)
- two minutes speaking: the **presentation** given by the candidate about the topic;
- one or two **final questions** to round-off this part of the interview.

After this the examiner will move on to the 'bridge' to Part 3:

*'Now we've been talking about .....(topic), and I'd like to ask you some more general questions related to this.'*

### Notes:

- **The introduction:** this is just the continuation of the 'bridge' from Part 1 to Part 2;  
*'Now I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk, you'll have one minute to think about what you're going to say. You can make some notes if you want. Do you understand?'*

If you don't understand and say so, the examiner will repeat these instructions, more slowly this time and stressing key content words. If you still do not understand, the examiner will proceed with the next stage, which is the handing out of a piece of paper and pencil for making notes together with the topic booklet, with the instruction:

*'So here's a piece of paper and a pencil for making notes, and here is your topic. I would like you to describe.....(topic)'*

The one minute preparation time starts **immediately after** the examiner has given these instructions. If, on receiving the topic you see you don't know anything about the topic, or you don't like the topic, you must proceed; you cannot change the topic.

If there is something in the topic that you don't understand, you can ask for an explanation from the examiner and he will briefly explain. If you ask immediately on receiving the topic, the preparation time starts after the explanation has been given. If your question comes during the preparation time, no extra time is added on to the one minute.

- **The preparation:** You have one minute to make notes about what you are going to say; you should make full use of this one minute to help you to think about and structure the presentation (we'll look at different ways to plan the long turn later on in this booklet, Appendix C). The topic card contains a few ideas about how you can structure your presentation. You do not need to follow these bullet point notes, but they will help you to

think of some ideas if you are stuck. At the end of this one minute the examiner will interrupt and say:

*'Now remember, you have one to two minutes for this. Don't worry if I stop you. I'll tell you when your time is up. Can you start speaking **now** please?'*

- **The presentation (long turn):** the candidate is expected to speak for the whole 2 minutes on the given topic. The examiner will not say anything but he will be listening carefully to what you are saying. If the candidate cannot speak for the whole 2 minutes, the examiner may wait a few seconds and then say:



*'Can you tell me anything more about that?'*

If the candidate can provide more details about the topic, then the examiner will wait till the end of the two minutes and then bring the long turn to a close, saying: 'Thank you'

- **Rounding-off question(s):** immediately after you have finished speaking the examiner may ask one or two rounding-off questions to bring Part 2 to a smooth close. If you are asked a rounding-off question, the response should be very short and concise. **No extended response is expected.**

*(There may be no time left to ask a rounding-off question, of course, and if this is the case the examiner will move to the Part 3 'bridge'.)*

After this rounding-off question, the examiner will move on to the 'bridge' to Part 3:

*'Now we've been talking about (topic), and I'd like to ask you one or two more general questions relating to this. Let's consider first of all...'*

## Strategies for dealing with the long turn: FAQs

<p><b>What if I get a topic I don't know much about?</b></p> <p><b>Can I speak off-topic?</b></p>	<p>You can't change the topic so you need to take appropriate action: you can make it all up if need be. The examiner doesn't know if it's true or not (and doesn't care). <b>So long as your response relates to the topic, it's ok to lie.</b></p>
<p><b>What if I 'dry up' halfway through, say after one minute?</b></p>	<p>The examiner will ask you if you can say anything else about the topic. You could always speak about something similar; for example, If you're talking about a 'best friend' and you dry up early, you can always describe <b>another</b> friend to describe for the rest of the two minutes. That's ok.</p>
<p><b>Is it ok to give a presentation I've learnt by heart?</b></p>	<p>Generally speaking, no it's not ok. Unless the presentation you've learnt by heart relates directly to the given topic, it's likely that the examiner will know it's learnt by heart. In this case, your long turn will not count towards your score for the Speaking Test, and it will create a poor impression on the examiner.</p>
<p><b>How many words do I need to speak in a two-minute presentation?</b></p>	<p>Around 250 – 350 words would be about right to achieve a score of around band 6 – 6.5, but so many other things come into play: pronunciation, grammar and lexical resource.</p>
<p><b>Do I need to cover all the bullet points of the topic card, and in the same order they appear?</b></p>	<p>The bullet points on the topic card are there to help you to structure your presentation. You can choose to use them or not; it's up to you. So, no, you don't need to cover all these bullet points, and there's no need to stick to the order they are presented in.</p>
<p><b>Can I start speaking before the one minute preparation time is up?</b></p>	<p>Yes, if you are ready, you tell the examiner you are ready to start. He will then repeat the instructions and you can start speaking. Your two minutes start from then.</p>
<p><b>Can I look at my notes when I speak?</b></p>	<p>Yes, you can refer to your notes and it makes good sense to do so. Again, the notes will help you to present a structured long turn.</p>

## Some strategies for the long turn

### 1. Make notes before you talk

The examiner will give you one minute to prepare your talk. You should write down some notes. Write down a list of words related to what you want to say or draw a mind map. If you have to think about what to say when you're talking, you will not be able to think about your language, so you are more likely to make grammatical mistakes. It's also very common for candidates to panic when they are talking and forget what to say; if you have notes, you won't forget what to say if you panic.

***Use the prompts presented as bullet points on your task card to help you structure what you're going to say.***

Most candidates don't do this well. They write just 2 or 3 things on the paper, and they spend most of the preparation time thinking about what to say. The problem with this approach is that as soon as they start speaking, they forget what to say

**See Appendix C for some strategies for making notes during this preparation phase.**

### 2. Memorise a good opener

Starting your talk is difficult, so memorise an opening phrase.

Here are some good examples:

- "I'd like to talk about..."
- "Well, there are many \_\_\_\_\_ I could talk about, but I suppose the \_\_\_\_\_ I've experienced/had is/was...."

*(The second example will help you get a better score than the others because the language is more advanced, but use the first example if the second sentence is too difficult to remember.)*

For example, if your topic is "describe your favourite teacher", you could say:

- "I'd like to talk about my favourite teacher."
- "Well, there are many good teachers who I could talk about, but I suppose the favourite teacher I've had was..."

If your topic is "describe a beautiful place to visit in your country", you could say

- "I'd like to talk about a beautiful place in my country."
- "Well, there are many beautiful places which I could talk about, but I suppose the most beautiful place I've been to is...."

### 3. Keep talking

Try to keep talking for the whole 2 minutes. Don't worry about the time. The examiner will stop you after 2 minutes.

