

Speaking Notes

You might be nervous about taking your IELTS Speaking test, but with these 10 tips, and plenty of practice, you will be well on your way to building your confidence and getting the IELTS band score you need.

For both IELTS on paper and IELTS on computer, the face-to-face Speaking test is made up of three parts. By understanding what happens in these three parts of the Speaking test, you will be better prepared.

Part 1

In Part 1, you will have a 4 to 5 minute conversation with an IELTS examiner about yourself. Topics might include:

- Work
- Family
- Home life
- Personal interests

Part 2

In Part 2 of the Speaking test, you will be given a card with a topic. You will be given one minute to take notes on the topic and will be given a pencil and paper to prepare your response, you will then speak on the topic for two minutes.

Part 3

In Part 3, you will have a conversation with the IELTS examiner around the topic given in part 2, discussing it in more detail. Part 3 should take approximately 4 to 5 minutes to complete.

Common topics you can practice for the Speaking test include:

- Tourism and travel
- Education
- Transport
- Environment
- Family life
- Sport and recreation
- Crime and punishment
- The internet
- Advertising and retail

IELTS Speaking Tips

A lot of candidates who take **IELTS Speaking test** find this section the hardest one because it involves face-to-face communication. But in fact, IELTS Speaking is the easiest section of IELTS to improve your score. You may think, *“But how? Interviews are so spontaneous! I just won’t have enough time to plan a good answer. Moreover, I’ll be worrying...”*.

It’s true, speaking interviews are spontaneous. But all test-takers are worrying and don’t have much time to plan their answers. And examiners are used to that, so they don’t expect you to speak like an orator. They don’t even expect you to give very logical and structured answers! You’re only tested on your ability to:

- speak fluently and without hesitation,
- use various vocabulary,
- avoid grammar mistakes,
- pronounce words well.

So you can have band 8 and more on IELTS Speaking by practising and learning vocabulary.

But you can also **increase your score by following these simple IELTS Speaking tips and tricks**. Here we’ve gathered **top 10 IELTS Speaking tips** to increase your IELTS Speaking score:

Be fluent and liberated

Speak fluently and spontaneously. You will gain more points. Don't worry too much about using clever vocabulary, it's more important to be fluent. But also don't speak too quick and mind your grammar. You should find a "healthy balance" between speaking too quickly and making long pauses.

Practice answering sample questions

Typically, you will be asked about everyday topics, such as work, studies, sport, family and so on. So you should try answering IELTS Speaking questions before the exam. You will be surprised how simple they are! You just need to learn appropriate vocabulary and understand what answers you will give.

Ask the question again if you need to

Don't be shy if you want to clarify something. You will not lose points for asking the examiner.

Be emotional

Speak with emotions. Nothing separates the experienced speaker from beginners as tone of the speech. Express your feelings like you would do using your native language.

Extend your speech

Try to speak at least more than the examiner. If you are asked a question using one sentence, respond with two or more. And never give short, uncommunicative replies:

Examiner: Do you do any sport?

You: No, I don't like sports... [*Don't stop there!*] I'm not a very active person and I've never liked P.E. in school. But I like playing intellectual games instead. For example, I find chess very interesting.

Be coherent

Use linking words and structures. Words and phrases like *however, nevertheless, all in all, moreover* will enrich your speech.

Give yourself time to think

If you are unsure how to answer the question, you can give yourself a bit more time to think by using this tip. First of all, you can say: "*That's a tricky question...*", "*I've never thought about that before...*" or "*That's an interesting question...*". This way you'll have some extra time to plan your answer.

You can also reformulate the question:

Examiner: What was your favorite book in the childhood?

You: What book did I like as a child? Let me see...

Made a mistake? Don't panic!

If you made a mistake - don't panic! Try to correct yourself as smoothly as possible. And if you can't - just continue speaking, you won't lose many points for a few mistakes.

Make a good first impression

Look good, smell good and feel good. Be confident. Although it may not seem very important, a strong first impression will go a long way.

Don't learn answers by heart

Examiners are able to determine whether you speak freely or you memorized the answer before your interview. Learning full scripts is a bad idea. Instead, it is much better to learn separate words and collocations and adopt them in your speech.

