

QUICK STUDY

Overview

There are three parts to the Speaking module, which lasts between 11 and 14 minutes. You will be alone in a room with one examiner who will ask you questions and ask you to talk on certain topics. The interview will be recorded. You will be able to make notes in Part 2 only.

The Speaking modules are the same for both the Academic and the General Training versions of the IELTS. Topics include discussions about you, your family, etc.

Speaking Module

Parts	Time	Tasks
Part 1	4–5 minutes	Introductions Identify self Answer questions
Part 2	3–4 minutes: 1 minute preparation, 1–2 minute speaking, 1 minute follow-up questions	Talk on a topic given on a task card
Part 3	4–5 minutes	Discuss with examiner the issues related to the topic in Part 2

Question Types

There are a variety of questions and prompts the examiner will use to get you to talk during the IELTS Speaking module. You should be familiar with these types.

- Part 1 *Wh-* questions
 Yes/No questions
- Part 2 Describe and explain
 Wh- questions
 Yes/No questions
- Part 3 *Wh-* questions
 Yes/No questions

The following activities will help you become familiar with these question types.

Part 1

PRACTICE A

Write the answers to the examiner's questions for Part 1.

1. What is your name?

2. How do you spell it?

3. Do you have your proof of identification? May I see it?

4. Let's talk about where you live. Can you describe your neighborhood?

5. What is an advantage of living there?

6. What is a disadvantage of living there?

7. Let's talk about jobs. What kind of job do you have?

8. What is the best thing about your job?

9. Let's talk about free time. What is one activity you enjoy doing in your free time?

10. How did you become interested in this activity?

PRACTICE B

Pretend you are taking the Speaking module. The examiner asked you the questions in Practice A. Now give your answers aloud to the examiner's questions for Part 1.

Part 2**PRACTICE C**

Make notes to answer the questions on the Task Card for Part 2. Try to do this in one minute.

Task card

Describe a place that you like to go.

You should say:

where the place is

how you get there

what it looks like

and explain why you like this place.

Notes:

Place

Location

Transportation

Appearance

Why I like it

PRACTICE D

Pretend you are taking the Speaking module. The examiner gave you the Task Card in Practice C. Now give your answers out loud to the examiner's questions for Part 2.

PRACTICE E

Write the answers to the examiner's follow-up questions for Part 2.

1. Do you go on your own to this place?

2. Are there similar places you like to go?

PRACTICE F

Pretend you are taking the Speaking module. The examiner asked you the questions in Practice E. Now give your answers out loud to the examiner's questions for Part 2 follow-up.

Part 3

PRACTICE G

Write the answers to the examiner's questions for Part 3. Note that these questions are related to the theme of Part 2.

1. Let's consider why people need to vary their surroundings.
 - What kinds of vacations¹ do most people take?
 - Are these different places than people used to go in the past?

2. Finally, let's talk about leisure time.
 - Why is leisure time important?

Speaking Tips

TIPS TO HELP YOU WHILE TAKING THE TEST

1. **Focus on the task.** Think what the examiner is asking you. Respond precisely to the question or topic.
2. **Speak clearly.** Sit up straight. Talk directly to the examiner. Do not be afraid to make eye contact.
3. **Speak loudly.** Make sure you are heard, but do not yell.
4. **Bring a watch.** You will have one minute to prepare your answer for Part 2. Glance at your watch to make sure you have enough time to complete your task.
5. **Laugh.** Do this before you meet the examiner. Before the speaking test begins, tell yourself a joke or think of something funny. Start to laugh. Laugh harder. Laugh louder. Laughter will make you feel better and more relaxed. It will also push air into your lungs and help you speak better. People around you may think you're crazy², but you're there to do well on the IELTS, not to impress people with your sanity.
6. **Smile.** Smile at the examiner. This will put both of you at ease and make you both more comfortable.

TIPS TO HELP YOU STUDY FOR THE SPEAKING TEST

1. **Talk to yourself.** When you walk down the street, pay attention to the things around you. What do the buildings look like? Is there a lot of traffic? How is the weather? Is this a typical day and scene in your city? In your mind, describe the scene to someone in English. Imagine a person who has never visited your city, and describe the scene to that person.

You can do the same thing at school, at work, or anywhere you go. Imagine describing the scene to a person from another country. Explain the customs of people in your country: how they dress, act, and talk in the different situations that you describe.

