

TOP TIPS FOR IELTS

Speaking



Top Tips for IELTS Speaking

Official Cambridge IELTS Preparation

We provide you with the tools and resources you need to learn and show your skills to the world. Whether you're studying in a classroom, or at home, you can rely on us to help you get ready for test day.

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Introduction

Top Tips for IELTS Speaking is an essential part of your revision for the IELTS test.

The tips are based on advice which IELTS materials writers have collected from many years' experience of involvement in the production of IELTS tests. Each section starts with a tip which is followed by an example taken from IELTS material and a clear explanation to help you understand exactly what it means.

How to use *Top Tips for IELTS Speaking*

Top Tips for IELTS Speaking is flexible. You can look at a different tip from a different page every day, or you can start at the beginning and work through until you get to the end of the tips. Whichever method you prefer, read the example and the explanation carefully to make sure that you understand each tip. When you have understood all the tips try the test on page 16.

Guide to symbols



This symbol introduces the tip which is at the top of the page. Each tip is some useful advice to show how you can give good answers which show your true level of English to the examiner.



This is an extra piece of advice which is important for this particular part of the test.

How to revise for IELTS Speaking

Make the effort to practise speaking in English whenever you can.

- Make sure that you know how to talk about your own work and study experiences and plans – become familiar with the relevant language by reading articles online about, for example, your chosen profession and about university courses.
- Make sure that you know how to express your opinion on a range of general topics, giving examples and reasons to explain why you think as you do – become familiar with the relevant language by listening to radio or watching TV programmes in which people give their opinions.
- If there are students in your area whose first language is English, try to make contact with them. Perhaps you could exchange conversation sessions with them – half an hour in English and half an hour in your first language.
- Try to make contact with English-speaking visitors to your area.
- Practise with friends by agreeing to talk only in English for half an hour on a regular basis – choose a specific topic to discuss for that time.
- Join an English-language club if there is one in your area.
- Make sure that you can do these things with ease in English – introduce yourself, agree or disagree, ask someone to repeat or explain, give arguments for and against, make hypotheses, talk about your own experiences, justify a point of view – as you will almost certainly need to do most of these in the Speaking test.


We hope these ideas will help you to make the most of your revision time. Above all, we hope that you enjoy your studies and wish you all the best for your exam.


Book your IELTS test at ielts.org/book-a-test




Top Tips for IELTS Speaking test

What's in the Speaking test?

Part 1  You answer general questions about yourself, your home/family, your job/studies, your interests and a range of familiar topic areas.

Part 2  The examiner gives you a card which asks you to talk about a particular topic and which includes points that you should cover in your talk. You are given 1 minute to prepare: you can make some notes if you wish. You talk for up to 2 minutes, after which the examiner may then ask one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 3  The examiner asks you further questions which are connected to the topic of Part 2. These questions give you an opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas.



11–14 minutes

The whole Speaking test is recorded.

Part 1



TIP: Explain your answers by giving reasons for what you say.

Example

Here are some examples of answers to questions on familiar topics.

EXAMINER: What's your favourite place to relax in your home?

CANDIDATE: Oh, definitely the balcony **because** if it's warm weather I really enjoy sitting out there in the open air reading a book or just watching the world go by.

EXAMINER: Have you ever cooked a meal for a lot of people?

CANDIDATE: Yes, lots of times. I love cooking for other people. Recently I made a big dinner for some of my friends from college. **Actually**, it was all traditional food from my country **and** everyone said they really liked it.

EXAMINER: Are you planning to see any films in the near future?

CANDIDATE: **Well**, I've heard there's a new Idris Elba film coming out **so** I'd really like to see that. I've seen most of his films already. **In fact**, I go to the cinema quite a lot.

Explanation: The highlighted words show how you can organise your responses and explain your answers.

Part 1



TIP: Be prepared to answer questions using different tenses and verb forms.

Example

Here are some questions and typical answers. These answers cover a range of time frames.

EXAMINER: How long have you had this job?


CANDIDATE: Well, I **started** working there about *eight months ago* and I'm **hoping to continue** with it **until I go back** to my country because I'm **really enjoying** the work I'm doing.

EXAMINER: Are you going to travel anywhere later this year?

CANDIDATE: Yes, I'm **planning to visit** Greece later in the summer with a couple of my friends. That's because **we want to go and see** the famous ancient ruins and relax on the beach for some of the time, of course.

Explanation: Look at the highlighted examples to see how a range of verb forms are used to talk about the past, present and future.

Part 2

 **TIP:** Use the 1 minute preparation time to make notes about what you will say about all the points given.

Example

Here is an example of a Part 2 task. Use the points to make notes on the piece of paper which the examiner will give you in the test.