Linking Words for IELTS Speaking

The linking words in IELTS speaking help the examiner follow your ideas when you are talking. Connecting words are part of the marking criteria of Fluency and Coherence, which is 25% of your marks.

However, linking words are used naturally in IELTS speaking. They should NOT be over used. It is not the same as writing where you need to use a range and show flexibility. In speaking, you CAN repeat common linking words. The list below are the most usual linking words and phrases to use in IELTS speaking.

Linking Words for IELTS Speaking

<p style="text-align: center;">Adding more information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And • Also • As well as • another reason is 	<p style="text-align: center;">Time Phrases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now • At the moment • At present • Right now • These days • Nowadays • In the past • Before • Then • At that time • Years ago • When I was younger
<p style="text-align: center;">Causes and Solutions</p> <p>I guess it's because The main reason is It was caused by because I suppose the best way to deal With this problem is I reckon the only answer is to The best way to solve this is</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Expressing ideas</p> <p>I think one important thing is I guess one difference is I suppose the main difference Between X and Y is</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Giving Examples</p> <p>For example For instance Such as Like</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Being Clear</p> <p>use these simple, natural You Expression to explain your Point again more clearly or get Your answer is back on track. What I mean is What I want to say is</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Contrasting and concessions</p> <p>But On the other hand While although or</p>	

Idioms and Phrases

We've helped hundreds of students get a Band 9 in IELTS Speaking, but did they get this score with the help of idioms?

We took hundreds of practice sessions from Band 9 VIP students and analysed them. We identified the most common idioms they used and even found the number of times they used these idioms.

Below is a list of the most commonly used idioms by our Band 9 students. I've also added my own sample answer that includes each of these idioms below. You can read them or watch this video that

includes all the Band 9 sample answers. But, you should not assume that using these idioms will boost your score.

Do Idioms Improve Your IELTS Speaking Score?

Yes and no.

Idioms are a type of 'idiomatic' language. Idiomatic language includes:

- Idioms
- Phrasal Verbs
- Slang
- Colloquialisms

In other words, the type of language you will hear native-English speakers use. But, trying to include as many of these words and phrases in your speaking test answers is not a good strategy. This is because it is not appropriate to use them very often, and IELTS students will often use them incorrectly which will lower your score.

You should only use idioms if it is appropriate to do so, and you are sure you are using them 100% accurately.

In fact, we found that the average number of times our Band 9 students used these was 1.2. Many of them didn't use idioms at all. None of them learned a list of idioms for IELTS speaking.

18 Most Common Idioms for IELTS Speaking

Idiom	Meaning	Origin
To Bite the Bullet	To force yourself to do something unpleasant or difficult, or to be brave in a difficult situation.	Derived historically from the practice of having a patient clench a bullet in their teeth as a way to cope with the pain of a surgical procedure without anesthetic.
A Piece of Cake	If you think something is very easy to do.	Comes from the fact that eating cake is pleasant.
Kill Two Birds With One Stone	To achieve two things by doing a single action.	Believed to have originated from the story of Daedalus and Icarus from Greek Mythology.
Let the Cat Out of the Bag	To disclose a secret, often by mistake.	Cats don't like being in a bag. Once you let them out, it is very difficult to get them back in, just like secrets.
Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Basket	To avoid concentrating all your resources or efforts in one area, as away to minimize risk.	When gathering up your eggs from your chickens, if you put them all in one basket, you might break them.
Once in a Blue Moon	Happens very rarely.	The concept behind the origination of this idiom is the second but rare appearance of the full moon in the same month.

Burn the Midnight Oil	To work late into the night or to work hard on something.	Oil lamps were used to provide light. If you were burning oil at midnight, you were working on something.
Over the moon	Extremely happy	I was over the moon when I cleared my 12th board exam with 95%
Sitting on the fence	Not making a firm decision between different choices	I'm not sure which party he is going to vote for. He's sitting on the fence.
Go the extra mile	Doing much more than is required when doing something.	My mother will always go the extra mile to help people.
Rule of thumb	Principal that is strictly adhered / kept to	As a rule of thumb, I don't work on weekends. I spend the time with my family.
Under the weather	Unwell	She's feeling under the weather today so she won't be going to work.