### 4. Don't speak too quickly

Try to speak at a steady, natural pace. DO NOT speak too quickly – this will hold down your band score for pronunciation. Also, don't speak too slowly. This will hold down your band score for Fluency and Coherence.

### **5. Decide what to talk about quickly (Lie if you need to!)**

Sometimes it's difficult to think of something to talk about. Let's say you have to talk about your favourite teacher. Remember you have a minute to prepare your talk.

**Being honest is not one of the assessment criteria.** The examiner doesn't care who your favourite teacher was. The examiner only cares about the language you use in your talk, your pronunciation and your fluency and coherence.

### **6. Ask for clarification**

If you don't understand a word on the topic card or your task, you can ask the examiner to explain. But, don't just say "I don't understand." Instead, use some more advanced phrases.

For example, you could say:

- "What does.... mean?"
- "So, in other words, I should talk about...?"
- "So, is it ok if I talk about...?"

If you ask for clarification using good language, you will really impress your examiner!

**IMPORTANT:** ask for clarification quickly. Ask **BEFORE** the examiner writes down the time for the start of the 1-minute preparation. Otherwise the clarification will be included in the 1-minute preparation time.

**See Appendix D for a range of Part 2 Topics**

*Scan the QR code to a Part 2 speaking test sample*



### Part 3

The timing for Part 3 of the interview is the same as for Part 1: **between 4 and 5 minutes**, although the optimum time for this phase will be around 4min 45 sec.

The Part 3 '*discussion*' follows directly on from the Part 2 long turn. The topic is the same as in Part 2, although the questions, while relating to the original topic, may move away from the topic in order to broaden the range of the discussion. It is described as a '*discussion*' because there should be two-way interaction between the examiner and the candidate. So, unlike Part 1 which was really just a Question & Answer session, Part 3 involves more direct involvement in the interaction by both the candidate and the examiner. In an ideal Part 3 discussion, the examiner's input should not take up more than 30% of the total time, with the remaining 70% being provided by the candidate, so that the examiner has a broad sample of language for assessment.

As mentioned earlier, the bridge from Part 2 to Part 3 is:

*'Now we've been talking about ..(topic), and I'd like to ask you one or two more general questions relating to this. Let's consider first of all...'*

The examiner then chooses 2 sets of questions (out of a possible 3 sets), three questions per set. Each set has its own heading to give details of what the set of questions is about. So, for example, if your Part 2 topic was about **staying healthy**, then the sets of question in Part 3 would be linked to this theme.

To put this in context, take a look at the bridge again:

*'Now we've been talking about something you do to help you stay healthy, and I'd like to ask you one or two more general questions relating to this. Let's consider first of all **'Staying healthy'***

#### Set 1 Staying healthy

- How do people in your country stay healthy?
- Do men and women do the same things to stay healthy?
- Do people in Thailand generally keep themselves fit and healthy?

*'Let's move on now and think about 'health education'.*

#### Set 2 Health education

- What part should schools play in educating people about staying healthy?
- How can the government make people aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle?
- To what extent can the media help people stay healthy?

*'Now let's think about 'paying for health-care'*

#### Set 3 Paying for health-care

- Who should pay for health-care: the government or the individual?
- Why do you think the cost of health treatment varies from country to country?
- Should pharmaceutical companies be allowed to make such large profits?

## Developing the discussion

During the Part 3 discussion phase, the examiner will ask some questions from two of the sets of questions (see above). He will also ask you questions based on the responses you give. He may ask you to give an example of what you have just said, or explain something which is unclear, or he may ask you to assess something (e.g. a development, a trend).

For example:

<b>Examiner:</b>	<i>How do people in your country stay healthy?</i>
<b>Candidate:</b>	<i>They go to the gym.</i>
<b>Examiner:</b>	<b><i>Do they do anything else to stay healthy?</i></b>
<b>Candidate:</b>	<i>Yes, they eat healthy food.</i>
<b>Examiner:</b>	<b><i>So what kind of food is 'healthy food'?</i></b>
<b>Candidate:</b>	<i>Things like fresh fruit and vegetables.</i>
<b>Examiner:</b>	<b><i>How easy is it to get fresh and vegetables here?</i></b>

The above example is not typical of a good candidate. Candidate's responses in Part 3 should be extended, without the need for examiner 'follow-up' questions all the time. Remember that the percentage of examiner-talk to candidate-talk should be around 30% - 70%.

Remember, also, that the Part 3 discussion should be '**general**' in nature, '**abstract**' at times (depending on the level of the candidate). The content should not be of a **personal** nature. Parts 1 and 2 have already dealt with the candidate's experience and preferences; Part 3 should show the candidate's ability to discuss topics in a broader context. If you try to speak about yourself, your own experience and preferences in Part 3, the examiner will try to steer you back to the more general context.

For example:

<b>Examiner:</b>	<i>Why do you think it's important to learn a foreign language?</i>
<b>Candidate:</b>	<i>Well, for me I like to travel abroad for holidays.</i>
<b>Examiner:</b>	<i>Do you think that's the same for most other people in Thailand?</i>

<b>Examiner:</b>	<i>Why do you think people prefer to use their own car for commuting to work?</i>
<b>Candidate:</b>	<i>Well, I find it easier and more convenient. I save my time.</i>
<b>Examiner:</b>	<i>Is that what motivates most people to drive to work, do you think?</i>

As mentioned earlier, Part 3 should not exceed 5 minutes and so the examiner may cut you off mid-sentence at that time. If he does, this is in no way a reflection of his reaction to your performance, merely the examiner following standard procedures.