¹BRITISH: holidays

²BRITISH: mad

2. **Make up stories.** Use your imagination. Look around you on the street, on the bus, on the elevator, wherever you are. Who are those people? Where are they going and why? What are they carrying? What will they do with what they are carrying? Imagine yourself in the story. What would you say to these people?
Ask yourself questions about everything and everyone you see. How did it get here? Why is it here? What will happen to it next?
3. **Make your daily plans.** Do you talk to yourself about your plans for the day when you get up in the morning? Do this in English. If you have to decide what clothes to wear, what to have for breakfast, if you will walk or take the bus, think about these decisions in English. If you make a shopping list or a reading list or a list of chores, you can do this in English too.
4. **Think about your job.** Imagine you are at a job interview. Talk about your educational and work background. What kind of training and experience do you have? What can you do well? How do you see your future? In your mind, try to sell yourself to a future employer by talking about your strengths and good qualities.
5. **Explain your interests.** Choose a hobby or free time interest that you have. Imagine that you are teaching another person how to do it. Explain everything step by step. Describe any equipment or tools that are needed. Then pick another hobby and do it again.
6. **Read books, watch movies and TV.** Think about a book, film, or TV show that you really enjoy. In your mind, tell another person what it is about and why you like it. Think about a book, film, or TV show that you dislike. Explain why you don't like it.
7. **Read about the news.** When you read the newspaper or watch the news on TV, think about it in English. How could you explain it to another person in English? How could you explain your own opinions or feelings about particular news events?

What the Examiner Measures

FLUENCY AND COHERENCE

When you answer the examiner's questions or talk about a topic, your speech must be fluent and cohesive. This means the words you use must fit the situation, and these words must come quickly. You must address the topic fully, and your ideas must be tied together.

It is important to speak for a least one full minute during Part 2. You can speak longer if you can. There is no penalty for speaking over one minute. The examiner will tell you to stop.

ACCURACY

Accuracy is very important. An examiner will listen to your vocabulary, your grammar, and your pronunciation. She or he will want to make sure that you have a large enough vocabulary to express yourself easily and be understood completely.

The examiner will want to make sure that the grammar you use is varied and appropriate to what you want to say.

The examiner will, of course, be paying close attention to your pronunciation. Your speech must be comprehensible. You can have an accent, but the words must be intelligible.

SPEAKING SKILLS

Target 1—Describing Yourself

There are three ways you can talk about yourself—factual, physical, and emotional. Look at these model introductions.

Factual—My name is Jose Maria Menendez. My first name is spelled J-O-S-E and my last name ends in "Z" not "S". People often have trouble when spelling my name. My identity number is C-9870-667.

Physical—I am almost 6 feet tall. My hair color is brown, the same color as my eyes.

Emotional—I'm a serious student, but I like to laugh, too. I spend a lot of time studying, but on week-ends, I like to go to out with my friends.

TEST TIP

When you say a string of numbers, use the single digit number. For example, for C-9870-667, don't say: C-ninety-eight seventy sixty-six seven. You'll be less likely to make a mistake by keeping it simple: C nine eight seven zero six six seven.

Useful Words

Factual	Physical	Emotional
first name	tall	serious
last name	feet/meters	lucky
surname	inches/centimeters	cheerful
ends with	curly	nervous
begins with	straight	calm
	brown/blue/green/red	excited
		worried
		confident

PRACTICE 1

Complete this form about yourself. This will help you organize your personal information.

Personal Information Form	
<u>Factual</u>	
First Name	_____
Middle Name	_____
Last Name ¹	_____
Age	_____
Nationality	_____
Native Language	_____
Occupation	_____
 <u>Physical</u>	
Height	_____
Weight	_____
Eye Color	_____
Hair:	
Color _____	(check one) long _____ short _____ medium length _____
	(check one) straight _____ curly _____ wavy _____
Other characteristics (glasses? beard? etc.) _____	
 <u>Emotional</u>	
(circle all that apply)	
optimistic pessimistic easygoing serious fun loving studious nervous calm	
shy confident outgoing friendly hardworking talkative quiet cheerful	

PRACTICE 2

Write three sentences about yourself. Use the examples as models. Then without looking at the form or sentences, describe yourself out loud. Record your description and listen to it. Record yourself speaking about the topic in different ways. Vary the vocabulary that you use and the order that you present the information. You only get one chance during the exam. This is your time to practice.

Factual

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

¹BRITISH: surname

Physical

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Emotional

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Target 2—Describing Your Family

When talking about your family, it is simpler to talk about them factually.

