

Live Lesson Notes

Studying

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What you will learn in this worksheet:

Useful links
Useful vocabulary
Listening task
Discussion about study techniques
Idioms to talk about studying

@Topic_based_vocabulary

IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: Studying

Talking about your studies is such an important topic in IELTS. Not only in the introduction where they ask “Do you work or are you a student?”, but also for other closely related topics such as:

- Your school
- A teacher you know
- Skills you have learned
- Concentration
- Education
- A hobby

Here are some useful phrases to talk about your studies in IELTS Speaking

I'm a student **at** university
I'm a student at **the** university of London

To talk about your studies you can use either present simple or present continuous

I study French
I am studying French

In addition, you can use the present perfect continuous to say how long you have studied.

I've been studying for 2 months

*Notice we use **FOR** to describe **a period of time***

I've been studying since July

*Notice we use **SINCE** to describe **a point in time***

Finally, you can develop your answer a little by adding which year you are in.

I'm in my first / second / final year

Next, we can talk about whether you like your studies and your ability. You should develop your answer a little and say why you like it (or not)

I like it
because I think
it's going to be really useful
for my future career

I don't like it too much
mainly because the teacher we have
is a bit boring
he doesn't engage us at all

I am good **at** French

I'm not bad **at** French

I am bad **at** Italian

IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: Commonly Confused Words

Moving on, here are three words that are commonly confused when talking about studying at school:

- To memorise
- To remember
- To remind

To **memorise** = to learn by heart

I am good **at** memorising names
I have a good memory **for** names

To **remember** = to recall

I must remember to call my sister later
I can't remember your name

To **remind** (v.) someone to do something = to **tell** someone not to forget something
A reminder (n.)

I need to remind you to pick me up at 4pm tomorrow.
I always have to remind my students to hand in their homework on time

These are not the only group of words that are often confused. Here is another set of words, that commonly get misused.

To **take / sit** an exam - students take (=do) exams

To **pass** an exam = to do well in an exam (=not **fail**)

To **give** an exam = a *teacher* gives an exam to the students

For example,

I **took** my IELTS exam yesterday

I **passed** my IELTS exam 2 weeks ago, I am so happy!

Finally, a nice word to use to talk about studying is

To **cram for** an exam = *to study hard in a short space of time*

At school I used **to cram** for most of my exams. I was always studying **at the last minute**

IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are extremely common in spoken English, and they can help show off your knowledge and use of vocabulary in the IELTS Speaking test.

Phrasal verbs are verbs that are followed by a preposition or an adverb.

For example;

To get up

I **get up** at 7am in the morning

Many phrasal verbs can be idiomatic, so they have a different meaning than the individual words.

For example;

To **look up** = to look to the sky

But it can be idiomatic, meaning 'trying to find a word in a dictionary'.

I **looked up** a new word in the dictionary

Find out more about **phrasal verbs** here
<https://www.phrasalverbdemon.com/>

Here are some less common phrasal verbs you can use to talk about studying.

To **buckle down** = to do a task with determination

I've been procrastinating (=be lazy), but now it's time for me to buckle down and start studying seriously

I need to buckle down for IELTS

To **pick up** something new = *to learn informally*

Where did you learn to cook so well?

I picked it up by watching Youtube videos

To **brush up on** = *to improve an existing knowledge or skill*

I haven't spoken French for years

I really need

to brush up on it

I need to

brush up on

my Italian

To **pore over** = To study (books, documents) with a lot of attention

I have been poring over my French course book lately

I have been poring over these reports for my boss

IELTS Listening Task: Schools and Study

Guess whether these are true or false:

1. Keith loved sitting quietly at his desk in school
2. He found it tricky to learn things by heart
3. He preferred biology to foreign languages
4. He would burn the midnight oil, cramming before most exams
5. He passed all exams with flying colours

(Read and check your guesses at the bottom of this file)

IELTS Speaking Discussion: Study techniques

Here are three study techniques you may want to research and learn more about. These are backed by research and ones that I also personally use.

Mind mapping

<https://www.mindmapping.com/>

Spaced practice

<https://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2016/7/21-1>

Cornell technique

<https://thinkinsights.net/consulting/cornell-method-great-notes/>

You can also find out about more proven ways to study via these two links:

<https://www.thebestcolleges.org/17-scientificallly-proven-ways-to-study-better-this-year/>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/5-research-backed-studying-techniques>

IELTS Speaking Idioms about Studying

Run-of-the-mill (adj.) = ordinary, normal

I was a run-of-the-mill student = a normal, average student.

To **burn the midnight oil** = *stay up late at night to study*

I used to burn the midnight oil the night before an important exam at university.

To **pass with flying colours** = to pass with a very good score / mark / grade

I did so well in my driving test, I passed with flying colours!

To **be a breeze** = *to be easy*

My biology exam was a breeze, I knew all the answers.

To **be a walk in the park** = *to be easy*

My IELTS test was not a walk in the park.

To **scrape a pass** = *to only just pass (almost fail, but actually pass)*

The pass mark was 70%, I got 71%, I just managed to scraped a pass.

To **go blank** = *when you can't think of anything to say*

In the middle of my interview, I went blank. What a disaster!

To **rack your brains** = *to try and think of something*

I don't know what to put in my presentation tomorrow, I am racking my brains, but can't come up with any ideas.

Let me tell you about my studies at school

I was bit of a **slow learner** at school, to be honest. Maybe I just wasn't very **academically inclined**, I preferred moving around and doing things. Sitting in at a desk for 8 hours a day **wasn't my cup of tea**.

I also found it hard to memorise dates, figures and names. The teacher never gave us any good **learning strategies**. They would just say, here is your list of 20 facts, now go and **learn them by heart**.

However, my **academic performance** improved, the older I got. When I **turned 11**, I went to a grammar school, that's a school that is partly subsidised by the government and **takes in** students based on their ability.

I was **especially good at** the **arts** but weaker at **sciences**. The language teacher forbade us from speaking English in the French class. It was so much fun. Like being a spy, talking in code!

Whenever I **sat an exam**, I did pretty well. I **didn't use to cram** too much, I just **prepared well in advance**. Some students spent hours **poring over their books** the night before an exam. I never understood that. What was the point? What a terrible way to spend the evening before an exam.

Overall, my results were **solid**, but I never really **passed my exams with flying colours** (=to pass with a very good score). That said, I did well enough and got into university. I was **thrilled to bits**. And that is where my education really **took off!** (=to get better)

ANSWERS TO LISTENING TASK:

1. Keith loved sitting quietly at his desk in school **F**
2. He found it tricky to learn things by heart **T**
3. He preferred biology to foreign languages **F**
4. He would burn the midnight oil, cramming before most exams **F**
5. He passed all exams with flying colours **F**