

# Simon's

# Advice on

# Speaking Part 1



# From Simon Corcoran:

## About IELTS-Simon (website)



My name is Simon Corcoran. I'm an ex-IELTS examiner and I now run IELTS exam preparation courses in Manchester, UK (I'm a native speaker of English).

The aim of this website is to provide good advice about the IELTS exam, and also to help you improve your English language skills.

### Some advice about how to use [ielts-simon.com](http://ielts-simon.com):

1. You can begin anywhere; there is no special lesson order.
2. I write a short lesson every day because I believe that daily practice is important.
3. Please use "comments" to communicate with me and with other students.

### Every day I'll add another lesson:

- Monday: IELTS Reading (Academic)
- Tuesday: IELTS Listening
- Wednesday: IELTS Writing Task 2 (Academic)
- Thursday: IELTS Writing Task 1 (Academic)
- Friday: IELTS Speaking
- Saturday: Grammar / Advice
- Sunday: Grammar / Advice

Good luck with your studies. I hope this website helps!

Simon

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# Posts in 2010

Friday, October 22, 2010

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: a good example

Remember, Part 1 is supposed to be easy. You should give short, simple answers. I think the student in the video does this well: she speaks clearly, answers the questions directly, and doesn't hesitate before answering. Her answers sound natural and she makes almost no mistakes.

Here are the first 4 questions and answers:

### ***Do you work or are you a student?***

I work and I'm studying English as well.

### ***And what's your job?***

I work in hairdressing and I do manicure, I do nails. I work part-time.

### ***How long have you done this job?***

I've been doing this job for almost one year.

### ***Do you like it?***

Actually, I don't like it very much. The part that I like is that I can communicate with people.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#)

# Posts in 2011

Friday, April 08, 2011

## IELTS Speaking: work or study

These are common questions at the start of the speaking test:

1. Do you work or are you a student?
2. Do you like your job / course? Why / why not?

Example answers:

1. Before I came to England I was working as an accountant, but at the moment I'm studying English because I hope to do a Master's here.
2. Yes, I really like my job because it's interesting and I work with a great team of people. **OR:** Yes, I enjoy studying English, but my real aim is to do a Master's and then find a job in an international company.

### **Note:**

Don't ask the examiner: "Do you mean in my country or here in England?" - it doesn't matter. Don't worry if you have a job and study at the same time - you can mention both.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(30\)](#)

Friday, May 13, 2011

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'neighbours' topic**

I've recently bought Cambridge IELTS book 8. Below are some questions and example answers from the first speaking test in the book. Remember that part 1 is supposed to be easy, so you should give short, direct answers.

### ***1. How well do you know your next-door neighbours?***

I know my neighbours quite well. They're really nice people, and I always stop to talk whenever I see them. I think it's important to get on well with the people who live next door.

### ***2. How often do you see them?***

I see my neighbours at least a few times a week. We usually see each other when we're leaving for work in the morning or coming home in the evening.

### ***3. What problems do people sometimes have with their neighbours?***

I think the most common problem is probably noise. It's difficult to live next to people who have a dog that barks at night, or who play loud music or have too many parties.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

Friday, June 17, 2011

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'numbers' topic**

One of my students had these questions in her exam last week. I've put an example answer below each one.

### ***1) Do you have a favourite number or a number that is special to you?***

Yes, my favourite number is... because it's the day I was born on, and it's my lucky number.

### ***2) Do any numbers have special importance in your country?***

Yes, certain ages are special. For example, your 18th birthday is important because it's when you are considered to become an adult.

### ***3) Are you good at remembering numbers? Why / why not?***

No, I'm not very good at remembering numbers. I don't think it's necessary to learn them by heart; I just save them on my phone.

### ***4) What numbers do people often have to memorise?***

The most important number to remember on a daily basis is the pin number for your bank card. Without this you can't pay for anything or get cash out.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

Friday, September 16, 2011

## **IELTS Speaking: pronunciation**

In the IELTS speaking test, 25% of your score is for pronunciation. Many students confuse 'pronunciation' with 'accent'. These are **not** the same thing!

Nobody expects you to speak with a perfect British English accent. In fact, the examiner will not judge your accent at all.

Your pronunciation score is based on these things:

- clarity (speaking clearly)
- speed (not too fast, not too slow)
- [word stress](#)
- [sentence stress](#)
- intonation (the rise and fall of your voice)

It's not easy to improve these things quickly or through deliberate practice. Good pronunciation is usually the result of lots of listening and copying. My tip is: stop worrying about your accent, and focus on speaking clearly.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: travel habits**

Remember that Part 1 questions are supposed to be easy. Just give a simple answer and a reason.

### ***1. What form of transport do you prefer to use? Why?***

I prefer to travel by car because it means that I have my own space. Also, the buses and trains in my city are usually overcrowded; my car is much more comfortable.

### ***2. How much time do you spend travelling on a normal day?***

I probably spend about an hour and a half travelling to and from work. I travel during the rush hours, so there is quite a lot of traffic.

### ***3. What do you do while you are travelling?***

I usually listen to the radio or a CD. In the morning I like to listen to the news to find out what is happening in the world.

### ***4. Do you ever have problems with transport?***

Yes, as I said, I get stuck in traffic on my way to and from work. I used to get annoyed by traffic jams, but now I'm used to them.

### **A few important points:**

- In the answer to question 4, can you see the difference between "I used to" and "I'm used to"?
- Notice the good vocabulary: 'have my own space', 'overcrowded', 'to and from work', 'rush hour', 'find out what is happening in the world', 'get stuck in traffic'.

- If the examiner asks a question that you have already answered, just say "as I said" and repeat your answer.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, October 14, 2011

## **IELTS Speaking: advice about grammar and vocabulary**

It's difficult to think about grammar when you're trying to speak. I think it's much easier to improve your vocabulary score than your grammar score.

### **Remember:**

- Grammar is only 25% of your speaking score.
- If you are thinking too much about grammar, you will lose fluency.
- If you try to use memorised grammatical structures, your speech will not sound 'natural'.
- You will not avoid small grammar mistakes unless you have lived in an English speaking country for many years.

I've taught many students who have achieved a score of 7 or higher, and they all made small grammar mistakes. They got their high scores because we focused on *vocabulary*, *ideas*, *opinions* and *fluency*.

Have a look through my speaking lessons, and you'll notice that the focus is usually on vocabulary.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#)

Friday, October 21, 2011

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: laughing**

The following questions are taken from Cambridge IELTS 7, page 55. The aim in part 1 is to give *short, simple* answers. Don't worry about using 'difficult' grammar.

### ***1. What kinds of thing make you laugh?***

I laugh most when I'm with friends talking about funny things that have happened to us. I also like watching comedians and comedy films.

### ***2. Do you like making other people laugh?***

Yes, it's a nice feeling when you can make someone laugh because you can see that you've made them happy. It's great to share a funny moment with someone.

### ***3. Do you think it's important for people to laugh?***

Yes, of course. It's important to see the funny side of things; humour helps us not to take life too seriously. I think that laughter is good for our health.

### ***4. Is laughing the same as feeling happy?***

It's not exactly the same because you can be happy without laughing, and sometimes we laugh when something bad has happened; a sense of humour can help us to cope with difficult situations.

## Posts in 2012

Friday, January 20, 2012

### **IELTS Speaking: linking phrases don't impress**

A student asked me a really useful (and common) question the other day.

#### ***Student's question:***

I've gone through your speaking answers, and I rarely found linking phrases like "*I suppose I should begin by highlighting the fact that...*" or "*the point I'd like to begin with is that...*". Don't you think such phrases are the sign of a high score?

#### ***Here's my answer:***

Good question. No, I don't use those phrases because examiners are not impressed by them. Even a beginner can learn linking phrases, and if it were that easy, everyone would get band 9. The sign of a high score is 'real content' ([topic-specific vocabulary](#)), not memorised phrases.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#)

Friday, February 03, 2012

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: emails and handwriting**

#### ***At work or in your studies, do you often write things?***

Yes, I write a lot of emails as part of my job. I work for a company that has offices in several countries, so we use email to communicate.

#### ***How often do you send e-mails?***

I probably write between 5 and 10 work emails every day, and I send emails to friends or family a few times a week.

#### ***Do you prefer to write by hand or on a computer?***

It depends what I'm doing. I prefer the computer for most things because it's faster and you can save or copy things, but I still like making notes or writing ideas down by hand.

#### ***Do you think computers might one day replace handwriting?***

No, I think we will always write by hand as well. I think it's an important skill, and schools will continue to teach children to write by hand before they learn to type.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(32\)](#)

Friday, March 09, 2012



## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: short, simple answers**

The first part of the IELTS Speaking Test lasts around 4 to 5 minutes. The examiner asks about 10 questions related to you, your daily life and your interests. Common topics are hobbies, family, friends, food, music etc.

Part 1 questions are supposed to be easy, and the examiner must get through all of the questions in 5 minutes or less. That's only about 30 seconds per question. If you try to give long answers, the examiner will interrupt you. My advice is to keep Part 1 answers very simple:

**Do you prefer home-cooked food or food from restaurants?**

**I prefer home-cooked food because I think it's healthier and you know exactly what you're eating. I also enjoy cooking for family and friends.**

You don't need to say any more than this. Just answer the question with a full sentence, give a reason, and maybe add one extra piece of information. Then stop speaking. *Stop with confidence and look at the examiner, ready for the next question.*

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Friday, May 11, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'accommodation' topic**

Here are some questions that I found on the official IELTS website, [ielts.org](http://ielts.org). The answers below are my examples. Remember to keep your part 1 answers short and simple. You don't need to show off in part 1.

**1. Tell me about the kind of accommodation you live in.**

I live in a house that has a living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, a bathroom and a small garden. It's not a very big house, but it's just right for me.

**2. How long have you lived there?**

I've lived there for about five years. It's the first house that I've owned; before that I was renting an apartment.

**3. What do you like about living there?**

I like living there because I think the house reflects my personality: I decorated it myself, I chose all the furniture, and everything is where I want it to be.

**4. What sort of accommodation would you most like to live in?**

If I could, I'd buy a bigger house near a beach or in the mountains, preferably somewhere with a warm climate.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Friday, June 08, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking Advice: record, transcribe, analyse**

Here are some steps that you could follow when practising for the speaking test:

1. Choose a real speaking test from one of the Cambridge books.
2. Record yourself answering one or all of the parts of the test.
3. Listen to the recording and transcribe it (write down everything you said).
4. Analyse the transcript. How could your answers be improved?
5. Take some time to prepare better answers for the same questions.
6. Try the same questions again! Record yourself, transcribe and analyse.
7. Repeat the process a few times until you are happy.