At the end of the Speaking Test, the examiner will say:

*'Thank you. That is the end of the Speaking Test.'*

<b><i>At this point, you should leave the room. The examiner is not allowed to give you any feedback on your performance. So don't ask for any.</i></b>
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**Strategies for dealing with Part 3: General FAQs**

<b>Do I need to use idioms in the Speaking Test to get a higher score?</b>	<i>The term 'idiomatic language' is referred to in the band descriptors for a band 7 and above. Some use of idioms can be a good thing, but over-use of idioms will create a bad impression on the examiner. See the information about the LR rating criteria in the next section for more advice about using idiomatic language.</i>
<b>Do I have to paraphrase the questions?</b>	<i>It's not usual to repeat the questions the examiner asks, but it is normal to refer to the content of the questions, and if you can do this using appropriate paraphrase, that will create a positive impression and may result in a higher band score. The key phrase here is: 'appropriate paraphrase'. See the information on Paraphrasing in the 'How to rate LR' in the next section of this booklet.</i>
<b>What tense should I use in the different parts of the Speaking Test?</b>	<i>Part 1 questions are about yourself and your current situation and so most of the responses will probably be in the Present Tense. However, some of the questions relate to the past tense: 'Did you... when you were a child?' And so obviously these should be answered in the Past Tense. Listen carefully to the tense used in the examiner's questions. Part 2 often refers to something in your past and so again Past Tense would be normal, but there are exceptions: 'Describe the family member you spend most time with?' In this case your response may well be mostly in the Present Tense. In Part 3 the topics cover Present Tense, Past Tense and Future speculation, so listen carefully to the examiner's questions.</i>

**Scan the QR code to a Part 3 speaking test sample**





## The Rating Criteria

There are 4 rating criteria, each given equal weighting:

- **Fluency and coherence**
- **Lexical Resource**
- **Grammatical Range and Accuracy**
- **Pronunciation**

### 1. Fluency and Coherence (FC)

**Fluency** relates to the volume of speech you produce in the interview: whether you can speak fluently without pauses, hesitation, self-correction and repetition. It also includes the speed at which you speak (not too slowly).

**Coherence** refers to the way you structure what you are saying, using cohesive devices such as sentence connectors, referencing and substitution. This also includes the way you develop a topic, especially in the Part 3 discussion phase.

### 2. Lexical Resource (LR)

This refers to the **vocabulary** which you use in your interview. It covers the **range** of vocabulary you use and the **accuracy** of usage. The range of vocabulary concerns the topics which you have to talk about in the Speaking Test: can you talk about a range of unfamiliar as well as familiar topics? Can you use less common items with good collocation and some idiomatic usage? The accuracy refers to the correct choice of word form (e.g. Part of Speech) and the choice of word itself.

### 3. Grammatical Range and Accuracy (GRA)

As you might expect this rating criterion deals with the grammar of your language input: e.g. verb tenses and use of modals, articles, prepositions, word order, active and passive use, punctuation and so on. The range of sentence structures should be varied with a mix of simple, compound, and complex sentences. The sentence structures must be as accurate as possible, in order to reach a higher level band score for GRA.

### 4. Pronunciation (Pron)

Pronunciation is rated according to how much like a native speaker your pronunciation sounds. It includes a number of areas such as chunking (the grouping together of meaningful groups of words and phrases), sentence rhythm, intonation and stress (for emphasis and contrast), as well as general intelligibility i.e. how easy it is to understand what the candidate is saying.

## 1. Fluency and Coherence

Take a look at the public domain band descriptors for FC, and we'll focus just on bands 4 through to 7 (since that's the range NC ss are likely to be interested in).

Band score	
7	<i>Speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence; may demonstrate language-related hesitation, some repetition and/or self-correction. Uses a range of discourse markers with some flexibility.</i>
6	<i>Is willing to speak at length though may lose coherence at times due to repetition, self-correction or hesitation. Uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately.</i>
5	<i>Usually maintains a flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going May over-use certain connectors and discourse markers. More complex speech causes fluency problems.</i>
4	<i>Noticeable pauses are common, as is slow speech, with frequent repetition and self-correction. Can link basic sentences but repetitious use of simple connectives. Some breakdowns in coherence.</i>

### Fluency

So, just to recap on what was mentioned so far about the volume of speech produced in the Speaking Test:

**Part 1:** There are 3 frames, each with 4 questions, and each response should average about 15 – 20 seconds in length.

**Part 2:** The long turn is when you give a presentation for 2 minutes. The number of words which you'll need to produce to reach a band score of around 6+ for the long turn is approximately 300 – 350 words. That will include some repetitions, hesitation and self-correction, but not too much at the band 6+ level.

**Part 3:** The examiner will probably choose 2 sets of questions, each set comprising 3 questions. There should also be follow-up questions which the examiner will ask directly related to what you have said. Timing for Part 3 should be around 4.50 seconds (between 4 and 5 minutes is the standard time permitted), and your input should take up around 3 to 3.5 minutes of this time.

## 1.1 Coherence

Coherence refers to the way you 'craft' your sentences, the way you link your ideas and present a clear argument. Crafting involves using a number of '**cohesive devices**'. Some examples are given below:

### A. Linking words

These words and phrases do as their name suggests: they link ideas together in a meaningful way. Linking words and phrases in speaking are generally not the same as those used in writing: writing tends to be more formal and if you use these linking words in a spoken context, they sound unnatural.

For example:

Function	Writing	Speaking
<b>Adding extra information</b>	In addition; Furthermore	Apart from that; Besides that Likewise
<b>Showing contrast</b>	In contrast; On the other hand	Having said that, That being said,

There are more examples of linking words for speaking in **Appendix E**.

### B. Referencing and substitution

We use referencing and substitution in order to avoid unnecessary, clumsy repetition, both in writing and in speaking. While some of the conventions are the same for both writing and speaking, there are some differences since speaking tends to be less formal.

For example:

**Relative clauses:** the use of relative pronouns (who, which, where, when, why and so on) is an integral part of both the IELTS Writing Test and Speaking Test. Linking ideas using relative clauses shows the kind of complex sentence structure which is needed to get a band score of 6 and above. Take a look at the following sets of sentences:

e.g. 1 *These are my friends. I share my apartment with these people.*

→ *These are the people with whom I share my apartment.* (Formal: Writing)

→ *These are the people I share my apartment with.* (Inf: Speaking)

## Exercise

Change the informal sentences into the formal format:

e.g. The books that the Principal disapproved of were removed from the library

→ **The books of which the Principal disapproved were removed from the library.**

1. The firm that we had done business with for twenty years went bankrupt.
2. The project that the feasibility study referred to was scrapped.
3. The schedule that we all work around is very tight.
4. The woman that the group disagreed with presented some new evidence to support her claims.
5. The fence that the car slammed into was flattened beyond repair.

Now, change these from formal to informal:

6. The tunnel through which the prisoner escaped was blocked up.
7. The markets upon which we all depend are drying up.
8. There are numerous ways in which solar energy can be used.
9. Gandhi was a politician for whom many of his peers had respect.
10. The information on which the researchers had relied turned out to be inaccurate.