Band 9 Sample Answers Including Each Idiom

Q: Why did you choose that career?

"I didn't really want to study law, but I was the only one in my family ever to get high grades in their A-levels. So my mother sat me down one day and said it was either medicine or law. So I went to a hospital on work experience and fainted when I saw the sight of blood. I'm too squeamish for medicine, so I decided just to bite the bullet and study law."

Q: Why did you change careers?

"To be honest, compared to practicing law, teaching English is a piece of cake. To give you a concrete example, to qualify as a lawyer takes around six years of study and work experience. To qualify as an English teacher only takes six weeks. The pay obviously isn't as good, but the students, the clients are much nicer and friendlier."

Q: Have you ever given jewelry to someone as a gift?

"Yes, I actually bought my wife a diamond ring last Christmas. So my wife's birthday is in November and Christmas is obviously in December. So I decided to kill two birds with one stone and buy one present for her birthday and Christmas. And she was very happy with that because she got one nice, expensive ring rather than two less expensive gifts."

Q: Have you ever received jewelry as a gift?

"If you count watches as jewelry, then yes. For my last birthday, my 40th birthday, my wife bought me a very special watch that I've been looking at and desiring for many, many years. The funny story about that is that my credit card and my wife's credit card are the same. So whenever my wife bought it, it pinged on my phone and I got an alert from my favorite watch boutique, and it was the exact amount of

money that was for this watch because I had been looking at this watch for ages. So the phone let the cat out of the bag a little bit, but it was still a very nice gift and a nice surprise.

Q: Do you think you will have the same career in the future?

“Probably not, because with the developments in AI recently, I don’t think there are going to be IELTS teachers or even any teachers in the future. I think it would be very foolish for me to put all my eggs in one basket and just hope for the best and hope that IELTS and teaching lasts forever. But honestly, I don’t think it will.”

Q: How often do you go out with friends?

“I used to go out nearly every night, but since I’ve had kids, it’s really once in a blue moon. Most of my friends have either settled down with kids like me, or they have moved away. So it’s quite rare to have an occasion where a group of friends are all together at the same time. Sometimes at Christmas, when a lot of our friends visit Ireland during the Christmas period, or in the summertime when a lot of our friends have time off, I might go out, but it is quite a rare occasion these days.”

Q: Do you think you changed as you got older?

“Yes, I used to burn the candle at both ends. I had a very much work hard, play hard attitude because I was a lawyer. Lawyers are expected to work 80 to 100 hours a week. But we would often go out to bars and restaurants after work to blow off steam and to destress, which isn’t really sustainable. Now, I do still burn the midnight oil. I work very, very hard on my career, but you’re more likely to find me tucked up in bed by 9 PM than to be out partying.”

Q: Do you own or rent your home?

“We actually rent our home. We could afford to buy a home, but we really value our independence and freedom. If you own a home, you’re kinda stuck in that location because it can take a very long time to sell that home. But if you rent, you can move anywhere at the drop of a hat.”

Q: What do you dislike about your job?

“The thing I dislike most about my job is dealing with people who only focus on the negative, especially when they are given negative feedback. That could be students, that could be employees, but people who make mistakes and don’t learn from them. So for example, I give a lot of feedback on student essays, and some students see mistakes and they’re like, great, now I know what my mistakes are and I can improve. Other students will just cry about it for days and they’ll cry about it for weeks. They’re like, I’m going to fail. It’s like, there’s no point crying over spilt milk. You made the mistake, now learn from it.”

Q: How often do you buy new clothes?

“Very rarely actually, because I’m a firm believer in you can’t judge a book by its cover. And we should judge people not on what clothes they wear and their appearance, but by their character and the things that come out of their mouths. My wife firmly disagrees with this because she says someone who gets millions of views on YouTube shouldn’t be wearing the same shirt every day. So she does encourage me to go and buy new clothes, but I do it begrudgingly.”