Imagine if you did this kind of hard work every day for a month. I'm sure you'd be more confident and better prepared than you are now.

Friday, June 22, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'work' topic**

Here are some example questions with short, direct answers. Remember that part 1 is like a warm-up; you are not expected to give long, complex answers for this part.

### ***1. Do you work or are you a student?***

I'm a qualified doctor, but at the moment I'm studying English so that I can work in this country.

### ***2. Do you enjoy your job?***

Yes, I really enjoy my job. Ever since I was a child I have always wanted to be a doctor; I've always wanted to be able to help people.

### ***3. What's the best thing about your job?***

The best thing about my job is that I can make a difference in people's lives. It's a great feeling to see someone recover after an illness because my colleagues and I were able to help.

### ***4. Do you prefer working alone or with others? Why?***

In a hospital you have to work as part of a team. I've got used to working with others, and I think you can achieve a lot more as a team than you would alone.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

Since I will be watching the Euro 2012 football matches this weekend, let me attempt to answer these Part1 questions (just for fun, of course):

1) I'm a professional football (or "soccer") player in one of the local teams in my country, but now I'm studying English full-time with the hope of playing for the Manchester United one day.

2) Yes, I definitely enjoy my career. I've been playing football since very little and it has basically become like a passion in my life.

3) I think the best and most satisfying thing is to score for my team. It is very difficult and challenging to score even 1 goal in a match, so being able to make goals can really give me a huge sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

4) As a professional footballer, I have no choice but to be part of a team. But still, I really enjoy teamwork because I believe this is the only way for us to win not only matches but also championships!

PS: Good luck to England on Sunday!!!!

Posted by: Martin | [Saturday, June 23, 2012 at 00:12](#)

Friday, August 24, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking: how to feel more confident**

Here are some tips to help you feel more confident when you go for your IELTS speaking test:

- Be prepared: you should know exactly what to expect in the 3 parts of the speaking test, and you should have read the suggestions on this website about how to answer.
- Lots of practice: a student who has practised answering all of the questions in all eight Cambridge books, as well as the questions on this site, will feel much more confident than a student who hasn't.
- Write it down: when studying at home, you have time to prepare 'perfect' answers to practice questions; write your answers down, and ask someone to help you check and improve them.
- Speak aloud: start by reading the answers you wrote down (like an actor uses a script), then gradually stop using the script.
- Record yourself: this allows you to analyse the quality of your answers, as well as your pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.
- Focus on ideas: it's difficult to think about grammar when you are speaking, so I advise students to stop worrying about grammatical structures, and focus on expressing good ideas (which means good vocabulary).

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, October 05, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: negative answers**

How do you answer questions about a topic that you are not interested in? For example, many people have no interest in dancing, so what should they say?

My advice: just tell the truth. It's fine to say you don't like something. Read my examples below:

### ***1. Do you like dancing?***

No, I don't like dancing. I'm not a big music fan, and dancing just makes me feel uncomfortable and self-conscious.

### ***2. Has anyone ever taught you to dance?***

No, I've never been interested in learning to dance, so I've never taken any lessons or asked anyone to show me how to do it.

### ***3. Do you think that traditional dancing will be popular in the future?***

I'm afraid I have no idea because I don't follow what's happening in the dancing world! I suppose it will always be popular with some people.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#)

Hi All,

Here are my negative (and true!) answers for today:

- 1) Definitely not. In fact, I hate dancing! I don't like moving my body and it just makes me feel very uncomfortable and embarrassed!
- 2) Yes. Thanks to one of my friends, I had the chance to take 1 free tango lesson. I thought I was going to start liking to dance, but it turned out to be just the opposite!
- 3) No, I really don't think so. Looking at the younger generation nowadays and how uninterested they are in traditional culture, I would say that traditional dancing will eventually disappear.

Cheers,  
Martin

Posted by: Martin | [Friday, October 05, 2012 at 17:37](#)

Friday, November 30, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'communication' topic**

Here are some more examples for IELTS speaking part 1. Remember to give short, easy, direct answers.

### ***1. How do you usually keep in touch with members of your family?***

I mostly keep in touch with my family by phone, and I've started using the Internet to make video calls. I also try to visit members of my family in person as often as I can.

### ***2. Do you prefer to speak to people by phone or by writing emails?***

It depends on the situation. I use email and text messages to communicate with friends, but my parents prefer it if I phone them.

### ***3. Do you ever write letters by hand? (Why / Why not?)***

No, I don't write letters by hand because it's so much easier to send an email that will arrive immediately.

### ***4. Is there anything you dislike about mobile phones?***

Well, I don't like listening to other people's conversations in public places, and I don't like it when someone's phone rings in the cinema or during a lesson.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

Dear All,

Here are my answers for today's questions. I'm giving 2 possible answers for each question, hoping that students can have more ideas on what to say!

Have a great weekend~  
Martin

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1-a) Since I live with my whole family, we see and talk to each other face to face practically every day. But if I'm away from home, I would use e-mail or Skype to stay in touch with them.

1-b) I actually stay in touch with my family by e-mail or phone. If it's an important or urgent issue, I would just call them, but if it is just to say HI, a quick e-mail will do.

2-a) It really depends on the situation. If I want to file a complaint or address an issue in a formal way, I'd rather use e-mail so that I can have a record of what I've said; but if it is to simply make an inquiry on a product or service, a quick phone call will do.

2-b) I prefer writing e-mails when communicating with people. I think e-mails give the recipients more time to think before replying and we all can keep a record if it is an important issue.

3-a) No, in fact, I haven't hand written a letter for years! I think most people nowadays prefer to type e-mails because it is much faster and convenient.

3-b) Yes, believe it or not, I still enjoy writing letters or postcards by hand. Although it takes more time, I think handwritten messages are much more meaningful than e-mails.

4-a) Well, according to research, the excessive use of cell phones could pose a health hazard, so that's something that I'm not very comfortable with.

4-b) To be honest, I think cell phones or smartphones are great communicating devices and I really don't see anything I dislike about them.

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Posted by: Martin | [Friday, November 30, 2012 at 20:53](#)

Friday, December 21, 2012

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: clothes**

### ***1. Are clothes and clothing fashions important to you? (Why/Why not?)***

No, clothes and fashions are not really important to me. I tend to wear clothes that are comfortable and practical rather than fashionable.

### ***2. What different clothes do you wear for different situations?***

Well, I have to dress quite formally for work, so I wear a shirt and trousers. At home I prefer to wear jeans and a T-shirt, and on special occasions I might wear a suit.

### ***3. Do you wear different styles of clothes now compared to 10 years ago?***

No, not really, because I don't follow fashion. I think I have dressed in a similar way for the last 10 years.

### ***4. Do you think the clothes we wear say something about who we are?***

Yes, they probably do. Some people are really careful about what they wear because they want to be seen as stylish. Other people wear clothes that show wealth or status, such as clothes by famous designers.

# Posts in 2013

Friday, January 25, 2013

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: musical instruments**

For IELTS speaking part 1, remember to give short, simple answers. Answer the question with a full sentence and give a reason for your answer. Here are some example questions and answers about musical instruments (from Cambridge IELTS book 6):

### ***1. Which musical instrument do you like listening to most? (Why?)***

My favourite musical instrument to listen to is the guitar. I like the fact that there are different types of guitar, like classical, acoustic and electric. I love the variety of sounds a guitar can make.

### ***2. Have you ever learned to play a musical instrument?***

I took some guitar lessons when I was younger and still have a guitar at home. I don't play it much nowadays. I wish I had more time to practise.

### ***3. Do you think children should learn to play an instrument at school?***

Yes, I think it's a great skill and it's really enjoyable to be able to play a musical instrument. All children should be given this opportunity.

### ***4. How easy would it be to learn to play an instrument without a teacher?***

It would probably be more difficult without a teacher. You need someone to show you what to do and correct your mistakes. You need a lot of discipline to teach yourself.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, February 01, 2013

## **IELTS Speaking: a preparation technique**

A good way to prepare for IELTS speaking is to take one topic area and practise possible questions for all 3 parts. Here are some examples:

'Home' topic

### **Part 1 - give short answers**

1. Do you live in a house or a flat?
2. What's your favourite room in your home? Why?
3. What would you like to change about your home? Why?
4. Would you like to move house in the future?

### **Part 2 - speak for 2 minutes**

Describe an interesting home that you have visited.

### Part 3 - give longer answers

1. What factors do you think are important when choosing where to live?
2. Compare life in a city with life in the countryside.
3. How do you think the design of homes will change in the future?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#)

Friday, March 29, 2013

### IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'friends' topic

In part 1 of the IELTS speaking test, remember to keep your answers short and simple. Here are some example questions and short answers:

#### **1. Are your friends mostly your age or different ages?**

Most of my friends are about the same age as me because we met at school or university. I've got one or two friends who are older or younger than I met through work.

#### **2. Do you usually see your friends during the week or at weekends?**

I tend to meet up with my friends at weekends because everyone's too busy during the week.

#### **3. The last time you saw your friends, what did you do together?**

It was one of my friends' birthday last weekend. Six of us went out for a meal to celebrate.

#### **4. In what ways are your friends important to you?**

I think it's important to have friends that you can talk to and share experiences with. My friends make me laugh, but I know I can also rely on them whenever I need help or support.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

Dear All,

Here are my answers and hope you can have more ideas on how to build your own answers:

1) Most of my friends are similar in age as me. Most of them are people who I met back in high school and college, so we also have similar interests and backgrounds.

2) Weekends tend to be much easier for us to meet. We all have a busy lifestyle and weekends are the only times when we can hang out and relax.

3) We had a gathering in my home about 2 months ago. I prepared barbeque for them and we took the opportunity to catch up with one another.

4) Well, my friends are definitely important in my life. I think it's always nice to know that there is always somebody who you can talk to and share your happiness and struggles with. In my case, my friends and I constantly give emotional support to each other and I think that's really important in a true friendship.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Cheers,  
Martin

Posted by: Martin | [Saturday, March 30, 2013 at 00:21](#)

VERB TENSE tends to be a big problem for many students.