## Substitution

In the Speaking Test, especially in the Question & Answer parts of the interview, it is very natural to omit certain words or phrases, or to replace them with something else.

For example:

Examiner: 'Do you think this is a positive trend?'

Candidate: 'Yes I **do**.' (**do** = I think this is a positive trend)

Examiner: 'Have you ever travelled by plane?'

Candidate: 'Yes, I **have**.' (**have** = I have travelled by plane)

## Exercise

Give response to the following questions:

Examiner: 'Did you enjoy Maths when you were a child?'

Candidate: 'Yes, \_\_\_\_\_'

Examiner: 'Have you ever visited a zoo?'

Candidate: 'No, \_\_\_\_\_'

Here are some more typical questions;

Examiner's question	Candidate's (short) response
<i>Did your parents travel overseas very much?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Can you swim?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Are there any shops and other facilities where you live?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Would you like to live in the countryside?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Do you like using perfume?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Did you have a favourite teacher at school?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Will you live in this house for a long time?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Had your friends seen this movie as well?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Is it likely to be a problem in the future?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.
<i>Could robots replace teachers in the classroom?</i>	Yes _____. No _____.

## Substitution of a clause

We use verbs like **expect/ think / imagine / believe** with **so** to express an opinion, belief, or intention, without repeating the preceding statement or question. We usually try to avoid using the same verb in the answer. These types of interaction between examiner and candidate are very common in Part 3 of the Speaking Test:

For example:

Examiner: 'Do you think WAP phones will ever catch on?'  
Candidate: 'I think **so** / I expect **so**' / 'I don't think **so**.'

N.B. 'I **think not**.' Can also be used, but this is much more formal and would not be appropriate in the Speaking Test.

Examiner: 'Do you think privatisation is a good move?'  
Candidate: 'I hope **so**. / Personally, I don't believe **so**.'

Examiner: 'Do you think interest rates are likely to rise?'  
Candidate: 'I hope **not**.'

Examiner: 'Do you think more people will work from home in the future?'  
Candidate: 'I'm certain of **it**. / I doubt **it**.'

Here are some more examples. Write the candidate's short answers:

Examiner's question	Candidate's (short) response
Do you think robots can do most jobs?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Do you think newspapers will disappear in the future?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Do you think universities should train people for specific jobs?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Are more people likely to migrate from the countryside to cities in the future?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Do you think the government will make free health-care for everyone a reality?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Are people likely to want to travel overseas for a holiday during this pandemic?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Do you expect the government to decentralize some offices to the rural areas?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____
Are we likely to see commercial travel to the Moon in your lifetime?	(Yes)_____ (No)_____

## 2. Lexical resource

Band score	
<b>7</b>	<i>Uses vocabulary source flexibly to discuss a variety of topics. Uses some less common items, some idiomatic language and some effective collocation. Some inaccuracies occur. Uses paraphrase effectively.</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>Can discuss familiar and unfamiliar topics at length, despite inaccuracies in word choice and form. Generally paraphrases successfully.</i>
<b>5</b>	<i>Can talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but with limited flexibility. Attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success.</i>
<b>4</b>	<i>Is able to talk about familiar topics but only basic meaning on unfamiliar topics. Frequent errors in word choice. Rarely attempts paraphrase.</i>

At the lower end of this scale a candidate can speak about **familiar** topics but only basic meaning can be conveyed on **unfamiliar** topics. Familiar topics would include topics which relate closely to the candidate: *family, home, work or study, hobbies, food preferences* and so on. Unfamiliar topics would include areas of experience and expertise outside of this close personal range. For this reason a full picture of the LR potential can really only be seen in the Part 3 discussion, which is not about personal topics and is more general and even abstract in nature.

At the upper end of this scale the candidate demonstrates an ability to use **less common items**, **idiomatic** language and effective **collocation**. So what exactly do these mean?

### Less common items

As their name suggests, these words and phrases are uncommon, not generally commonly used in everyday conversation. Some of these could be classed as 'academic' words but you also need to remember that higher level academic words may not be appropriate in a speaking test environment. A useful starting point for enhancing your vocabulary would be to take a look at the **Academic Word List**, a group of 570 words identified as 'higher order' lexical items, and classified according to topics.

*(Scan the QR code to the Academic Word List)*



**Collocations**

A **collocation** is made up of two or more words that are commonly used together in English. Think of collocations as **words that usually go together**. The more you use collocations, the more you will sound like a native speaker. There are different kinds of collocations in English. Strong collocations are word pairings that are expected to work together.

**For example;**

make the bed → *I need to make the bed every morning.*

do my homework → *My niece does her homework after dinner.*

take a risk → *Some people don't take enough risks in life.*

give someone advice → *The teacher gave us some advice on taking tests.*

Common **verb collocations** are often followed by particular nouns or adjectives.

**For example:**

make a phone call → *I have to go and make a phone call.*

get wet → *It rained today and I got wet.*

keep a record → *I keep a record of all of my bank statements.*

**Collocations** are often used as short expressions to describe how someone feels about a situation. In this case, collocations can be used in the adjective form, or also as emphatic expressions using an intensifier and a verb.

**For example:**

positively encourage someone to do something → *I'd like to positively encourage you to apply for the position.*

deeply regret the loss of someone/something → *I deeply regret saying no to that job offer.*

to be in an utter fury over something → *I am in an utter fury over missing out on getting those gig tickets.*

to go to great lengths to do something → *She went to great lengths to be able to move to another country.*



## Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is the skill of being able to say something in a different way. Paraphrasing is useful to show you have a range of vocabulary to talk about the same topic, to say something in your own words. It is also as useful skill if you don't know a certain word but you want to describe it in different terms.

*For example:*

In IELTS Part 1:

Examiner: Do you **work or are you a student**?

Candidate: I don't have a **job** at the moment, but I am **studying** to be an **engineer**.

Examiner: How **often do you eat snacks**?

Candidate: I **frequently** enjoy **eating between meals**, but usually just **biscuits and chocolate**.

*For example:*

In the long turn, talking about a friend:

*'I'd like to talk about my best friend, Tom. He's a very **popular** person, probably the most popular person in my class.....The only think I don't like about Tom is that he is quite an **impatient** person.'*

- *'I'd like to talk about my best friend, Tom. He's a very .....what can I say...**everybody in my class likes him**..... The only thing I don't like about Tom is that he is quite....how to say...he **gets angry quite easily when he has to wait for something**.'*

## Idiomatic language

The use of **idiomatic language**, including metaphors and analogies to compare things can improve your score in LR. In order for these to be effective, however, they should be used '*sparingly*' i.e. not too often. If we pepper the interview with these, we risk losing the impact that such devices can have. In fact, we risk *trivializing* what we say.