EXAMPLE 1

I have a very small family. There is only my mother, father, and me. I'm an only child.

EXAMPLE 2

I have a very large family. I have three brothers and two sisters. I am the youngest. One of my brothers still lives with my parents; my other siblings have all married and moved to their own homes.

EXAMPLE 3

My father died when I was ten. I was brought up by my mother and grandparents. My mother and two sisters and I still live with my grandfather.

TEST TIP

You don't have to tell the examiner everything. She or he is not judging you. Just provide some basic information. If you don't want to talk about your family, talk about someone else's family.

Useful Words

parents	married	live with
relations	single	die/passed away
youngest/oldest	divorced	moved out
middle child	widowed	raised by
only child		

PRACTICE 1

Complete this form about your family. This will help you organize your personal information.

Family Information Form

	Relationship to You	Name	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Other Information
Parents	mother					
	father					
Siblings						
Other Relatives						

PRACTICE 2

Write three sentences about your family. Use the above as a model. Then without looking at the form or sentences, describe your family out loud. Record your description and listen to it. Record it over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Target 3—Describing Your Home or Hometown

You may be asked to talk about your home or your neighborhood. You can talk generally about either one, or you can talk more personally. Try to have a lot of specific details prepared. This will help your answers be more cohesive and fluent.

TEST TIP

If you don't understand the task, ask for clarification. This will give you time to think a bit.

These phrases will be helpful:

Do you mean the house I live in or my hometown?

Would you like me to describe the house generally or in great detail?

Home: General Description

We live in a flat¹ in the old section of the city. It was once a large home that was converted to several flats. Now, five families live in this home. We have two bedrooms: one for me and one for my parents. There is a large living room and a kitchen with a small balcony overlooking the street. The streets are very narrow, and there are no trees.

Neighborhood: General Description

I was born in Beijing. Even though it is a very large city and the capital, we live in a part that is like a small village. We know everyone here. On the corner of my street, there is a small grocery store. Across from that, there is a dry cleaner. Next to the dry cleaner is a big clothing store. On the corner opposite the grocery store, there is a bus stop so we can easily go anywhere in the city.

Home: Personal Description

My home is a small house in a new development. It was built by my father. The house has three bedrooms: a large one for my parents and two smaller bedrooms for my brother and me. In my bedroom, I have a bed, a desk, and a chair. I also have a lot of books in bookshelves along two walls. I have a window in my room that looks out over our garden. It's a small garden, but we can grow all our own vegetables.

Neighborhood: Personal Description

My mother and father live in my hometown, Burdur. In fact, my entire family—aunts, uncles, grandparents, everyone—lives in Burdur. We've lived there for over six generations. We know everyone in the area so when we sit outside, it is like being in our living room with our very large family. We live across the street from a park. My family spends a lot of time sitting in this park talking to neighbors and relatives.

¹AMERICAN: apartment

Useful Words

Type	Relation	Description
balcony	across from	large/small
one-bedroom	along	spacious
kitchen	behind	airy
section/area	beside	narrow
grocery store	corner	old/new
park	end	lots
post office	facing	a lot of
department store	in back/front/middle of	big
taxi stand/rank	left-hand/right-hand side	
clothing store	near	
dry cleaner	next to	
park	overlooking	

PRACTICE 1

Complete these forms about your home and neighborhood. This will help you organize your personal information.

Home Information Form

Size _____
 Age _____
 Number of bedrooms _____
 Other rooms _____
 Garden/yard _____
 Special features _____
 My Bedroom:
 Size _____
 Furniture _____
 Colors _____
 Art _____
 Other _____

Neighborhood¹ Information Form

Name _____
 Style of houses _____
 Shops/businesses _____
 Schools _____
 Religious buildings _____
 Other buildings _____
 Transportation _____
 Parks/gardens _____
 Special characteristics _____

¹BRITISH: neighbourhood

PRACTICE 2

Write four sentences about your home. Use the above as models. Then without looking at the form or sentences, describe your home and hometown out loud. Record your description and listen to it. Record it over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

Home: General Description

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Neighborhood: General Description

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Home: Specific Description

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Neighborhood: Specific Description

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Target 4—Describing Your Occupation or School

You may be asked to discuss how you spend your day. Do you work or do you study? Be prepared with specific details about your occupation or your school life.

Occupation

I'm an engineer. I've worked for the same company for three years. My specific job is working with the senior engineer and helping her prepare presentations for contractors and their clients. I'd like to get an advanced¹ degree. That's why I'm applying to study at an engineering school in Australia.