Always listen carefully to the question before answering! Using the wrong verb tense could make your ideas totally irrelevant to the question!

Posted by: Martin | [Saturday, March 30, 2013 at 00:49](#)

Are your friends mostly your age or different ages?

I have many friends from different ages. I met most of my friends at school so we are almost at the same age, some others I met through my work who are a little older or younger than me.

2. Do you usually see your friends during the week or at weekends?

We meet every month as all of us are working and married so we do not physically meet regularly, But we chat and call each other over the phone almost everyday.

3. The last time you saw your friends, what did you do together?

It was a farewell party for one of our group who is travelling to do master degree in London, we had a great celebration and enjoyed the food and the weather very much.

4. In what ways are your friends important to you?

I believe that my friends are essential in my life because I have to find trusted people to share my life with, to find nice and funny people to be around and to support each other when we need that.

Posted by: Soha | [Sunday, March 31, 2013 at 13:38](#)

Friday, May 17, 2013

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'telephoning' topic**

Here are some part 1 questions and sample answers from Cambridge IELTS book 9. Remember to make your part 1 answers short and simple. Just give a direct answer, followed by a reason or one extra piece of information.

### ***1. How often do you make telephone calls?***

I probably make three or four phone calls every day, usually just to make arrangements with work colleagues or to speak to family and friends.

### ***2. Who do you spend most time talking to on the telephone?***

I think it would be one of my closest work colleagues. We often call each other rather than meeting face-to-face.

### ***3. When do you think you'll next make a telephone call?***

My family are expecting me to phone them as soon as I finish this exam. They'll want to know how it went.



#### **4. Do you sometimes prefer to send a text message instead of telephoning?**

Yes. I prefer to send a text message when I'm arranging something simple, like a time to meet someone. In those situations, a phone call isn't necessary.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Dear All,

Here are my sample answers:

- 1) I make several phone calls every day at work; it's either to communicate with co-workers or deal with my customers.
- 2) I think it's probably one of my biggest customers. You know, it's important to have a close communication with customers if you want to expand the business and have a long-term relationship with them.
- 3) I'll probably call my wife after the test and see where she is at. This way I'll know where to look for her and be able to go home together.
- 4) Yes, especially if it's for something not so important. I think a text message is also better if you know that the friend or customer has a busy lifestyle and may be unavailable to talk on the phone for leisure.

Enjoy your weekend!

Martin

Posted by: [Martin](#) | [Friday, May 17, 2013 at 18:14](#)

Friday, July 05, 2013

#### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'toys' topic**

I've already done lessons about 'toys' for [part 2](#) and [part 3](#) of the speaking test, so let's try some part 1 questions about this topic. Notice that my part 1 answers are always short and direct.

##### **1) Did you play with toys when you were a child?**

Yes, of course. I loved playing with toys when I was a child; I think all children do.

##### **2) What kinds of toys did you like?**

As far as I remember, I mostly played with toy cars, planes and action figures from films or cartoons. I also liked building things with Lego.

##### **3) In your country, do boys and girls play with the same types of toys?**

Not really. I think boys like the kinds of toys that I mentioned before, whereas girls play with dolls. My niece, for example, doesn't like toy cars; she prefers dressing dolls in different outfits.

##### **4) Do you think that toys help children to learn?**

Yes, I do. All toys encourage children to use their imagination and creativity. Even with simple toys, children imagine situations and invent games and rules.

Dear All,

Here are my sample answers:

- 1) Yes, definitely. I played with all kinds of toys and I think they were a very important part of my childhood.
- 2) Lego was my favorite, but I also spent plenty of time playing with toy cars, robots, and action figures like Superman, Batman, and the ThunderCats!
- 3) Mmm... no, I don't think so. In general, I would say that boys play with the kinds of toys I've just mentioned, and girls would prefer to play with dolls or stuffed animals.
- 4) Yes, absolutely! Toys are basically tools for children to develop their imagination and creativity. Children also make new friends and develop their social skills by playing and sharing toys.

Best of luck to those who will be taking the exam this weekend!!!

Cheers,  
Martin

Posted by: Martin | [Friday, July 05, 2013 at 19:03](#)

Saturday, August 24, 2013

### **IELTS Speaking Advice: get to the point**

Yesterday I wrote that you should avoid using long phrases to begin your answers. So what should you use instead? Native speakers say things like:

- I think...
- I guess...
- Well,...

These words/phrases might seem less impressive, but you have to remember that examiners are not impressed by the long phrases either! The important thing is to **get to the point** of your answer.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#), [Questions/Advice](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

Friday, August 30, 2013

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: strange questions**

In part 1 of the speaking test, the examiner will ask around 10 easy questions. However, students have reported some strange questions, such as:

1. Do you like parks?
2. Do you think different colours can change our moods?
3. When do people give flowers in your country?

Don't be shocked by these questions. Just give a simple answer with a reason. Don't worry about using fantastic grammar or vocabulary; just try to answer without hesitating. For example:

1. Yes, I like parks because they are great places to relax. I think all cities need green areas.
2. Yes, I think bright colours, like red, can make you feel energetic. Some greens and blues can be more relaxing.
3. People give flowers on special occasions like birthdays or on Valentine's Day. In my country, giving flowers is seen as romantic.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Friday, September 06, 2013

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'shopping' topic**

Here are some questions and sample answers for the 'shopping' topic. Remember that part 1 answers need to be short, direct and simple.

### ***1) Who does most of the shopping in your household?***

There isn't one person who does most of the shopping. I'd say it's a shared responsibility because we tend to go shopping together as a family.

### ***2) What kind of shopping do you like doing?***

I quite like shopping for presents for people's birthdays or for Christmas. My favourite type of shop would have to be a bookshop.

### ***3) Is shopping a popular activity in your country?***

Yes, it's very popular. Saturday is the busiest shopping day, and lots of people treat shopping as a kind of leisure activity, rather than something practical.

### ***4) What types of shops do teenagers like best in your country?***

I'm not an expert on teenage behaviour, but I guess they like buying clothes, music, gadgets... that kind of thing.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

Friday, October 25, 2013

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: giving negative answers**

It's fine to give negative answers in part 1 of the speaking test. Here are some example negative answers for people who don't like sport:

### ***1. What sports or physical activities do you regularly do?***

Unfortunately I don't have time to do any sports or physical activities because of my work commitments. I'd like to find more time for regular exercise.

### ***2. Which sport or game would you like to be good at?***

I'd like to be good at tennis. It must be great to be able to hit the ball as hard as you can and watch it land exactly where you wanted it to.

### **3. Do you prefer watching or playing sports?**

I don't watch much sport on TV and I'm not a big sports fan, so I think I would probably enjoy doing sports more than watching them.

### **4. Do you think children should be encouraged to do more sport?**

Yes, I think that sport is really important for children. Sports and games teach children to play together and try their best.

Posted by: Simon | [Friday, February 28, 2014 at 12:53](#)

## Posts in 2014

Friday, April 04, 2014

### **IELTS Speaking: a tip for each part**

Here are three tips, one for each part of the speaking test.

#### **Part 1: stop and smile**

For part 1 of the speaking test, you need to get used to giving short answers. Many students find it difficult to stop speaking, and the examiner is forced to interrupt. My tip is to give your answer then stop and smile, showing the examiner that you are ready for the next question.

#### **Part 2: tell a story**

In the context of speaking part 2, a story is simply a long example to illustrate a point that you have made. If you're describing a person, for example, you could tell a story to illustrate why you like him/her. People find it easy to keep speaking for longer when they have a story to tell.

#### **Part 3: include an 'if...' sentence**

Look at technique number 2 in [this lesson](#). The 'alternatives' technique helps you to say more, and it also encourages you to add a conditional 'if...' sentence, which might help your grammar score.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#)

Friday, April 11, 2014

### **IELTS Speaking: if you don't understand**

What should you do if you don't understand a question in the speaking test? Here are my tips:

#### **Part 1**

In part 1, the examiner is not allowed to help you, but he/she can repeat the question. Just say: "Sorry, can you repeat the question please?" If you still don't understand the second time, try to say something related to the topic or any of the words that you heard. Try your best, then focus on the next question.

#### **Part 2**

You are given a task card with the question written on it, so you shouldn't have any problems in this

part. If there is a word that you don't understand on the task card, don't ask the examiner - he/she is not allowed to help.

### Part 3

In this part of the test, the examiner is allowed to rephrase the question. If you don't understand, just say something like: "Sorry, can you explain that question in a different way please?"

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Friday, April 25, 2014

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: home town

Here are some part 1 questions and answers on the topic of 'home town'. Try changing the answers to similar ones about your own town or city. Keep your answers short, simple and direct.

### **1. Where are you from?**

I'm from Manchester, which is a city in the north west of England.

### **2. Do you like your home town? (Why?)**

Yes, I like living in Manchester because it's where most of my friends live, and because there are plenty of things to do there. The only thing I don't like is the weather.

### **3. Would you prefer to live somewhere else? (Why?)**

For the moment I'm happy living here, but at some point I'd like to live in a country with a warmer climate, and I'd like to live near a beach!

### **4. Do you think your home town is a good place for young people? (Why?)**

Yes, Manchester has lots of things for young people, such as sports facilities, music and cinemas.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(24\)](#)

Dear All,

Here are my sample answers to today's questions.

These are actually not the things I would say in the real test, but I just pretended to be a student in Taiwan. Hope you guys can find them useful to build your own answers.

1. I'm from Kaohsiung, which is a metropolitan city located in the southern part of Taiwan.
2. Yes, I think the nicest thing about Kaohsiung is its people. Everyone is so friendly to each other and you can really enjoy the atmosphere of a warm city.
3. Probably not for the moment. I have my family and best friends over there and I wish to contribute to my hometown after I obtain my master's degree in the UK.
4. Yes, I guess so. Kaohsiung has lots of nice schools with modern facilities. Young people can also enjoy the different cultural attractions, such as museums, theaters, as well as public libraries.

Cheers,  
Martin

Friday, May 23, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: five simple rules**

Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking test is supposed to be easy. You don't need to give 'difficult' answers, and you should try to avoid making mistakes.

### **Here are five simple rules for Speaking Part 1:**

1. Keep your answers short, then stop with confidence.
2. Answer the questions using full sentences.
3. Use words from the examiner's question in your answer.
4. If possible, give a reason for your answer.
5. Don't forget to say "yes" or "no" when necessary.