Q: What type of jewelry do you like best?

“I prefer to buy luxury watches than jewelry. I’m not sure if you could count a luxury watch as jewelry, but the thing about jewelry is like diamond rings, necklaces, and things like that. Often as soon as you buy them, as soon as you walk out of the jewelers, they lose value. Whereas many of the watches that I’ve purchased have actually gone up in value. I don’t want to count my chickens, but if I were to sell these watches, I probably would make a lot more money on them than I paid for them. So that’s why I prefer luxury timepieces over simple jewelry.”

Q: Who does the cooking in your home?

“My wife does the vast majority of the cooking, not because she’s necessarily a better cook. But the thing I love about my wife is in whatever she does, she goes the extra mile. So if I was cooking steak, I would just cook the steak and eat it with a little bit of bread. But my wife will have three different sauces, and balsamic vinegar, and two different olive oils, and four different types of potato. She really does go the extra mile when it comes to cooking in our house.”

Q: Do you like your neighborhood?

“As you can tell from looking at me, no, I don’t have a very healthy diet. I do try, I normally get up in the morning and have a healthy breakfast and a healthy lunch, but it’s so easy just to throw in the towel when you get home after a hard day’s work, and your wife has a beautiful meal prepared, there’s a bottle of wine on the table, and your kid’s half-eaten chocolate is lying all around the kitchen. So I do quite well most of the day and then fail in the evenings.”

Q: Do you have a healthy diet?

“As you can tell from looking at me, no, I don’t have a very healthy diet. I do try, I normally get up in the morning and have a healthy breakfast and a healthy lunch, but it’s so easy just to throw in the towel when you get home after a hard day’s work, and your wife has a beautiful meal prepared, there’s a bottle of wine on the table, and your kid’s half-eaten chocolate is lying all around the kitchen. So I do quite well most of the day and then fail in the evenings.”

Q: Will you change careers in the future?

“It’s not something I really like to think about because, in the back of my mind, I know IELTS teachers and all educators are doomed because AI is going to replace them. Why would a student hire a human

that is not as good as a machine that can do it at half the price or a fraction of the price and do it much more effectively? We'll cross that bridge when we come to it, but I don't think it's that far away. But in the meantime, I'm just going to enjoy teaching for as long as I can."

Q: Is there anything you don't like about social media?

"The thing I hate about social media is the fact that these companies have so much power to change their systems and change their algorithms, but they decide not to for money. So to give you an example from my work and my job, to become a famous IELTS YouTuber is actually quite easy. All you have to do is come up with some clickbait titles like 'hacks' and 'tricks' and 'predictions' and things like that and put a pretty girl on the thumbnail. But that doesn't mean that the person making that video knows anything about IELTS, it just means that they know how to trick the algorithm. You know, I understand Rome wasn't built in a day, and that it takes time to fix platforms and change algorithms. But these are sometimes trillion-dollar companies. If they wanted to get these people off their platform, they could. But they decide not to because popular is more important than educating the public properly."

Q: Are you okay with someone randomly taking your photo?

"No, I actually hate it and it makes me feel very uncomfortable. I'm from Ireland and in Ireland, it is quite rare for someone to take your photo. And if they want to take your photo, it is rude to just take it without asking you. So it's customary just to say, "Do you mind if I take a photo?" And if somebody says yes, you can take it. But if they say no, you should definitely not take it. My wife, who is from Vietnam, in Vietnam, they have a very, very different culture. They are taking photos all of the time, and they will think nothing of this taking a photo of you. And if I get angry with someone for taking a photo, they'll think that I'm the problem and I'm being rude. So when in Rome."

IELTS Writing Task 1 Band Descriptors

Scoring criteria for Academic and General Training tests

A script must fully fit the positive features of the descriptor at a particular level. **Bolded text** indicates negative features that will limit a rating.