School

I'm a third-year student at National University. I'm studying psychology. I'm in class most of the day, and when I'm not in class I have to spend a lot of time working on my assignments. My goal is to become a research psychologist, so I'll have to get a doctorate degree. I have a lot of years of studying ahead of me.

Useful Words

boss	duties	qualified
co-workers	assignments	goal
clients	position	advanced degree
classmates	schedule	master's degree
instructors	salary	doctorate degree

PRACTICE 1

Complete this form about your occupation or studies. This will help you organize your personal information.

Job Information Form	
Company name	_____
Job title	_____
Length of time at this job	_____
Duties	_____
Training required for this job	_____
Skills required for this job	_____
Things I like about this job	_____
Things I don't like about this job	_____
Future career goals	_____

¹BRITISH: higher degree

Education Information Form

Name of college/university _____
 Major/subject¹ _____
 Classes I am taking now _____
 Hours per week in class _____
 Years to complete degree/certificate _____
 Educational goals _____
 Future career goals _____

PRACTICE 2

Write four sentences about your occupation or your studies. Use the above as models. Then without looking at the form or sentences, describe your job or school out loud. Record your discussion and listen to it. Record it over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

My occupation _____ or My studies _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Target 5—Describing Your Hobbies or General Interests

The examiner may ask you how you spend your free time. Do you like to read, go to the cinema, play sports? Do you have any hobbies like collecting stamps, bird watching, photography?

Hobby (EXAMPLE 1)

I enjoy bird watching. I often go to a park near my house in the early morning to watch the birds. I also belong to a bird watching club. Several times a year we take trips to other places. We try to find birds that we've never seen before. You don't need much equipment for bird watching, just a pair of binoculars and a pair of strong legs for walking. I enjoy this hobby because I like to be outside, and I'm fascinated by the natural world.

Hobby (EXAMPLE 2)

I like to play the guitar. I took lessons when I was a child. Some friends and I had a rock band once, a long time ago. We played at parties. Now I mostly play on my own at home, and sometimes I get together with friends to play. I'm thinking about taking lessons again. I'd like to learn how to play jazz guitar. I have a large collection of jazz CDs.

¹BRITISH: doing a degree in

Useful Words

interested in	club	equipment
enjoy	get together	collect/collection
join	learn how	passion
belong to	lessons	fascinate/fascinated by

PRACTICE 1

Complete this form about your hobbies or general interests. This will help you organize your personal information.

Hobby/Free-Time Activity Information Form

Hobby/Activity #1 _____
 How often do you do this hobby or activity? _____
 Do you do it on your own or with other people? _____
 Do you belong to a club related to this hobby/activity? _____
 How did you learn how to do this hobby/activity? _____
 Do you need special equipment for it? _____
 What do you like most about it? _____

Hobby/Activity #2 _____
 How often do you do this hobby or activity? _____
 Do you do it alone or with other people? _____
 Do you belong to a club related to this hobby/activity? _____
 How did you learn how to do this hobby/activity? _____
 Do you need special equipment for it? _____
 What do you like most about it? _____

PRACTICE 2

Write four sentences about how you spend your free time. Use the above as models. Then without looking at the form or sentences, describe your hobbies and general interests out loud. Record your description and listen to it. Record it over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

Hobby/Activity #1 _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Hobby/Activity #2 _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Target 6—Discussing a Topic

The examiner will give you a card. The card will have a topic and some questions to guide your discussion of the topic. You will have one minute to prepare your answer. The questions are very important. They will guide your organization. You can make notes on paper provided by the examiner. Your discussion will be more cohesive if you can provide a sequence of events or actions for your topic.

EXAMPLE

Describe a museum that you have visited.

You should say:

where it is located and what kind of museum it is
 what specific things you can see there
 when and why you last visited it

and discuss how it compares to other museums you have visited.

Notes:

- Greenport Ship Museum, in Greenport, a beach resort
- Parts of old ships and demonstrations of shipbuilding methods
- Last summer, took my niece and nephew to entertain them on a rainy day
- Not like a city museum: smaller, simpler exhibits, but friendlier staff

Useful Words for Establishing a Sequence

after	during	previously
as a teenager	earlier	prior to
at the same time as	in the 1990s	simultaneously
before	later	when

PRACTICE 1

Make notes about these topics. Give short answers to the question.