### **Here's an example to illustrate these points:**

Do you like parks?

Yes, I like parks because they are great places to relax. If you live in a city, a park is often the only place where you can escape from the noise and the traffic.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Friday, May 30, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'language learning' topic**

Try answering the following 'part 1' questions. Remember to follow the rules in last week's [lesson](#).

1. Do you like learning languages?
2. How did you learn the languages that you know?
3. Why do people learn more than one language?
4. Do you think that all children should learn foreign languages at school?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(22\)](#)

Friday, June 06, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: keep it simple**

Instead of correcting the grammar mistakes in the sentences below, try rewriting the sentences in an easier way.

1. I admire learning languages as communication bridges.
2. I also do general readings in my spare time.
3. Moreover, learning foreign languages helps us talk friendly.
4. It open more avenues for getting a better job.
5. Young age is the right time to learn multiple languages.

6. You can break many hurdles and expand your horizons.

7. As our knowledge in language expands, the better we can communicate.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(41\)](#)

Sunday, June 08, 2014

## **IELTS Grammar: easy sentences**

Here are my suggestions for the sentences in [Friday's lesson](#). Remember, the aim was to make the sentences as easy as possible.

1. I like learning languages because they help me to communicate with people from other countries.

2. I do lots of reading in my spare time.

3. If you can speak the local language, it's easier to make friends.

4. Knowing a foreign language can help you to get a better job.

5. The best time to learn another language is when you are young.

6. Learning a foreign language opens your mind and expands your horizons.

7. The more you practise, the easier it becomes to communicate in a new language.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#), [Vocabulary/Grammar](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

Friday, July 18, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'reading' topic**

Here are some part 1 questions with example answers. Remember to keep your part 1 answers short and simple.

### ***1. Do you like reading?***

Yes, I like reading a lot. I read all sorts of things, including novels, newspapers, magazines, and online articles.

### ***2. Do you usually read for leisure or for work purposes?***

Well, I have to do a certain amount of reading as part of my job, but I probably read more for enjoyment. I pick up a newspaper most days, and I usually have a book on the go.

### ***3. What was your favourite book or story when you were a child?***

The first book that I remember really enjoying was '.....'. It only took me a few days to read because I liked it so much that I couldn't put it down.

### ***4. Do you think it's important that children read regularly?***

Definitely. I think reading is possibly the most important skill that children learn. The ability to read opens the door to all aspects of education.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#)

Saturday, July 19, 2014

## **IELTS Vocabulary: nice bits of language!**

There were a few nice bits of language that you might have noticed in yesterday's speaking lesson:

- all sorts of things
- a certain amount of
- I pick up a newspaper most days
- I usually have a book on the go
- I couldn't put it down
- opens the door to all aspects of education

These phrases made my answers sound very natural and "native-speaker-like". Try using them in your own sentences.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#), [Vocabulary/Grammar](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

Friday, August 08, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'games' topic**

I was asked recently about the questions below. Can you suggest any answers? Do you think it's acceptable to talk about sports, or should we only talk about games like chess?

1. What games are popular in your country?
2. Do you play any games?
3. How do people learn to play games in your country?
4. Do you think it's important for people to play games?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

I think it's acceptable. People use the concept 'Games' in many big sporting event such as Olympic Games or Winter Games. Talking about sports can broaden the topic and get more ideas.

1. Badminton and football are ones of the popular games in my country. Tourists can see people usually play badminton in the park and play football in the yard any time.
2. I can play many kinds of games such as chess and badminton. When I was young, my father taught me to play them. Playing badminton can help me enhance my health and chess can improve my memory.
3. It depends to the purpose people play games. If it's just for entertainment, people can learn from friends or from the internet. Some people want to become a good player for competing, they can learn from teachers at schools or centers.
4. Playing games is essential for people at any time for 3 main reasons. Firstly, people play games to relax and get rid of stress. Secondly, games can improve memory and health. Last but not least,



games can connect people and people together. People can make friends or even create many relationships while playing games.

Thanks, Simon. Your web can help me improve my English a lot.

Posted by: Kate | [Friday, August 08, 2014 at 10:27](#)

### **A note from Simon:**

I agree with Kate (second comment from the top of this page) - sports are very often referred to as games e.g. a game of tennis.

Remember that this is part 1, so it's not supposed to be tricky.

Posted by: Simon | [Friday, August 08, 2014 at 21:21](#)

Friday, August 15, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: games**

Here are my sample answers to last week's questions:

### **1. What games are popular in your country?**

Well, if we can consider sports as games, then football is definitely the most popular game in my country, but we also love board games like chess.

### **2. Do you play any games?**

Not regularly these days. I play the occasional game of tennis with my brother-in-law, and I recently played a bowling game on the Nintendo Wii with my nephew. I wasn't very good at it.

### **3. How do people learn to play games in your country?**

I think children teach each other to play games. I remember a friend at primary school teaching me to play chess, for example.

### **4. Do you think it's important for people to play games?**

Yes, it's really important, especially for children. I think research has shown that play can improve brain development, intelligence, creativity, and the ability to cooperate with others.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(28\)](#)

# Posted in 2015

Friday, January 16, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'maps' topic**

A few students said they had this topic in a recent exam. How would you answer?

*Let's talk about maps...*

1. Do you ever use maps?
2. When do people usually need to use a map?
3. Do you prefer electronic or paper maps?
4. Do you ever ask people for directions instead of using a map?

Remember to keep your answers short and simple. This topic might surprise you, but it isn't difficult.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

Friday, October 03, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: house or apartment?**

Here are some very common questions from part 1 of the speaking test. How would you answer them?

1. Do you live in a house or an apartment?
2. Which is your favourite room in your home? Why?
3. Would you change anything about your home? Why / why not?
4. Would you like to move to a different home in the future?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(41\)](#)

Friday, October 10, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking: correct the mistakes**

Here are some sentences that students wrote below last week's [lesson](#). Can you correct the mistake(s) in each one?

1. I would want the walls to be painted in bright colors, arrange the furniture with some good interior designers.
2. If I am well off, I would like to move into much more bigger house.
3. If I had enough money, I will buy some more household appliances.
4. My favourite room is my living room because most of the time I spent in that room.
5. It goes without saying that I am quite passionate about my bedroom.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(28\)](#)

## **ANSWERS FROM SIMON**

First, these are the problems:

1. The use of 'arrange' doesn't follow the grammar of the first part of the sentence, so we'll need to make it match e.g. "walls to be painted.... furniture to be arranged"
2. The first half of the conditional (if I am) is wrong, and we don't say "much more bigger".
3. The second half of the conditional (I will buy) is wrong.
4. We shouldn't use the past "I spent".
5. No grammar mistakes, but "it goes without saying" seems strange and inappropriate here - why does it go without saying?

## **FROM SIMON (continued)**

Here are my suggestions:

1. I would want the walls to be painted in bright colors, and the furniture to be arranged by some good interior designers.
2. If I were well off, I would move into a much bigger house.
3. If I had enough money, I would buy some more household appliances.
4. My favourite room is my living room because I spend most of my time there.
5. I love my bedroom; it's definitely my favourite room.

Friday, October 17, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: sample answers**

Remember to keep your part 1 answers short and direct; the examiner will interrupt you if you don't. Here are my sample answers to the 'house or apartment' questions from two weeks ago:

### **1. Do you live in a house or an apartment?**

I live in a semi-detached house with three bedrooms in a suburb of Manchester. I've lived there for just over a year.

### **2. Which is your favourite room in your home? Why?**

I don't really have a favourite room. But if I had to choose, I'd say the living room because that's where I go to sit and relax.

### **3. Would you change anything about your home? Why / why not?**

Yes, I've been meaning to redecorate it since I moved in last year. It needs a new kitchen, so that's what I'd change first.

### **4. Would you like to move to a different home in the future?**

Yes, I'd definitely move again at some point if I could afford to. I'd like to live in the countryside, or maybe in a different city or country.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Friday, December 05, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'parks' topic**

Several students have had this topic recently. How would you answer?

1. Do you like parks? Why / why not?
2. How often do you visit parks?
3. Why are parks an important part of many towns and cities?
4. What do you think could be done to make parks better?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#)

Friday, December 12, 2014

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'parks' answers**

Here are my sample answers for last week's questions. Remember that part 1 answers are supposed to be short and direct. You don't need to 'show off' in this part of the test!

### **1. Do you like parks? Why / why not?**

Yes, I like parks because they're great places to relax or go for a walk. I think every city needs some green space where people can escape from the crowds.

### **2. How often do you visit parks?**

There's a park very close to where I live, so I probably go there once or twice a week if the weather's nice.

### **3. Why are parks an important part of many towns and cities?**

Parks are like an oasis where people get away from the hustle and bustle of city life. They are where people go to have lunch, to take some exercise, or to forget about work for a while.

### **4. What do you think could be done to make parks better?**

The parks in big cities are already really good in my opinion. If I think about the famous parks in London, Paris or New York, I can't imagine what I would do to improve them.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

# Posts in 2015

Friday, January 16, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'maps' topic**

A few students said they had this topic in a recent exam. How would you answer?

*Let's talk about maps...*

1. *Do you ever use maps?*
2. *When do people usually need to use a map?*
3. *Do you prefer electronic or paper maps?*
4. *Do you ever ask people for directions instead of using a map?*

Remember to keep your answers short and simple. This topic might surprise you, but it isn't difficult.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

Friday, January 23, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking: 'maps' answers**

Here are my sample answers for last week's questions about maps. Remember that my answers are short and simple because this is what the examiner requires in part 1 of the test.

### ***1. Do you ever use maps?***

Yes. Whenever I go somewhere new, I plan my journey with the help of a map.

### ***2. When do people usually need to use a map?***

I imagine that some people use a map every day if they travel to different places for work. Others might only use a map when they're on holiday.

### ***3. Do you prefer electronic or paper maps?***

I still prefer paper maps for a long journey; I like being able to open the map out on a table and see the full journey ahead.

### ***4. Do you ever ask people for directions instead of using a map?***

Only if I'm really lost. Whenever I ask for directions, I find it difficult to remember what the person said. So I prefer to find my own way.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#)

Friday, February 20, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'collecting' topic**

Try preparing some short, easy answers to the following questions:

- 1) Have you ever collected anything as a hobby? (What?)
- 2) What kinds of thing do people often like collecting?
- 3) Why do you think people collect certain objects?
- 4) Is there anything that you would like to collect in the future?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(25\)](#)

Saturday, February 21, 2015

## **IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**

Here are some sentences that people wrote below yesterday's speaking lesson (about 'collecting'). Can you find and correct the mistakes?