There are **2 main dangers** involved here:

- **Clichés**: this is when a word or phrase has been used (and sometimes misused) so frequently that its impact has been lost. In worst case scenarios, people hearing or reading such clichés feel annoyed or even insulted by their inclusion.
- **Tautology**: sometime referred to as '*redundant language*'. This is when words or phrases which basically have the same meaning are joined together (**e.g. return back**). Rather than reinforce the meaning, they detract from the overall impression.

## Clichés

People tend to use clichés because they are quite easy to memorize and give the impression that the user can manipulate language in an idiomatic way. In truth, though, these phrases lack the freshness, clarity and impact of less hackneyed expressions.

## Exercise 1

Look at the table of clichés below. Match them with their plain English meanings:

Clichés	Plain English
A coin has two sides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finally</li> </ul>
At the end of the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To examine all possibilities</li> </ul>
In the final analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the last possible time</li> </ul>
Last but not least	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a very strange, unfamiliar setting</li> </ul>
At the eleventh hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make no impression on someone</li> </ul>
To go in one ear and out the other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without any hesitation at all</li> </ul>
To leave no stone unturned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are arguments both for and against</li> </ul>
Like a fish out of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following a false trail</li> </ul>
At the drop of a hat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When all the facts are known</li> </ul>
Barking up the wrong tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last in appearance but not in importance</li> </ul>

## Tautology

People sometimes fall into the trap of using tautology when they want to emphasise something. In the end, though, they simply end up repeating themselves, and this can diminish the impact of what they're saying:

- e.g. This new innovation will transform the way we conduct business.  
*(‘Since any innovation is by nature, ‘new’, there’s no need to use ‘new.’)*
- e.g. This concept of generating energy from alternative sources is very unique.  
*(‘Unique’ is not usually accompanied by the very ‘very’ or ‘totally’ since ‘unique’ means there is only one like it.)*
- e.g. The glass was completely full.  
*(If the glass is full, then, of course, it’s completely full. There is no need to use words like ‘completely’, ‘totally’, ‘very’ with the word ‘full’ (or ‘empty’)*

## Exercise 2

Decide which sentences contain redundant language and re-write them.

1. Collaborating together is likely to result in enhanced improvements.
2. My brother is a well-known famous basketball player, and I also play basketball, too.
3. My father has to start work at 7.00 am in the morning, so getting up around 5 o'clock is a necessary requirement.
4. Let me reiterate again that being in close proximity to the high security transmitter mast is unlawful and illegal.
5. In my opinion, personally I think that today's modern technology has more benefits than drawbacks.
6. All customers get a free bottle of wine on the house.
7. The two twin boys are exactly identical.
8. They donated the new house to charity as a gift.

*Further materials useful for developing lexical resource can be found in the following books:*

- *Vocabulary for IELTS*, by Pauline Cullen (Cambridge Univ Press)
- *Check Your Vocabulary for IELTS*, by Rawdon Wyatt (Macmillan)

### 3. Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Band score	
7	<i>Uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility. Error-free sentences are frequent, but some errors persist.</i>
6	<i>Uses a mix of simple and complex sentences but with limited flexibility. May make frequent errors in complex structures, though these do not affect communication.</i>
5	<i>Produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy. Uses a limited range of complex structures but often faulty, and may lead to communication problems.</i>
4	<i>Basic sentence forms are formed and some correctly but subordinate clauses are rare, errors are frequent and can lead to misunderstanding.</i>

When assessing the score for GRA, the **range** is the more important aspect. If the range of sentence structures is restricted, then the degree of accuracy does not play a part. For example, if all sentence structures are simple with no subordination, then the score is restricted to a band 4 (*subordinate clauses are rare*), regardless of the accuracy. If the range matches the description higher up the band scores, then accuracy does play its part.

A **simple sentence** consists of a subject, a verb and sometimes something else. It looks like this:  
'I live in an apartment.'

Sentence **coordination** is when you link 2 simple sentences using linking words such as 'and', 'or' 'so' or 'but':

For example:

He works in Bangkok **but** lives in Nonthaburi.

She likes reading **and** she also enjoys watching movies.

It was raining heavily **so** we didn't go out.

You can go to the park **or** you can stay home. It's up to you.

A **coordinating conjunction** used to join clauses has only one function: it joins clauses of equal importance. A **subordinating conjunction**, used to create **complex** sentences, on the other hand, has two functions: it joins, and it shows a relationship **between** the clauses that it joins.

For example:

'**Although** it was raining heavily, we decided to go for a walk in the park.'

'**Despite** the fact he hadn't finished his work, he decided to take a break.'

(See **Appendix F** for a list of structures which would match the degree of subordination and complexity referred to in the band descriptors.)

## 4. Pronunciation

For rating Pron we need to consider also the band descriptor for a band 8, since that comes into play when awarding a band 7.

Band score	
8	<i>Uses a wide range of phonological features with only occasional lapses. Can easily be understood throughout the interview. Accent has minimal effect on intelligibility.</i>
7	<i>Demonstrates all the positive features of a band 6 and some of the positive features of a band 8.</i>
6	<i>Uses a range of phonological features but with variable control. Can generally be understood throughout the interview without much effort.</i>
5	<i>Demonstrates all the positive features of a band 4 and some of the positive features of a band 6.</i>
4	<i>Uses a limited range of pronunciation features but lapses are frequent. Mispronunciation of certain words and phonemes are common and cause some difficulty for the listener.</i>

**Pronunciation** refers to the way you ‘articulate’ sounds in words, and your score for Pron is largely determined by how closely your pronunciation resembles that of a native speaker. Some common features of pronunciation include:

- Differentiating between vowel sounds: long and short sounds
- Differentiating between pairs of consonants which have similar sounds: e.g. minimal pairs such as /b/ + /p/, /t/ + /d/ and so on.
- Ability to pronounce consonant clusters appropriately: e.g. crisps, asks

But pronunciation involves much more than this, and your band score is determined by your articulation of sounds as well as a number of other ‘**phonological features**’.