Describe a time you visited a friend's home for a special reason.

You should say:

- when you went
- who you visited
- what you did there

and explain why you visited your friend's home.

Here are some notes a student made in order to prepare for this task.

Lee's house – last Saturday evening

My best friend – met at school – often do things together

– go out, my place, his place

Prepared dinner – tidied up – had dinner – tea – music – chatting

Normally see Lee at weekends – invited for dinner with college friends

Explanation: Your notes will help you to organise what you say and remember what you want to talk about.



*The notes are just ideas. You don't need to write full sentences.
Find out the way to write notes that suits you best.*

Part 2



TIP: Give more details about each of the points you make.

Example

Here is part of a sample answer to the task on the previous page. This is what the student said, not what they wrote in their notes.

WHEN YOU WENT

I went to my friend Lee's house last Saturday evening. As he lives quite near me it only took me about ten minutes to get there and I stayed for several hours because he'd invited several of our other friends round for the evening.

WHO YOU VISITED

Well, Lee is really my best friend I'd say and I've known him for several years. We first met at school when we were about 16. He's a really great guy and we spend a lot of our free time together. We sometimes go out to different places together but also he often comes round to my place or I go to his.

WHAT YOU DID THERE

When I got there Lee was getting ready and he'd prepared a whole lot of food for everybody. Because he was busy with that I helped out by tidying up in the living room ...

After dinner we all sat around drinking tea, listening to music and chatting about various things. Yes, I remember we were talking about the exam because several of us are taking it around the same time ...

WHY YOU VISITED

Well, the main reason I went to Lee's house was that he'd organised a dinner for all of us, me and several of our classmates at college. I'd say it was really a social occasion – a chance to relax, eat together and just have fun chatting.

Explanation: Giving more details shows that you can enlarge on a topic and that you can use a range of vocabulary and expressions.



After you finish speaking, the examiner may ask you a question about the topic you've talked about. You only need to give a short answer to this question.

Part 3



TIP: Weigh up both sides of a question and give examples to support this. This will help you to tackle the more challenging questions in Part 3.

Example

Here is an example of the kind of question you might get in Part 3. It asks you to think more broadly about the topic of friendship and to discuss it in relation to wider issues.

EXAMINER: What kind of effect do you think changes in technology have had on the nature of friendship?

CANDIDATE: Well, of course mobile phone and computer technology, the internet and everything, have all had a big impact on the way we manage our relationships with other people. They can affect the nature of friendship in so many different ways. For example, on the positive side, if you're far away from your friends it's so much easier to keep in touch using the phone or the internet. On the other hand, a lot of people would say that personal relationships have suffered from excessive use of computers – people are less interested in what's going on around them and spend more time alone on the computer.

Explanation: The highlighted sections show the language which the candidate uses to cover both sides of the question and support the argument.



Relating abstract topics to examples helps you to deal with a question more clearly.

Part 3



TIP: Give your opinion and develop your ideas by offering examples of what you mean.

Example

Here is an example of the kind of question you may get in Part 3 and part of a candidate answer.

EXAMINER: What qualities do you think are important in a good friend?

CANDIDATE: Well, *as far as I'm concerned*, some of the most important things are trust and being supportive. *What I mean is that a good friend should be someone that you can always depend on and turn to if you need them and you would do the same for them. For example, if you lost your job, a good friend might help you out by lending you money. They would know that you would pay it back and that you'd do the same thing if they were in the same situation.*

Explanation: The highlighted words show good examples of developing ideas by adding details and examples.

Here are some useful phrases for giving your opinion.

Giving your opinion

In my view ...

As far as I'm concerned ...

That's a difficult question ...

To be honest, I think ...

Generally speaking, I'd say ...

I'm not sure what I think about that.

I have mixed views on that.

Well, on the whole, I tend to agree that ...

My view is that ...

It seems to me that ...

If you ask me ...



Always give an opinion! It doesn't matter what your opinion is – you are being assessed on your language, not your ideas. The examiner wants to hear how wide your range of language is.