- 1) There are a lot of things that people often are collect.
- 2) I think people often go to gather small things such as stamps.
- 2) Whenever I went in a vacation, I used this opportunity to buy another object.
- 3) Let me think, may be valuable watches which their prices increase by time.
- 5) People collecting things for many reasons for example they do it as a hobby.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#), [Vocabulary/Grammar](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(39\)](#)

### ANSWERS FROM SIMON:

First, here are the problems in each sentence:

- 1) "people are collect" is wrong. This is not a passive, so we need to delete the word "are".
- 2) "Gather" is not appropriate - it doesn't have the same meaning as "collect" in this context.
- 3) We don't say "go in a vacation".
- 4) A few problems: First, this is not a proper sentence. Second, "may be" should be one word in this case. Third, "which their prices increase" is wrong. Fourth, we don't say "by time".
- 5) "People collecting" is wrong, and "for example" is used wrongly.

Posted by: [Simon](#) | [Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 21:06](#)

### FROM SIMON, CONTINUED:

Here are some possible correct versions:

- 1) There are a lot of things that people often collect.
- 2) I think people often collect small things such as stamps.
- 2) Whenever I went on vacation, I used the opportunity to buy another object.
- 3) Let me think. Maybe I would collect expensive watches, which become more valuable over time.
- 5) People collect things for many reasons. For example, they do it as a hobby.

Posted by: [Simon](#) | [Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 21:20](#)

Friday, February 27, 2015

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'collecting' answers

Here are my sample answers to the questions from last week.

### **1) *Have you ever collected anything as a hobby? (What?)***

Yes. When I was younger I used to collect keyrings. I remember that my favourite was a Lego man keyring that someone bought me as a present.

### **2) *What kinds of thing do people often like collecting?***

Some people collect cheap items like stamps, keyrings or toys. Others collect expensive antiques, watches, jewellery or even cars.

### 3) *Why do you think people collect certain objects?*

Maybe they like the constant search for a new item, or they want to remember past experiences. Others might like the feeling of organising and presenting what they own.

### 4) *Is there anything that you would like to collect in the future?*

Yes. If I could afford it, I'd love to have a collection of guitars in different colours, shapes and sizes!

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(20\)](#)

Friday, March 27, 2015

## IELTS Speaking: complex structures?

Students often worry that they need to use "complex structures" in the speaking test. But what is a complex structure?

[This website](#) explains the difference between simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences. You'll notice that compound and complex sentences are ***much easier*** than they sound! I'm sure you use them all the time without realising it.

Here's my advice: stop worrying about the need for "complex" grammar. Instead, focus on expressing your ***ideas*** well. As you explain your ideas in detail, you will naturally produce longer sentences which contain a variety of grammatical features.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(12\)](#)

Friday, April 17, 2015

## IELTS Speaking: is accent important?

People often ask whether their accent will affect their IELTS score. The simple answer is no. Your score for pronunciation depends on how clearly you speak and how intelligible (easy to understand) you are.

So if accent is not important, what are the factors that affect pronunciation? I really like the explanation on [this page](#) from the Warwick University website. They look at 5 key elements of pronunciation:

- Pronunciation of individual sounds
- Word stress
- Sentence stress
- Rhythm
- Intonation

There are some great tips about improving your pronunciation near the bottom of the page, but my

favourites are: work on your mistakes, copy good models of speech, record yourself, slow down, and try to sound interesting / interested!

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(14\)](#)

Friday, April 24, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'cooking' topic**

Here are some recent part 1 questions, with my example answers.

### **1. Do you like cooking? Why / why not?**

Sometimes. I like preparing a special meal for family or friends who visit, but everyday cooking is a bit boring; it's something that has to be done, but it's not really fun.

### **2. Who did the cooking in your family when you were a child?**

My mother almost always did the cooking when I was young. I don't think she trusted my father to make a nice meal.

### **3. Do you think that it's important to know how to cook well?**

I'm not sure whether it's important to cook *well*, but I do think that everyone should know the basics. It definitely isn't healthy to rely on pre-prepared meals or fast food.

### **4. Do you think that children should be taught cookery at school?**

Yes, that's probably a good idea. If all children knew how to cook a few basic, healthy meals, that would surely be a good thing.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

Friday, May 29, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'study' topic**

Try answering these recent exam questions. Just give a short, direct answer and a reason.

### ***Let's talk about studying...***

1. Do you like studying? Why / why not?
2. Do you prefer to study alone or with others? Why?
3. Where do you prefer to go when you need to study? Why?
4. How do you feel if someone disturbs you when you are studying?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

Friday, June 05, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'study' answers**



Here are my sample answers to the questions in last week's lesson.

**1. Do you like studying? Why / why not?**

Yes, I like studying because it's the best way to gain a deeper insight into any subject. I like reading, learning from others, and trying to understand difficult concepts.

**2. Do you prefer to study alone or with others? Why?**

I prefer to study alone because I need to be able to concentrate fully. Other people are a distraction.

**3. Where do you prefer to go when you need to study? Why?**

I like to find a quiet corner in my local library; being in an old building and surrounded by books seems to help me to focus on my work.

**4. How do you feel if someone disturbs you when you are studying?**

It frustrates me because it breaks my concentration. I prefer to avoid distractions by going somewhere where nobody will interrupt me.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#)

Friday, June 12, 2015

**IELTS Speaking: real opinions and experiences**

Some students are worried about expressing their real opinions in the speaking test. They think that the examiner might disagree and therefore give a lower score.

Don't worry about this. The examiner only cares about your language. Express your opinions, talk about your interests, and give examples from your own experience. The examiner will find 'real' opinions and experiences more interesting than general, superficial answers.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, July 24, 2015

**IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'walking' topic**

Remember to keep your part 1 answers short and 'to the point'. Here are my example answers for some questions about walking:

**1. Do you like walking?**

I'm not one for going on really long walks in the countryside, but I don't mind walking when I'm in a town or city, for example when I'm sightseeing in a new place.

**2. Do you think walking is important?**

Yes, I think it's important to be active, and walking is the most basic physical activity that we can do.

**3. Do you think walking in the countryside is better than walking in the city?**

Personally, no. As I said before, I like walking in the city, especially if it's somewhere with a lot of history like London or Paris.

#### **4. What could be done to improve the experience of walking in cities?**

I suppose the main issues are space and safety. Pavements need to be wide enough to accommodate lots of pedestrians, and we need safe places to cross the street.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Friday, August 21, 2015

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: don't worry, just answer!**

*"Do you work or are you a student?"*

This is often the first question that the examiner asks in the speaking test. It's an easy question, but many people still worry about it.

Here are some of their worries:

- What should I say if I do both (work and study)?
- What if I normally work, but now I'm studying for the IELTS test?
- I've just moved to a new country. Which country should I talk about?

My advice is to stop worrying, and just explain your situation. For example: "I'm a qualified doctor, but at the moment I'm studying English so that I can work here in the UK."

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Friday, September 04, 2015

### **IELTS Speaking: if you don't like the topic**

People often ask me what they should do if the examiner asks about a topic that they don't like or don't know anything about. Take the topic of 'music' for example. This is an easy topic for some people, but others find it difficult because they don't usually listen to music.

Let's imagine that you don't like music and you don't know anything about it. How would you answer the following questions in part 1 of the test? Try to give negative answers, but make sure that they are still good answers!

1. Do you like music?
2. What kind of music did you listen to when you were young?
3. When was the last time you went to a concert?
4. Would you like to participate in a live music show?

**Remember:** You might not like a topic, but this doesn't mean you can't answer the questions. IELTS speaking questions never require 'knowledge', only simple ideas and opinions.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(26\)](#)

Friday, September 11, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: negative answers**

Here are my negative answers to the questions in last week's speaking lesson. Remember: I'm imagining that I don't like (or know about) the topic.

### **1) Do you like music?**

No, I don't really like music, and I don't listen to it. It's not something that I've ever been interested in.

### **2) What kind of music did you listen to when you were young?**

I can't remember listening to much music as a child either. I suppose I must have heard some traditional music at festivals or parties, but I didn't take much notice of it.

### **3) When was the last time you went to a concert?**

I've never been to a music concert. Maybe I should try going to one; perhaps it would be interesting to see an orchestra playing classical music.

### **4) Would you like to participate in a live music show?**

No, definitely not. I don't play a musical instrument and I don't sing, so I can't imagine that I'd ever find myself performing to an audience.

#### **Note:**

My aim here is to show you that you can answer questions about any topic - you don't need to like it or know anything about it. (I do like music by the way!)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, October 02, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking: correct the mistakes**

Here are some sentences that people wrote in the "comments" below last week's [speaking lesson](#). Can you correct the mistakes?

1. After graduating high school, every my classmates and I also wanted to study in the university.
2. For 6 years I was studying in university in first year I chose my major and I was frightening for many things.
3. I didn't contact any friends of mine, shut off all social networks, totally devoted myself to the preparation and even didn't talk much to my parents every day.
4. It was very challenging because the exam given was very difficult, almost all answers in the multiple choice questions are common.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(32\)](#)

### **CORRECTIONS FROM SIMON:**

1. After graduating from high school, my classmates and I all wanted to study at university.

- graduating from
- my classmates and I all wanted
- at university

2. I studied at university for 6 years. In the first year I chose my major, and it was all a bit daunting.

- past simple
- at university
- new sentence when starting a new idea
- "it was daunting" rather than "I was frightened"

3. I didn't contact any friends, I logged off all social networks, I devoted all my time to revision, and I hardly even talked to my parents.

- Add "I" to the start of every item in the list (otherwise, each item follows the negative "I didn't")
- I logged off
- I devoted all my time
- revision
- I hardly even talked to

4. It was very challenging because the exam was very difficult, and almost all of the answers in the multiple choice section were similar.

- delete "given"
- , and
- almost all of the answers
- multiple choice section
- were similar

Posted by: Simon | [Sunday, October 04, 2015 at 23:24](#)

Friday, October 09, 2015

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'mathematics' topic**

Here are some recent exam questions that somebody shared here on the blog. As usual, my part 1 sample answers are short, direct and simple.