### What are these ‘phonological features’?

**Chunking** means dividing **speech** into groups of words when we talk. These groups of words, also known as ‘chunks’, are usually separated by pauses. Without **chunking**, it can be hard for people to follow our message and they may get confused or not understand what we are trying to say.

For example:

*There was a small, square table / bolted to the floor / and two metal chairs, / one on either side.  
When I was a child / I used to enjoy swimming / but when I got older / I didn’t have time / because I  
had to study harder.*

**Word stress** refers to the place in each word where the stress falls:

For example:

**un**iverse / uni**ver**sity

**E**urope / Euro**pean**

**ph**otograph / phot**o**grapher / phot**o**graphic

**Sentence rhythm** refers to the words in a sentence which are stressed. The stressed words are usually the key words, which give the sentence its meaning. In any sentence, some words carry a stress. These are the 'strong' or 'lexical' words (usually nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). The remaining words are 'grammatical' words and are unstressed or 'weak' (conjunctions, pronouns, prepositions, auxiliaries, articles).

For example:

'Eating **junk food** is the **worst** thing you could **do**.'



## Appendix A Speaking Test Band Descriptors

### SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

**IELTS™**

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar</li> <li>speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features</li> <li>develops topics fully and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics</li> <li>uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately</li> <li>produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety</li> <li>sustains flexible use of features throughout</li> <li>is effortless to understand</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language</li> <li>develops topics coherently and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning</li> <li>uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies</li> <li>uses paraphrase effectively as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of structures flexibly</li> <li>produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriate or basic/non-systematic errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of pronunciation features</li> <li>sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses</li> <li>is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence</li> <li>may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction</li> <li>uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics</li> <li>uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices</li> <li>uses paraphrase effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility</li> <li>frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation</li> <li>uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inaccuracies</li> <li>generally paraphrases successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility</li> <li>may make frequent mistakes with complex structures though these rarely cause comprehension problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control</li> <li>shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained</li> <li>can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going</li> <li>may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers</li> <li>produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility</li> <li>attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy</li> <li>uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction</li> <li>links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice</li> <li>rarely attempts paraphrase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare</li> <li>errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a limited range of pronunciation features</li> <li>attempts to control features but lapses are frequent</li> <li>mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks with long pauses</li> <li>has limited ability to link simple sentences</li> <li>gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information</li> <li>has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances</li> <li>makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pauses lengthily before most words</li> <li>little communication possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only produces isolated words or memorised utterances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot produce basic sentence forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech is often unintelligible</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no communication possible</li> <li>no rateable language</li> </ul>			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not attend</li> </ul>			

**Appendix B Part 1 Topics**

The range of Part 1 topics included in the Speaking Test examiners materials is quite broad and may include some of the following:

- food
- hobbies
- mass media *e.g. newspapers, television, internet, advertising*
- social networking
- sports activities
- transportation
- friends or family
- the weather
- holidays and travel
- animals
- clothes
- shopping
- school: *e.g. subjects, teachers, your first day at school and so on*
- names
- numbers
- being polite
- being patient
- sleep patterns
- parks and gardens
- laughter: things that make you laugh
- the environment: *the sky, nice views and so on*
- cultural heritage: *e.g. museums, festivals and holidays*
- food: *e.g. fruit and vegetables, cakes and sweets and so on*
- special events: *e.g. weddings, birthdays*
- *and so on*



## Appendix C

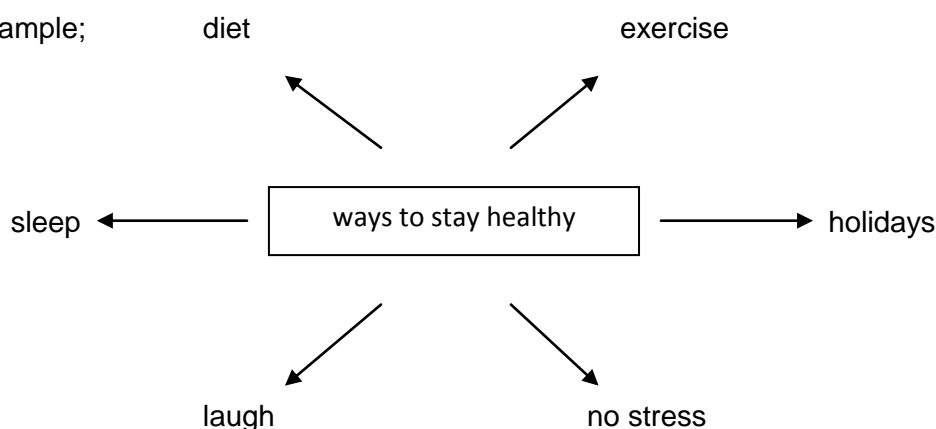
### Strategies for making full use of the one-minute preparation time for the long turn

There are a few ways to make full use of the one-minute preparation time for the long turn:

#### 1. Cloudburst

This is similar to the way some people brainstorm ideas for the Writing Task 2 essay and involves writing the main idea in a box or circle in the middle of the page with ideas radiating off.

For example;



#### 2. Vocabulary list

Some people might prefer just to write a list of words and phrases related to the topic. If that's the strategy it would make sense to include some less common items, good collocations or idiomatic phrases which would help with a higher score for the long turn.

For example:

##### **Stuck in a traffic jam:**

- Traffic congestion
- Rush hour traffic
- Bumper to bumper
- Air pollution
- Feeling of frustration
- Impatient
- Late for work
- Stressed out
- Music for relaxation
- Short nap

Of course, on its own the vocabulary doesn't count for much; you'll need to craft it together with accurate sentence structures and good spoken discourse features.