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Band Score	Task Achievement	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
9	All the requirements of the task are fully and appropriately satisfied. There may be extremely rare lapses in content.	The message can be followed effortlessly. Cohesion is used in such a way that it very rarely attracts attention. Any lapses in coherence or cohesion are minimal. Paragraphing is skilfully managed.	Full flexibility and precise use are evident within the scope of the task. A wide range of vocabulary is used accurately and appropriately with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features. Minor errors in spelling and word formation are extremely rare and have minimal impact on communication.	A wide range of structures within the scope of the task is used with full flexibility and control. Punctuation and grammar are used appropriately throughout. Minor errors are extremely rare and have minimal impact on communication.
8	The response covers all the requirements of the task appropriately, relevantly and sufficiently. (Academic) Key features are skilfully selected, and clearly presented, highlighted and illustrated. (General Training) All bullet points are clearly presented, and appropriately illustrated or extended. There may be occasional omissions or lapses in content.	The message can be followed with ease. Information and ideas are logically sequenced, and cohesion is well managed. Occasional lapses in coherence or cohesion may occur. Paragraphing is used sufficiently and appropriately.	A wide resource is fluently and flexibly used to convey precise meanings within the scope of the task. There is skilful use of uncommon and/or idiomatic items when appropriate, despite occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation. Occasional errors in spelling and/or word formation may occur, but have minimal impact on communication.	A wide range of structures within the scope of the task is flexibly and accurately used. The majority of sentences are error-free, and punctuation is well managed. Occasional, non-systematic errors and inaccuracies occur, but have minimal impact on communication.
7	The response covers the requirements of the task. The content is relevant and accurate – there may be a few omissions or lapses. The format is appropriate. (Academic) Key features which are selected are covered and clearly highlighted but could be more fully or more appropriately illustrated or extended. (Academic) It presents a clear overview, the data are appropriately categorised, and main trends or differences are identified. (General Training) All bullet points are covered and clearly highlighted but could be more fully or more appropriately illustrated or extended. It presents a clear purpose. The tone is consistent and appropriate to the task. Any lapses are minimal.	Information and ideas are logically organised and there is a clear progression throughout the response. A few lapses may occur. A range of cohesive devices including reference and substitution is used flexibly but with some inaccuracies or some over/under use.	The resource is sufficient to allow some flexibility and precision. There is some ability to use less common and/or idiomatic items. An awareness of style and collocation is evident, though inaccuracies occur. There are only a few errors in spelling and/or word formation, and they do not detract from overall clarity.	A variety of complex structures is used with some flexibility and accuracy. Grammar and punctuation are generally well controlled, and error-free sentences are frequent. A few errors in grammar may persist, but these do not impede communication.

IELTS Writing Task 2 Band Descriptors

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A script must fully fit the positive features of the descriptor at a particular level. **Bolded text** indicates negative features that will limit a rating.