### **1) *At what age did you start studying mathematics?***

I can't exactly remember, but it was probably in my first year at primary school when I was 5 years old. I probably learnt simple addition at that age.

### **2) *Do you like mathematics? Why / why not?***

I don't dislike maths, but I wouldn't say that I've ever really liked the subject either. I'm happy to do simple calculations, but my brain can't cope with the complex stuff!

### **3) *Is it necessary for everyone to learn mathematics?***

Yes, I think it is. We all need a basic grounding in maths so that we can do daily tasks, like managing our money, working out bills, and so on.

#### **4) Do you prefer to use a calculator when doing mathematics?**

It depends. I quite like exercising my brain with anything that's easy enough, but I use the calculator on my phone for anything tricky.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

Friday, December 11, 2015

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'newspapers' topic**

Try answering the following questions. Remember to give a direct answer, give a reason, then stop! If you say more than this, the examiner will interrupt you.

1. How often do you read a newspaper?
2. Why do you think some people like reading newspapers?
3. Which other sources can people use to find out about the latest news?
4. Do you think that it's important to know about news from other countries? Why / why not?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(26\)](#)

## **Posts in 2016**

Friday, February 05, 2016

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: next video lesson**

I'm in the middle of creating a video lesson about part 1 of the IELTS speaking test. Before I publish it (this weekend), let me ask you four quick questions:

1. Do you know exactly what to expect in speaking part 1?
2. Do you know what the examiner expects from you?
3. Do you have a method for this part of the test?
4. Are you worried about any aspect of speaking part 1?

Feel free to share your answers in the comments below. Please think about part 1 only - I'll cover parts 2 and 3 in later videos.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#)

Friday, March 25, 2016

### **IELTS Speaking: review of tips**

Here's a quick review of my main tips for each part of the speaking test:

#### **Part 1**

Keep it simple; there's no need to show off in this part. Give a short, direct answer and a reason for your answer. Then stop. If necessary, smile at the examiner to show that you are ready for the next

question; if you keep speaking, the examiner will interrupt you. Answer using full sentences, and try not to hesitate; just say the first thing that comes into your head.

## Part 2

Before the exam, prepare ideas for the [six main topics](#). Focus on vocabulary, not grammar or linking. In the exam, try to note down as many ideas as you can during the 1-minute preparation time - hopefully you'll be able to use ideas that you have already prepared. You don't have to cover all of the points on the task card, but it helps you to structure your answer if you do. Say as much as you can for each point, and use a real example or story at the end of your description if you need to fill time. Keep going until the examiner stops you.

## Part 3

Practise "3-step" answers: 1) answer the question 2) explain your answer 3) give an example. There's also a [4th step](#) that you can sometimes use. By following these steps, you ensure that your answer "moves forward" instead of becoming repetitive - most people repeat the same ideas when they try to give a long answer, and the steps will help you to avoid this.

**PS.** I'll publish my next speaking video in the next few days.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(27\)](#)

Friday, May 13, 2016

## IELTS Speaking: what's most important?

Here are some factors that might affect your speaking score:

- fluency, not hesitating too much
- linking
- answer structure / organisation
- ideas
- vocabulary
- grammar
- pronunciation

But which of these factors are most important? I'll give you my answer in a free video lesson that I'll publish this weekend.

**Tip:** I'm going to suggest that you focus on a ***different*** factor (from the list above) in each of the 3 parts of the speaking test.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(25\)](#)

Friday, May 20, 2016

## IELTS Speaking: main tip for 3 parts

In case you missed the advice at the end of the [video lesson](#) that I shared last week, here's my main tip for each of the 3 parts in the speaking test:

### Part 1

Focus on **fluency**. You don't need to show off with great vocabulary or grammar in this part. Just try to answer quickly, without hesitating. A short, simple answer is fine.

## Part 2

Focus on **ideas / vocabulary**. This is your best chance to impress the examiner with some nice language, especially if you've prepared for common topics in the way I suggest in my video lessons.

## Part 3

Focus on your **answer structure**. Use the 3 or 4 steps that I explained in last week's video. This will force you to give longer answers without repeating yourself. You don't really have time to think about good vocabulary or grammar; just worry about answering the question by following the steps.

### Note:

Notice that I don't recommend worrying about grammar or linking at any point in the speaking test. Finally, if you forget every other exam tip, just remember one thing: [answer the question!](#)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(19\)](#)

Friday, May 27, 2016

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: giving negative answers

It's completely acceptable to give negative answers in part 1 of the speaking test. To test whether you can do this, try giving negative answers to the questions below. Keep your answers short and simple as usual. The first one is done as an example.

### **1) What type of photos do you like taking?**

Well, I don't usually take photos to be honest. I prefer to enjoy whatever I'm doing, rather than stop to take a photograph.

### **2) What do you do with photos you take?**

### **3) When you visit other places, do you take photos or buy postcards?**

### **4) Do you like people taking photos of you?**

(Questions taken from Cambridge IELTS book 11)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#)

Friday, June 03, 2016

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: negative answers

Here are my negative answers to the questions in last week's [lesson](#):

### **1) What type of photos do you like taking?**

Well, I don't usually take photos to be honest. I prefer to enjoy whatever I'm doing, rather than stop to take a photograph.

### **2) What do you do with photos you take?**

I rarely take photos, but if I occasionally use my mobile phone to take a picture of something, I just leave the photo there; I don't do anything special with it.

### **3) When you visit other places, do you take photos or buy postcards?**

I don't really do either. I leave it to my friends or other family members to take photographs; I'm usually with someone who likes taking photos and can share them with me later.

#### **4) Do you like people taking photos of you?**

No, I prefer not to be in photos. I always feel awkward when someone asks me to smile for the camera, and I don't think I'm very photogenic.

#### **Note:**

It's usually easier to give positive answers, but it's worth practising some negative responses just in case you get a topic that doesn't interest you. Whatever the question is, the easiest way to answer is to tell the truth!

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#)

Friday, June 17, 2016

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: a student's question**

Someone asked me this question:

*I was asked to describe my living room in IELTS speaking part 1. What style of answer should I give for this question?*

Let's see what people think. How would **you** answer this part 1 question?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(46\)](#)

#### **FROM SIMON:**

Thanks for your interesting answers! Just a few of them look too long to me. Remember that there are about 10 questions in part 1, and the examiner has a maximum of 5 minutes to get through all of them. If you try to give long answers, the examiner will interrupt you, and this can be frustrating for both of you.

One or two sentences is enough. For example:

"The living room is the biggest room in our house. In it we have a sofa, a big armchair, a coffee table, and a TV in the corner."

That's enough for a part 1 answer - short and simple as usual.

Posted by: [Simon](#) | [Saturday, June 18, 2016 at 18:19](#)

Friday, July 15, 2016

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'house' topic**

Examiners often begin the speaking test by asking about your home. Here are some typical questions and sample answers.

#### **1) Do you live in a house or an apartment?**

I live in a semi-detached house with three bedrooms and a small garden.

#### **2) Which room do you like most in your house? Why?**



My favourite room is the kitchen because it looks out onto the back garden, and it's on the side of the house that catches the afternoon sun.

### **3) Is there anything about your house that you would like to change?**

Well, it would be nice if it were a detached house so that we could have windows on the wall that we currently share with our neighbours.

### **4) Tell me something else about your house.**

The previous owners converted the loft into an extra bedroom; that's the quietest room in the house, and the best place to go to do some work.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

Friday, July 22, 2016

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'music' topic**

Practise giving short, simple answers to the following questions. Remember that negative answers are fine too.

1. Do you like music? Why / why not?
2. What kind of music do you listen to? Why?
3. Has the music that you listen to changed since you were young?
4. Do you think older and younger generations prefer different types of music?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(19\)](#)

Friday, July 29, 2016

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: simplify**

Your priority in part 1 of the speaking test should be to demonstrate **fluency**, not difficult grammar or vocabulary. You'll speak more fluently if you keep your part 1 answers simple.

Here are some examples of how I would simplify students' answers.

Note: the students' answers contain some mistakes.

### **Student's answer:**

Logically people from different generation will have taste variation. Depending upon the maturity, music stars of their own age, impact of globalisation as well as technological development in music industry will divide younger and older generation.

### **My simplified answer:**

Of course, people from different generations have different tastes in music. Popular music changes all the time, and most of us are influenced by whatever style of music is popular when we are growing up.

### **Student's answer:**

Yes, I am fond of music. It is simply the medicine for my mind. When I am stressed, music remove stress. When I am happy, music inspires me to be more. It always in the centre of all my parties with friends. When I am sad, music takes me out glue and move forward.

### **My simplified answer:**

Yes, I love music, mainly because it helps to put me in a better mood. When I'm stressed or sad, music picks me up and puts me in a positive frame of mind.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Friday, September 16, 2016

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'free time at home' topic**

Try giving short, direct answers to the following part 1 questions. Remember to answer with a full sentence, and give a reason where relevant.

- 1) *How much time do you spend at home?*
- 2) *Do you prefer to spend your free time at home or outside the house?*
- 3) *What do you do when you have some free time and you're at home?*
- 4) *Would you like to have more spare time to spend at home in the future?*

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

Friday, September 23, 2016

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'free time at home' answers**

Here are some example answers for the questions that I shared last week. Remember to focus on fluency in part 1. Try not to hesitate; just say the first thing that comes into your head.

#### **1) *How much time do you spend at home?***

Obviously I sleep at home, but I don't spend very much time at home during the day, because I'm usually busy with work.

#### **2) *Do you prefer to spend your free time at home or outside the house?***

During the day I prefer to be out of the house, so I like visiting family or meeting up with friends. But I do like relaxing at home in the evenings.

#### **3) *What do you do when you have some free time and you're at home?***

I usually sit and watch some TV or a film, or I listen to some music. I also like sitting outside if the weather is nice.

#### **4) *Would you like to have more spare time to spend at home in the future?***

No, not really. I get bored if I'm at home for too long. In the future, I imagine I'll still prefer to go out and do things rather than stay indoors.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, October 21, 2016

## **IELTS Speaking: you can't get a high score in part 1**

On a recent course, some of my students were surprised when I told them to give [short, easy answers](#) in part 1 of the speaking test.

One student asked: "But how can we get a band 7 with these answers?"