***What you should NOT do is to write complete sentences as notes. You don't have time for this.***

**Appendix D Some typical Part 2 topics (grouped according to broad categories):****Food**

- A dish which is eaten on special occasions in your country
- A time when you had a special meal with family or friends
- A restaurant you enjoy going to
- Some food from another country that you'd like to try

**Sport and leisure**

- A water sport you would like to try
- A game you used to play when you were a child
- A toy you remember from your childhood

**Entertainment**

- A movie you saw and would like to see again
- A live concert you attended
- A television program which made you laugh
- A song which you remember from your childhood

**Health**

- Something you do to help you stay healthy
- An article you read (on the internet or in a magazine) about healthy lifestyles
- A time when you visited someone in hospital

**Work**

- A job you think you would be good at
- A job you would NOT like to do
- A difficult job that you know about

**Emotions**

- A time when you laughed a lot
- A time when you received some very good news
- A time when you felt very proud about a friend's success
- An occasion when you were very surprised

**Transport**

- A time when the vehicle you were in broke down
- A time when you were stuck in a traffic jam
- A journey which you did not enjoy
- A long journey you took on public transport

**Technology**

- A time when you were not allowed to use your mobile phone
- An electronic device you would like to buy
- A time when you bought something and didn't know how to use it
- A website which helped you solve a problem

**Education**

- Your favourite teacher at secondary school
- Your first day at a new school
- A subject you did not enjoy at school
- A student at school you remember well
- A new skill you would like to learn
- A language (not English) that you would like to learn

**Clothes and shopping**

- A shop where you often go to buy things
- Your favourite item of clothing
- Something you bought and regret buying
- A street market you enjoy going to

**People**

- The person in your family you like to spend time with
- A friend from your childhood days
- A famous person you would like to meet
- A time when you had a conversation with a stranger
- A person who has inspired you

**Places**

- A place where you go to relax
- A famous place in your area which is popular with tourists
- A place where you like to go to read
- A place in your city or town which is often crowded

**Holidays and travel**

- A country you have never been to but would like to visit
- The best holiday you have ever had
- An unusual holiday you would like to go on again
- A holiday when things didn't go according to plan

**Miscellaneous**

- A time when you had to get up very early
- A time when you had to wait a long time for someone or something
- A gift you received which was special
- A wedding celebration you went to
- A birthday party you remember well
- Your idea of the perfect home
- A time when you had to change your plans because of the weather
- An occasion when you arrived later for something
- Your favourite wild animal
- The time of year or season you like most

## **Appendix E Spoken discourse markers**

### **Stating Opinions**

You will need to be able to talk about your opinions and the opinions of others.

#### **Your opinions**

Here are some phrases you can use to introduce your own opinions:

- *In my experience*
- *In my view*
- *Personally*
- *I feel / I would say that...*
- *It depends on....*

#### **General opinions**

Here are some phrases you can use to talk about what people think generally:

- *Some people say that...*
- *A lot of people think that...*
- *I've heard that...*

If you want to say whether you agree or disagree with the general opinion, you can say:

- *I tend to agree with that.*
- *I tend not to agree with that / I tend to think differently.*

### **Speculating**

Sometimes, the examiner will ask you to talk about what you think will happen in the future or how things will change in the future. This is more likely in Part 3 of the test. Here are some phrases you can use:

- *It is (highly) likely that ...*
- *It is (highly) probable that ...*
- *It is unlikely/improbable that ...*
- *It seems likely/unlikely/improbable that ...*
- *I doubt that ...*
- *I'm sure/I'm convinced that ...*

You can also use verbs like *may / could / might / will / won't*

**Scan this QR code to find out more about the language of probability**



## Talking about Trends

There are two types of trends you could be asked to describe:

- (1) current trends and
- (2) trends over time.

### Current Trends

Here are some time expressions you could use:

- *Currently*
- *At the moment*
- *These days*
- *Nowadays*

Often, you will need to use the **Present Continuous** tense in these situations, for example, "Currently, my country is experiencing unemployment problems". **However**, be careful! - you will probably expand the topic and in this case, you will move on to other tenses. The examiners don't want a list of simple sentences using the Present Continuous.

### Trends Over Time

Here are some time expressions you could use:

- *Over the past five/ten/etc. years*
- *Recently*
- *In recent years*
- *Lately*
- *Since (+year)*

It is common here to use the **Present Perfect Simple/Continuous** to talk about changes from the past to the present. For example, "Recently, people in my country have been having fewer children." It is essential to use it with '*since*'. However, as I said with Current Trends, do not become trapped into using one tense over and over - it will sound strange.

## Making Suggestions

There are two areas of language here: first, you need to be able to say what you think the real problem is and second, you need to be able to make suggestions.

Describing the real problem:

- *The real problem here is that ...*
- *The key point here is that...*
- *What this is really about is (+ noun/-ing form)*

Making suggestions:

- *What the government/city council needs to do is to (+verb)*
- *What people/we/they need to do is to (+verb)*
- *What we need to focus on is (+noun/-ing form)*
- *The way to tackle the problem is to (+verb)*
- *One way to solve the problem is to (+verb)*

Be careful to use the correct grammatical structure to continue the sentence as shown in the brackets.

## Expressions of Time

You will almost certainly need to use expressions of time in all parts of the IELTS Speaking Test. If you can use expressions of time which are a little more advanced, you will get higher marks. Here are some useful phrases for you:

- *late August / early August*
- *at the beginning / end of the week*
- *mid-week*
- *first thing (in the morning before anything else)*
- *last thing (at night before you go to bed)*
- *a fortnight (two weeks)*
- *at that time / in those days (referring to a long time ago)*
- *these days / nowadays*
- *the other day (on a day in the recent past)*
- *once in a while (very occasionally)*
- *once (on a day a long time ago)*
- *the day before yesterday*
- *the day after tomorrow*

Let's look at three of them more closely:

**At that time / in those days** refers to a period of time a long time ago (a decade, a century etc.). It is more common to use it to talk about life in general but can be used for personal things too.

For example, *"In those days, very few people had access to electricity."*

or

*"In those days, we didn't have much money."*

**Once** refers to a specific occasion and refers to something you yourself did a long time ago.

For example,

"Once, I was on the beach when this terrible thing happened."

**The other day** also refers to something that happened to you personally but is used for more recent times, like last week or two weeks ago.

For example,

"The other day, I bumped into John - we went for a coffee together."

## Appendix F A range of sentence structures at different levels

The lists below show the kind of sentence structures which are needed to fit the band descriptors from levels 4 to 7+. Some of the structures describing each level would be expected to reach the higher band scores.

The list is for guidance only. Accuracy also plays a major part in achieving the target band score.

### Band 4

*'Structures tend to be repetitive and there is little evidence of complex sentences.'*

*Examples:*

Bangkok is the capital of Thailand. It is in the central part of Thailand.

I live in an apartment.

It is better to live in a house.

I have never eaten spaghetti.

Smoking is bad for the health.

Many people in Thailand cannot swim.

The weather in the cool season is dry.

### Band 5+

*'Complex structures are attempted.'*

*Examples:*

There's a lot of juvenile crime **because** young people can't find a job.