Band Score	Task Response	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
9	<p>The prompt is appropriately addressed and explored in depth.</p> <p>A clear and fully developed position is presented which directly answers the question/s.</p> <p>Ideas are relevant, fully extended and well supported.</p> <p>Any lapses in content or support are extremely rare.</p>	<p>The message can be followed effortlessly.</p> <p>Cohesion is used in such a way that it very rarely attracts attention.</p> <p>Any lapses in coherence or cohesion are minimal.</p> <p>Paragraphing is skilfully managed.</p>	<p>Full flexibility and precise use are widely evident.</p> <p>A wide range of vocabulary is used accurately and appropriately with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features.</p> <p>Minor errors in spelling and word formation are extremely rare and have minimal impact on communication.</p>	<p>A wide range of structures is used with full flexibility and control.</p> <p>Punctuation and grammar are used appropriately throughout.</p> <p>Minor errors are extremely rare and have minimal impact on communication.</p>
8	<p>The prompt is appropriately and sufficiently addressed.</p> <p>A clear and well-developed position is presented in response to the question/s.</p> <p>Ideas are relevant, well extended and supported.</p> <p>There may be occasional omissions or lapses in content.</p>	<p>The message can be followed with ease.</p> <p>Information and ideas are logically sequenced, and cohesion is well managed.</p> <p>Occasional lapses in coherence and cohesion may occur.</p> <p>Paragraphing is used sufficiently and appropriately.</p>	<p>A wide resource is fluently and flexibly used to convey precise meanings.</p> <p>There is skilful use of uncommon and/or idiomatic items when appropriate, despite occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation.</p> <p>Occasional errors in spelling and/or word formation may occur, but have minimal impact on communication.</p>	<p>A wide range of structures is flexibly and accurately used.</p> <p>The majority of sentences are error-free, and punctuation is well managed.</p> <p>Occasional, non-systematic errors and inappropriacies occur, but have minimal impact on communication.</p>
7	<p>The main parts of the prompt are appropriately addressed.</p> <p>A clear and developed position is presented.</p> <p>Main ideas are extended and supported but there may be a tendency to over-generalise or there may be a lack of focus and precision in supporting ideas/material.</p>	<p>Information and ideas are logically organised, and there is a clear progression throughout the response. (A few lapses may occur, but these are minor.)</p> <p>A range of cohesive devices including reference and substitution is used flexibly but with some inaccuracies or some over/under use.</p> <p>Paragraphing is generally used effectively to support overall coherence, and the sequencing of ideas within a paragraph is generally logical.</p>	<p>The resource is sufficient to allow some flexibility and precision.</p> <p>There is some ability to use less common and/or idiomatic items.</p> <p>An awareness of style and collocation is evident, though inappropriacies occur.</p> <p>There are only a few errors in spelling and/or word formation and they do not detract from overall clarity.</p>	<p>A variety of complex structures is used with some flexibility and accuracy.</p> <p>Grammar and punctuation are generally well controlled, and error-free sentences are frequent.</p> <p>A few errors in grammar may persist, but these do not impede communication.</p>

IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors

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Band Score	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<p>Fluent with only very occasional repetition or self-correction.</p> <p>Any hesitation that occurs is used only to prepare the content of the next utterance and not to find words or grammar.</p> <p>Speech is situationally appropriate and cohesive features are fully acceptable.</p> <p>Topic development is fully coherent and appropriately extended.</p>	<p>Total flexibility and precise use in all contexts.</p> <p>Sustained use of accurate and idiomatic language.</p>	<p>Structures are precise and accurate at all times, apart from 'mistakes' characteristic of native speaker speech.</p>	<p>Uses a full range of phonological features to convey precise and/or subtle meaning.</p> <p>Flexible use of features of connected speech is sustained throughout.</p> <p>Can be effortlessly understood throughout.</p> <p>Accent has no effect on intelligibility.</p>
8	<p>Fluent with only very occasional repetition or self-correction.</p> <p>Hesitation may occasionally be used to find words or grammar, but most will be content related.</p> <p>Topic development is coherent, appropriate and relevant.</p>	<p>Wide resource, readily and flexibly used to discuss all topics and convey precise meaning.</p> <p>Skilful use of less common and idiomatic items despite occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation.</p> <p>Effective use of paraphrase as required.</p>	<p>Wide range of structures, flexibly used.</p> <p>The majority of sentences are error free.</p> <p>Occasional inappropriacies and non-systematic errors occur. A few basic errors may persist.</p>	<p>Uses a wide range of phonological features to convey precise and/or subtle meaning.</p> <p>Can sustain appropriate rhythm. Flexible use of stress and intonation across long utterances, despite occasional lapses.</p> <p>Can be easily understood throughout.</p> <p>Accent has minimal effect on intelligibility.</p>
7	<p>Able to keep going and readily produce long turns without noticeable effort.</p> <p>Some hesitation, repetition and/or self-correction may occur, often mid-sentence and indicate problems with accessing appropriate language. However, these will not affect coherence.</p> <p>Flexible use of spoken discourse markers, connectives and cohesive features.</p>	<p>Resource flexibly used to discuss a variety of topics.</p> <p>Some ability to use less common and idiomatic items and an awareness of style and collocation is evident though inappropriacies occur.</p> <p>Effective use of paraphrase as required.</p>	<p>A range of structures flexibly used. Error-free sentences are frequent.</p> <p>Both simple and complex sentences are used effectively despite some errors. A few basic errors persist.</p>	<p>Displays all the positive features of band 6, and some, but not all, of the positive features of band 8.</p>