My answer is: you can't! Part 1 of the speaking test is supposed to be easy, and the best thing you can do in this part of the test is demonstrate fluency by answering without hesitation.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#)  
Friday, October 28, 2016

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'names' topic**

This is an interesting set of questions from Cambridge IELTS book 11:

*Let's talk about names...*

- 1) *How did your parents choose your name?*
- 2) *Does your name have any special meaning?*
- 3) *Is your name common or unusual in your country?*
- 4) *If you could change your name, would you?*

Remembering the advice that I gave [last week](#), try answering these questions (aloud) without hesitating too much. It's fine to give negative answers or to say that you don't know the answer, but you should still explain why.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#)

Friday, November 04, 2016

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'name' answers**

Here are some sample answers for the 'name' questions that I shared last week. Notice that most of these answers are negative ones; it's completely acceptable to answer in this way.

### ***1) How did your parents choose your name?***

To be honest, I'm not sure how they chose it; I've never asked them. I suppose it was just a name that they both liked, and maybe they thought it suited me.

### ***2) Does your name have any special meaning?***

It might do, but I don't know what that meaning is; I've never looked it up. Maybe I'll google it later today; you've made me curious to find out!

### ***3) Is your name common or unusual in your country?***

Yes, it's quite a common name. I remember that there were two other people with the same name as me in my class at school.

### ***4) If you could change your name, would you?***

No, I definitely wouldn't. My name is part of my identity now, and it would feel strange to suddenly change it. I don't think my friends and family would like that either.

Friday, December 23, 2016

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'neighbours' topic**

Here are some part 1 questions from Cambridge IELTS book 8, with my sample answers. How would you answer these questions?

### ***1. How well do you know the people who live next door to you?***

I know my neighbours quite well. They're really nice people, and I always stop to talk whenever I see them.

### ***2. How often do you see them?***

I see my neighbours at least a few times a week. We usually see each other when we're leaving for work in the morning or coming home in the evening.

### ***3. What kinds of problem do people sometimes have with their neighbours?***

I think the most common problem is probably noise. It's difficult to live next to people who have a dog that barks at night, or who play loud music.

### ***4. How do you think neighbours can help each other?***

Neighbours can do little things like watching your house if you go on holiday or taking a delivery if something arrives by post when you're not at home. I think these little favours are a good way for neighbours to help each other.

# Posts in 2017

Friday, January 20, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'chocolate' topic**

A student sent me the following part 1 questions from a recent IELTS test. How would you answer them?

- 1) Do you like chocolate? Why / why not?
- 2) What type of chocolate do you prefer? Why?
- 3) When do you usually eat chocolate?
- 4) Do people give chocolate as a present in your country? When?

Remember that it's ok to give negative answers if you don't like chocolate. Or you could just pretend that you do!

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'chocolate' mistakes

Here are some of the answers that people wrote below last week's lesson. Can you correct the mistake(s) in each sentence?

1. I like white and milk Chocolate, cause dark chocolate is taste bitter for me, I like sweet one.
2. I adore all kind of chocolates and the reason behind this interest is that when I was young, my father was always giving me chocolate as a prize for the good behavior.
3. I'd love all types of chocolate, but my favourite one is dark.
4. I am certain that I detest dark chocolate: it does not exite my palate.
5. I'm into chocolate just like most people. You know, it is hardly forgotten when you have got access to it.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

### **ANSWERS FROM SIMON:**

Here are my corrected sentences:

1. I like white and milk chocolate because dark chocolate tastes too bitter to me; I prefer a sweeter taste.
  2. I love all kinds of chocolate because when I was young, my father used to give me chocolate as a prize for good behaviour.
  3. I love all types of chocolate, but my favourite type is dark chocolate.
  4. I hate dark chocolate; I don't like the way it tastes at all.
- ("excite my palate" is a phrase that only professional food critics would ever use! It sounds very strange in our context)
5. Like most people, I love chocolate. (the rest of the sentence didn't make sense)

Posted by: [Simon](#) | [Saturday, January 28, 2017 at 10:43](#)

Saturday, January 28, 2017

## IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'chocolate' answers

Here are my sample answers for the 'chocolate' topic. Remember that your priority in speaking part 1 is to demonstrate fluency by giving answers that are short, direct and natural, without hesitating too much.

### **1) Do you like chocolate? Why / why not?**

Yes, I love chocolate. I like the taste, the texture and the feeling that you get when you eat it. And it goes really well with my favourite drink, coffee.

### **2) What type of chocolate do you prefer? Why?**

I prefer dark chocolate to milk chocolate, because it has a stronger taste. I also like chocolate when it's in a cake, and I love drinking hot chocolate too.

### **3) When do you usually eat chocolate?**

I try not to eat too much, but I probably eat or drink something that contains chocolate every couple of days.

### **4) Do people give chocolate as a present in your country? When?**

Yes, it's very common to give boxes of individual chocolates as a gift. You can give chocolates on any special occasion really: birthdays, Valentine's day, Easter, Christmas, and so on.

#### **Note:**

To see my corrections for the sentences in yesterday's lesson, look in the "comments" area below that lesson.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Friday, February 24, 2017

### **IELTS Speaking Part 1: stop and smile!**

In part 1 of the speaking test you need to give short, direct answers. When you've given your answer, you should stop and wait for the next question.

The problem is that many candidates keep speaking, even when they've already given a good answer. Sometimes it's because they feel nervous about leaving a moment of silence. As they keep speaking, they start hesitating and repeating themselves, making the answer sound worse and worse. A further problem is that the examiner has to interrupt the candidate in order to move on to the next question.

The solution that I practise with my students is this: stop and smile! When you've answered the question, stop confidently and smile at the examiner to show that you're ready for the next question. If you can do this, part 1 of the speaking test will go more smoothly.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

Saturday, February 25, 2017

### **IELTS Speaking: smiling won't help your score, but...**

Regarding the advice that I gave yesterday (stop and smile), I just want to clarify that there are no marks for body language in the speaking test. The "stop and smile" idea is simply a way to show the examiner that you're ready for the next question in part 1 of the test.

So, smiling won't help your score, but it can help with the "flow" of questions and answers in part 1.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(12\)](#)

Friday, March 10, 2017

### **IELTS Speaking: if you don't understand**

What should you do if you don't understand a question in the speaking test? Here are my tips:

#### **Part 1**

In part 1, the examiner is not allowed to help you, but he/she can repeat the question. Just say:

"Sorry, can you repeat the question please?" If you still don't understand the second time, try to say something related to the topic or any of the words that you heard. Try your best, then focus on the next question.

## Part 2

You are given a task card with the question written on it, so you shouldn't have any problems in this part. If there is a word that you don't understand on the task card, don't ask the examiner - he/she is not allowed to help.

## Part 3

In this part of the test, the examiner is allowed to rephrase the question. If you don't understand, just say something like: "Sorry, can you explain that question in a different way please?"

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

Friday, March 17, 2017

## IELTS Speaking: slow down!

I talked about 'speed' in this week's reading and listening lessons, so let's now consider speaking speed.

In my experience, many students speak too quickly and this causes several problems. If you speak too quickly, you're more likely to make grammar and pronunciation mistakes, and you'll probably lose clarity and coherence. If you slow down, you'll have more time to think, to pronounce words clearly, and to correct yourself if necessary.

One more tip: Have you ever practised pronouncing words **very very** slowly? For example, can you pronounce every individual vowel and consonant sound in the word "slowly" (s...l...ow...l...y)? I've tried this with students and they are not usually very good at it - they find it easier to rush the pronunciation of words. Native speaker children, on the other hand, love pronouncing slowly and do it very well, so maybe it's something that adult language learners should practise more!

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(12\)](#)

Friday, April 07, 2017

## IELTS Speaking: not academic or formal

People doing the academic IELTS test are often misled by the word 'academic'. They think that they need to speak in a formal way using academic words.

But look at the following speaking questions / tasks:

- Do you like music?
- What's your favourite colour? Why?
- Describe a café you have been to.
- Describe a present you gave someone.
- Do you think it's more important to love your job or to earn a good salary?

I hope it's clear that these questions are not really formal or academic. Instead of trying to use academic words, just aim to speak in a "normal conversation" style. This is the style that I used in my sample answer in last week's [lesson](#).

Friday, April 14, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'holidays' topic**

Here are some recent part 1 questions that a student shared. Try to answer each question using just one sentence: give a direct answer and a reason.

1. Do you like holidays? Why / why not?
2. Do you prefer to travel or stay at home during holiday periods? Why?
3. What do most people do during their holidays in your country? Why?
4. When do you prefer to take your holidays? Why?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#)

Friday, April 21, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'holidays' answers**

Here are my sample answers for the questions that I asked you to look at last week. As usual, my part 1 answers are short and simple.

Remember that the priority in part 1 is to answer "fluently", not to show off your best language (you can do that in parts 2 and 3).

### ***1) Do you like holidays? Why / why not?***

Yes, I love holidays because I get the chance to take a break from work, to relax and unwind, and to spend time with my family.

### ***2) Do you prefer to travel or stay at home during holiday periods? Why?***

If I can I prefer to travel. It's nice to get away from everything and to have a change of scenery. Also, I like visiting new places and doing some sightseeing.

### ***3) What do most people do during their holidays in your country? Why?***

During the summer especially, I think most British people go somewhere hot and sunny, to escape from the British weather!

### ***4) When do you prefer to take your holidays? Why?***

I like taking my holidays just outside the main summer season, which is July and August. If you go on holiday in May, June or September, everything is cheaper and places aren't so crowded with tourists.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Friday, May 19, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: robots and shoes!**

I was looking through the recent questions that students share [here](#), and I noticed some interesting part 1 questions that I haven't seen before:

### **'Robots' topic:**



1. What do you think of robots?
2. Did you watch any cartoons related to robots in your childhood?
3. Do you like the idea of robots helping you at home or driving your car?

**'Shoes' topic:**

1. Do you like to buy expensive shoes?
2. When you buy shoes, do you prefer convenience or style?
3. Why do you think some people buy many pairs of shoes?
4. Have you ever bought shoes online?

Has anyone else had these topics in the speaking test? How would you answer these questions?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

Friday, May 26, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: strange topics, easy answers**

Don't worry if the questions in part 1 of the speaking test seem strange. Just give a direct answer and a reason as usual. For example:

**'Robots' topic:**

***1. What do you think of robots?***

I think robots are a clever idea. I'd love to have a robot that could speak to me and do things for me!