General tips for Speaking

- 1** Spend time before the test speaking and listening or reading in English rather than in your own language so you are 'thinking in English' when you go into the examination room.
- 2** Smile and relax – the more you smile, the more relaxed you will feel. Don't let the fact that the test is recorded make you nervous – try and concentrate on what you are asked about.
- 3** Always speak clearly so that the examiner can hear you.
- 4** It's important not to sound flat, so use stress and intonation to make what you say sound interesting.
- 5** Don't speak too fast because it can be difficult to follow. Don't speak too slowly as you won't have the chance to say very much.
- 6** Use fillers like 'Well', 'So' and 'Let me think' to give yourself time to prepare what you will say without leaving a long pause.
- 7** Don't worry if you make a grammatical mistake – you are being assessed on various things, not just your grammar.
- 8** Try to use a wide range of grammar and vocabulary during the test. The examiner can only award you marks for the language you produce.
- 9** Don't worry if the examiner stops you before you have finished. The test is carefully timed and the timings for each part must be observed by the examiner.

IELTS Speaking test

PART 1

The examiner asks the candidate about him/herself, his/her home, work or studies and other familiar topics.

EXAMPLE

Friends

- How often do you go out with friends? [Why/Why not?]
- Tell me about your best friend at school.
- How friendly are you with your neighbours? [Why/Why not?]
- Which is more important to you, friends or family? [Why?]

PART 2

Describe a writer you would like to meet.

You should say:

who the writer is

what you know about this writer already

what you would like to find out about him/her

and explain why you would like to meet this writer.

You will have to talk about the topic for one to two minutes. You have one minute to think about what you are going to say. You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

PART 3

Discussion topics:

Reading and children

Example questions:

What kinds of book are most popular with children in your country? Why do you think that is?

Why do you think some children do not read books very often?

How do you think children can be encouraged to read more?

Reading for different purposes

Example questions:

Are there any occasions when reading at speed is a useful skill to have?

What are they?

Are there any jobs where people need to read a lot? What are they?

Do you think that reading novels is more interesting than reading factual books?

Why is that?

What to do on the day

Very few people like taking exams, but you can make the day of the exam easier if you make sure you know what to expect and what you will have to do before you go to the IELTS test centre.

Rules and regulations

For any exam you take, there are some rules and regulations about what you **must** do and what you **mustn't** do during the exam. Read through the rules and regulations below and if there is anything you don't understand, ask your teacher or the administrator at the test centre.

You must ...

- provide proof of your identity (passport or National Identity Card) at registration. Contact the test centre to confirm which type of identity document is accepted. Test takers taking the test outside their own country must use a passport.
- inform the test centre of any changes to your identity document before the test date, bring the same identity document on the test day as the one recorded in your application, arrive at the test centre before the scheduled test start time. If you do not do any of the above you will not be allowed to take the test and you will not be eligible for a refund or transfer.
- consent for your identity to be verified both at test registration and on test day.
- switch off your mobile phone, pager and any other electronic devices and put them with your personal belongings outside the test room. (Any candidate who does not switch off their phone/pager, or who keeps one in their possession, will be disqualified.)
- tell the test invigilator immediately if the conditions on the day of the test in any way impede your performance.

You must not ...

- impersonate another person or have another person impersonate you.
- attempt to cheat, copy the work of another candidate or disrupt the test.
- use, or attempt to use, a dictionary, pager, spell-checker, electronic recorder or mobile phone for the duration of the test. Any candidate doing so will be disqualified.
- talk to or disturb other candidates once the examination has started.

- use, or attempt to use, a dictionary.
- reproduce any part of the test in any format/medium. Any candidate doing so will have their test results disqualified and be liable to prosecution.
- remove any materials used during the examination. This includes, but is not limited to, examination papers, Speaking task cards, answer sheets and working paper.

Make sure you attend on time

- Know the date, time and place of your examination and arrive before the scheduled start time.
- If you arrive late for any of the components, report to the supervisor or invigilator. You may not be allowed to take the examination.

Provide what you need

- Leave anything which you do not need, or which is not allowed, outside the examination room.
- You may not lend anything to, or borrow anything from, another candidate during the examination.
- Do not bring valuables as the test centre cannot be responsible for these.

Examination instructions

- Listen to the supervisor and do what you are asked to do.

Advice and assistance during the examination

- If you are not sure about what to do, raise your hand to attract attention. An invigilator will come to help you.
- You must not ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.
- If you do not feel well on the day of the examination or think that your work may be affected for any other reason, tell the supervisor or invigilator.

Leaving the examination room

- You may not leave the examination room without the permission of the supervisor or invigilator.
- You cannot leave your seat until you have been told you can leave.

- When you leave the examination room you must leave behind any paper used for rough work, clearly crossed through, and any other materials provided for the examination.
- Do not make any noise near the examination room.

Results

- Results are issued by test centres, usually 13 days after the paper-based test.
- Results may be delayed or withheld where any of the rules and regulations have been breached.
- In exceptional circumstances, results may be delayed and you may be required to retake one or more modules where the pattern of module results is highly unusual.