Topic 1

Talk about a pet that you or someone you know once had.

You should say:

what kind of animal it was

what kind of care it needed

what you liked/didn't like about it

and explain why this is or is not a popular type of pet to own.

Topic 2

Describe a birthday celebration that you attended recently.

You should say:

whose birthday it was and that person's age

who attended the party

where the party took place

and describe some activities that happened at the party.

Topic 3

Talk about a friend you had as a child or teenager.

You should say:

when and how you first met this friend

what things you liked to do together

what things you had in common

and explain why this friendship was important to you.

Topic 4

Describe a trip you have taken recently.

You should say:

where you went

who went with you

why you went there

and describe some things you saw and did on your trip.

PRACTICE 2

Write a paragraph about each topic. Then without looking at your notes or your paragraph, discuss the topic out loud. Record your discussion and listen to it. Record it over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Topic 4

Target 7—Responding to Follow-up Questions

The examiner will ask you specific questions about your discussion of a topic.

Follow-up questions for a topic on museums:

How often do you go to museums?

What kinds of museums do you generally prefer to visit? Why?

Is it important to take children to visit different kinds of museums?

Useful Words

According to my point of view	I believe	I'm in favor of _____ because _____
As far as I'm concerned	I don't know if	It seems to me
I agree with/disagree with	I don't know whether	Personally I think
I'm certain/positive/sure that	I think it's a good idea because _____	The advantage of _____ is that
I assume	I'm against _____	The disadvantage of _____ is that

PRACTICE 1

Make notes to respond to these follow-up questions.

Topic 1

What are some advantages and disadvantages to owning pets?

Is it important for children to have pets? Why or why not?

- _____
- _____

Topic 2

How do you like to celebrate your birthday?

What other kinds of celebrations are important for you?

- _____
- _____

Topic 3

What are some things you like to do with your friends now?

Do you think it's better to have a lot of friends, or just a few good friends?

1. _____
2. _____

Topic 4

When you travel, what kinds of places do you usually visit?

Do you like to travel? Why or why not?

1. _____
2. _____

PRACTICE 2

Write an answer for each follow-up question. Then without looking at your notes or your sentences, respond to the question out loud. Record your answers and listen to them. Record them over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

Topic 1

1. _____
2. _____

Topic 2

1. _____
2. _____

Topic 3

1. _____
2. _____

Topic 4

1. _____
2. _____

Target 8—Discussing an Issue in Depth

In the last part of the Speaking section of the test, the examiner will ask you some more questions and give you an opportunity to discuss in depth some of the issues related to the topic in Part 2.

Issues from example topic asking for definition:

Why do people visit museums?

What role do museums play in a society?

Issues from example topic asking for comparison and contrast:

What do museums offer in terms of education that books or other sources don't?

How will museums be different in the future?

Useful Words for Definitions

characteristic	in explanation	to paraphrase
condition	in other words	
define	to explain	

Useful Words for Comparison

alike	in the same way	resemblance
almost the same as	just as	similar to
common characteristics	like	similarity
correspond to	likewise	to have in common

Useful Words for Contrast

although	however	nevertheless
different from	in contrast to	on the other hand
even so	less than	still
(larger) than	more / more than	unlike

PRACTICE 1

Make notes about these issues.

Issues from Topic 1

Definition:

Why do people have pets?

In your opinion, what kind of animal makes the best pet?

Comparison and contrast:

In what different ways have animals been useful to people throughout history?

How are people's attitudes toward animals different now than they were in the past?

Issues from Topic 2

Definition:

Are birthday celebrations important in your country? Why or why not?

How are older people treated in your culture?

Comparison and contrast:

Are birthday celebrations different now than they were in the past? How?

In your opinion, how will the role of older people in your culture change in the future?

Issues from Topic 3

Definition:

What are the qualities of a good friend?

What role do friends play in most people's lives?

Comparison and contrast:

What differences are there between men's and women's friendships?

Do you think the nature of friendship is changing?

Issues from Topic 4

Definition:

Why do people travel?

What are some transportation problems in your country?

Comparison and contrast:

How has plane travel changed the way people live?

What are some advantages and disadvantages that tourism can have for a specific place?

PRACTICE 2

Write a paragraph about each issue. Then without looking at your notes or your sentences discuss the issue out loud. Record your discussion and listen to it. Record them over and over until you are satisfied with your presentation.

Issues from Topic 1

Issues from Topic 2

Issues from Topic 3

Issues from Topic 4