***2. Did you watch any cartoons related to robots in your childhood?***

I can't remember watching cartoons with robots, but I remember that I liked the robots in films like Star Wars.

***3. Do you like the idea of robots helping you at home or driving your car?***

Yes, definitely. It would be great to have a robot helper at home, and I like the idea of driverless cars - I think driving would be safer if cars were controlled by robots.

.....

**'Shoes' topic:**

***1. Do you like to buy expensive shoes?***

No. I tend to buy average-priced shoes because I'm more interested in comfort than expensive brands.

***2. When you buy shoes, do you prefer convenience or style?***

I mainly look for comfort and convenience. But obviously I consider the style too, because I do choose shoes that match the clothes I wear.

***3. Why do you think some people buy many pairs of shoes?***

I suppose they either like following the latest fashions, or they want a pair of shoes to match all of the different clothes or outfits that they have.

***4. Have you ever bought shoes online?***

No, I haven't. I always like to try shoes on before I buy them, to make sure that they fit properly and feel comfortable.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

Friday, July 14, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: five simple rules**

Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking test is supposed to be easy. You don't need to give 'difficult' answers, and you should try to avoid making mistakes.

### **Here are five simple rules for Speaking Part 1:**

1. Keep your answers short, then stop with confidence.
2. Answer the questions using full sentences.
3. Use words from the examiner's question in your answer.
4. If possible, give a reason for your answer.
5. Don't forget to say "yes" or "no" when necessary.

### **Here's an example to illustrate these points:**

Do you like parks?

Yes, I like parks because they are great places to relax. If you live in a city, a park is often the only place where you can escape from the noise and the traffic.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#)

Friday, July 21, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'numbers' topic**

In last week's [speaking lesson](#) I gave you 5 simple rules for your part 1 answers. Here are some more example answers in which I follow those rules:

### **1) Do you have a favourite number or a number that is special to you?**

Yes, my favourite number is... because it's the day I was born on, and it's my lucky number.

### **2) Do any numbers have special importance in your country?**

Yes. The number 7, for example, is supposed to be a special number in my country. It appears in so many places, like the seven days of the week, the seven main notes in music, and the seven ages of man that Shakespeare described.

### **3) Are you good at remembering numbers? Why / why not?**

No, I'm not very good at remembering numbers. I don't think it's necessary to learn them by heart; I just save them on my phone.

### **4) What numbers do people often have to memorise?**

The most important number to remember on a daily basis is the pin number for your bank card. Without this you can't pay for anything or get cash out.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#)

Friday, August 18, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking: 3 parts, same topic**

A useful way to practise IELTS speaking is to work on one main topic that might appear in all three parts of the test. For example, take the topic of "**television**":

### **Part 1 questions:**

1. Do you like watching television?
2. How much time do you spend watching TV programmes?
3. What types of programmes do you prefer? Why?
4. Do you think it's bad for children to watch television?

### **Part 2 task:**

Describe a television programme that you enjoyed watching. You should say  
- what type of TV programme it was  
- where you watched this programme  
- what the programme was about  
- and why you enjoyed watching it.

### **Part 3 questions:**

1. Why do you think television is so popular among people of all ages?
2. Do you think people will watch less television in the future?
3. Do you see television as being educational or just a form of entertainment?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

Friday, September 01, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: finish my sentences**

How would you finish my answers to the questions below?

### **1) Do you like watching television?**

Yes, I like watching television, especially in the evenings, because.....

### **2) How much time do you spend watching TV programmes?**

On an average day, I watch..... and..... , so I probably watch about.....

### **3) What types of programmes do you prefer? Why?**

My favourite types of programmes are..... and..... because.....

### **4) Do you think it's bad for children to watch television?**

Maybe too much television would be a bad thing, but I think that.....

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#)

Friday, October 27, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'health' topic**

Let's have a look at some questions from Cambridge IELTS book 12. I've answered the first two questions; can you answer the others in the same simple, direct way?

### ***1. Is it important to you to eat healthy food?***

Yes, I prefer to eat healthy home-cooked food, rather than fast food or pre-prepared meals, because I want to stay fit and healthy as I get older.

### ***2. If you catch a cold, what do you do to help you feel better?***

I usually take paracetamol tablets, and I sometimes buy a nasal spray or cough medicine. It also helps to stay at home and relax.

### ***3. Do you pay attention to public information about health?***

### ***4. What could you do to have a healthier lifestyle?***

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(22\)](#)

Friday, November 03, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking: pauses and hesitations**

A student asked me for advice about avoiding pauses and hesitations in the speaking test. So here are some tips:

- First, don't worry **too** much about this. It's normal, even for native speakers, to pause or hesitate to some extent. The more you worry, the more likely you are to hesitate.
- Don't "overthink". If you're thinking about grammar, linking or using "difficult" words, you're more likely to hesitate. Just focus on answering the question with the first idea that comes into your head.
- Slow down. Many candidates speak too quickly; hesitation or repetition occurs because their brains can't work fast enough to keep up.

### **But here's the main piece of advice: practise!**

Make yourself a collection of IELTS speaking questions (from this site or from the Cambridge books), and practise answering them without hesitating.

And don't just practise this once. Go through your list of questions many times (every day if necessary), and you'll find that you gradually improve, both in terms of the quality of your answers and in terms of fluency and lack of hesitation. Maybe you could even record yourself, perhaps once a week, so that you can analyse your own performance.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

Friday, November 10, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'rain' topic**

Here are some part 1 questions that a student sent me. I haven't seen this topic before, so it's a good one for us to practise.

- 1) Do you like rain? Why / why not?
- 2) Do you think that rain affects people's mood?
- 3) Does it often rain where you live?
- 4) Have you ever been caught in the rain without a coat or umbrella?

Can you give a short, simple, direct answer with a reason for each question, without making any mistakes?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Saturday, November 11, 2017

## **IELTS Grammar: 'rain' topic mistakes**

The following sentences were written by students below yesterday's lesson. Can you correct or improve them?

1. Yes, I like when it rains. Because it makes the weather awesome.
2. People say environment affects mood and I am with this.
3. After few seconds it started raining and I was beaten heavily.
4. Taichung, my city only rain in summer.
5. I don't like the rainy day, when it is dropping on my face, let me feel sticky.
6. I've got caught in the rain several times so far as I got nothing to cover me at that time.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#), [Vocabulary/Grammar](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(12\)](#)

### **CORRECTIONS FROM SIMON:**

First, I'll try to explain the problems.

- 1) Add the word "it" after "like". Also, change "it makes the weather awesome" - this is a very strange expression, and it doesn't explain why you like rainy weather.
- 2) You can say "I'm with you" when you agree with someone, but I wouldn't normally say "I am with THIS".
- 3) Write "a few". Also, change "I was beaten" - this sounds a bit funny or strange, even if you're using it in a figurative way.
- 4) The city doesn't rain! "It" rains in my city.
- 5) "let me feel" should be changed to "it makes me feel". I would also change "dropping" and "feel sticky". We need to find a 'more English' way to express these ideas.
- 6) "so far as" doesn't work in this context.

Posted by: [Simon](#) | [Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 14:58](#)

### **FROM SIMON (continued)**

So, here are my corrected versions:

- 1) Yes, I like **it** when it rains because **it makes the air feel clean and fresh**.

(Note: I added my own ending, instead of using the "awesome" idea)

- 2) People say **that the** environment affects **people's** mood, and I **agree** with this.
- 3) After **a** few seconds it started raining and I was **drenched**.
- 4) In my city, Taichung, **it** only rains in **the** summer.
- 5) I don't like rainy days, because I hate feeling wet and sticky.
- 6) I've **been** caught in the rain several times **when I had** nothing to cover me.

Posted by: Simon | [Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 15:07](#)

Friday, November 17, 2017

## **IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'rain' answers**

Here are my answers to the 'rain' questions from last Friday's lesson. Remember: there's no need to show off in this part of the speaking test, so short, simple answers are best.

### ***1) Do you like rain? Why / why not?***

No, not at all. It rains far too often in Manchester, where I live, and I'm fed up of it; I wish we had more sun!

### ***2) Do you think that rain affects people's mood?***

Yes, definitely. I think rainy days and grey skies can be a bit sad and depressing. Where I live, people are much more cheerful when the sun comes out.

### ***3) Does it often rain where you live?***

Yes, unfortunately it does. As I said, Manchester is known for being a rainy place; you can't trust the weather here, because it can cloud over and start raining at any moment.

### ***4) Have you ever been caught in the rain without a coat or umbrella?***

Yes, many times. Just last week I went out without an umbrella and got soaked; I did have a coat on, but it didn't really help.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(9\)](#)

Saturday, November 18, 2017

## **IELTS Advice: part 1 speaking technique**

Did you notice how I answered each question in yesterday's lesson? Here's the first part of each of the four answers:

- No, not at all.
- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, unfortunately it does.
- Yes, many times.

After answering with these short phrases, I then explained my answers in more detail, using full sentences.

I think this is a nice technique that you could try. Start with a short "yes or no" answer (e.g. yes I do, no we don't, yes it certainly is...), and then explain your answer fully. Perhaps this technique will give you a few extra seconds to think before you give your full answer.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#), [Questions/Advice](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

## Posts in 2018

Friday, February 02, 2018

### IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'public transport' topic

A student sent me the following exam questions. How would you answer them?

1. Do you use public transport? Why / why not?
2. Which type of public transport do you prefer? Why?
3. How good is the public transport where you live?
4. Do you think people should use public transport more? Why / why not?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Speaking](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(20\)](#)

Friday, February 09, 2018

### IELTS Speaking Part 1: 'public transport' answers

Here are my answers to the questions that I showed you last Friday:

#### **1) Do you use public transport? Why / why not?**

These days I mostly drive, and the main reason is that my usual journeys are much faster by car. For example, the half-hour drive that I do twice a week would take me three times as long by train and bus.

#### **2) Which type of public transport do you prefer? Why?**

I definitely prefer the train. I like being able to stroll up and down, and on some trains I can book a seat with a table and a socket, so that I can do some work.

#### **3) How good is the public transport where you live?**

It's quite good. There's a train station not far from my house, and it's a direct line straight into the city centre. There are lots of bus routes too, and there's even a tram network in the centre of Manchester.

#### **4) Do you think people should use public transport more? Why / why not?**

Yes, as long as it's convenient for them. Public transport is obviously more environmentally friendly than private cars, so we could reduce air pollution by using it more.