**If** the government reduces VAT, people will have more money to spend on other things.

The government raised interest rates **in order to** slow down the economy.

**When** it rains too much, Bangkok gets flooded.

She slipped in the bathroom **while** she was having a shower.

The cost of petrol is low **so** more motorists are using their own private vehicles to go to work.

He's the one **who** invented the internet.

I'll stay in this house **until** I get married.

Australia is the **largest** island and the **smallest** continent in the world.

Bangkok gets **more** rain in October **than** in December.

Finding a job is **easier** in the city **than** in the countryside.

**Band 6+**

*'A mix of sentences (simple, coordinate and complex) is used.'*

*Examples:*

A library is a place **where** people go **to read** and borrow books, or use computers to surf the internet.

**Finding** a job is the key **to reducing** poverty.

**Unless** the government takes appropriate action, the situation will deteriorate.

Interest rates are **likely to rise** before they fall.

Let's start by **talking about** health-care issues.

African elephants, **which** are larger than Indian elephants, **tend to be** more aggressive, too.

**If** you don't own a smart phone, you **won't be able to** go shopping.

**Although** they lose a year of potential income, young people still choose to take a gap-year.

**Band 7(+)**

*'A range of sentences is used flexibly.'*

*Examples:*

**Not wanting to** increase the unemployment rate, the government introduced a new job-search scheme.

No one is really sure **how to motivate** learners of English.

**Had we known** about the consequences, we would never have taken this action.

**Not only did** the house prices fall, **but** the cost of borrowing **also** decreased.

The economy **is thought to be** shrinking.

No one is really sure **why the dinosaurs became extinct**.

**Even though** statistics show that capital punishment does not reduce the incidence of serious crimes, it continues **to be used** in a number of countries.

The expanding population has resulted in farmers **choosing** to grow more rice.

**Despite** the introduction of new legislation, garbage **is still being dumped** in rivers.



# ANSWER KEY

**Referencing and substitution****Exercise**

*Change the informal sentences into the formal format:*

1. The firm that we had done business with for twenty years went bankrupt.  
→ The firm with which we had done business for twenty years went bankrupt.
2. The project that the feasibility study referred to was scrapped.  
→ The project to which the feasibility study referred was scrapped.
3. The schedule that we all work around is very tight.  
→ The schedule around which we all work is very tight.
4. The woman that the group disagreed with presented some new evidence to support her claims.  
→ The woman with whom the group disagreed presented some new evidence to support her claims.
5. The fence that the car slammed into was flattened beyond repair.  
→ The fence into which the car slammed was flattened beyond repair.

*Now, change these from formal to informal:*

6. The tunnel through which the prisoner escaped was blocked up.  
→ The tunnel that the prisoner escaped through was blocked up.
7. The markets upon which we all depend are drying up.  
→ The markets that we all depend on are drying up.
8. There are numerous ways in which solar energy can be used.  
→ There are numerous ways that solar energy can be used in.
9. Gandhi was a politician for whom many of his peers had respect.  
→ Gandhi was a politician that many of his peers had respect for.
10. The information on which the researchers had relied turned out to be inaccurate.  
→ The information that the researchers had relied on turned out to be inaccurate.

## Substitution

### Exercise

Give response to the following questions:

Examiner: 'Did you enjoy Maths when you were a child?'

Candidate: 'Yes, I did.'

Examiner: 'Have you ever visited a zoo?'

Candidate: 'No, I haven't.'

Examiner's question	Candidate's (short) response
<i>Did your parents travel overseas very much?</i>	Yes, they did. No, they didn't.
<i>Can <b>you</b> swim?</i>	Yes, I can. No, I can't.
<i>Are there any shops and other facilities where you live?</i>	Yes, there are. No, there aren't.
<i>Would you like to live in the countryside?</i>	Yes, I would. No, I wouldn't.
<i>Do you like using perfume?</i>	Yes, I do. No, I don't.
<i>Did you have a favourite teacher at school?</i>	Yes, I do. No, I don't.
<i>Will you live in this house for a long time?</i>	Yes, I will. No, I won't.
<i>Had your friends seen this movie as well?</i>	Yes, they have. No, they haven't.
<i>Is it likely to be a problem in the future?</i>	Yes, it is. No, it isn't.
<i>Could robots replace teachers in the classroom?</i>	Yes, they could. No, they couldn't.

## Substitution of a clause

Some possible responses:

Examiner's question	Candidate's (short) response
<i>Do you think robots can do most jobs?</i>	Yes, I think so. No, I don't think so.
<i>Do you think newspapers will disappear in the future?</i>	Yes, I think so. No, I hope not.
<i>Do you think universities should train people for specific jobs?</i>	Yes, I believe so. No, I don't think so.
<i>Are more people likely to migrate from the countryside to cities in the future?</i>	Yes, I believe so. No, I don't think so.
<i>Do you think the government will make free health-care for everyone a reality?</i>	Yes, I hope so. No, I doubt it.
<i>Are people likely to want to travel overseas for a holiday during this pandemic?</i>	Yes, I think so. No, I doubt it very much.
<i>Do you expect the government to decentralize some offices to the rural areas?</i>	Yes, I hope so. No, I doubt it.
<i>Are we likely to see commercial travel to the Moon in your lifetime?</i>	Yes, I think so. No, I don't believe so.

## Clichés

### Exercise 1

Look at the table of clichés below. Match them with their plain English meanings:

Clichés	Plain English
A coin has two sides	• There are arguments both for and against
At the end of the day	• Finally
In the final analysis	• When all the facts are known
Last but not least	• Last in appearance but not in importance
At the eleventh hour	• At the last possible time
To go in one ear and out the other	• To make no impression on someone
To leave no stone unturned	• To examine all possibilities
Like a fish out of water	• In a very strange, unfamiliar setting
At the drop of a hat	• Without any hesitation at all
Barking up the wrong tree	• Following a false trail

**Tautology****Exercise 2**

1. Collaborating is likely to result in improvements.
2. My brother is a well-known basketball player, and I play basketball, too.
3. My father has to start work at 7.00 am, so getting up around 5 o'clock is requirement.
4. Let me reiterate that being in close proximity to the high security transmitter mast is illegal.
5. In my opinion, I think that modern technology has more benefits than drawbacks.
6. All customers get a bottle of wine on the house.
7. The twin boys are identical.
8. They donated the new house to charity.