

# Master IELTS Speaking

## Course Material and Supplements

*For Academic and General  
Training Candidates*

**Ebrahim Tahasoni**

Cert TESOL, Academic IELTS 9.0

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## What's the test like?

The speaking test will take about 11 to 14 minutes to complete. There are three sections in total. These are as follows:

- **Part 1 – Introduction and interview.** This lasts for about 4 to 5 minutes. In this section, the Examiner will introduce him/herself and ask you questions about yourself.
- **Part 2 – Individual long turn.** Part 2 lasts for about three to four minutes. In this section, you will be asked to prepare and give a short talk for about one to two minutes on a given subject.
- **Part 3 – Two-way discussion.** Part 3 lasts for 4 to 5 minutes. In this section, you will be asked to have a short discussion linked to the subject you spoke about in part 2.

## Assessment

Overall, you will be assessed on your:

- fluency and coherence
- vocabulary
- range of grammar and accuracy
- pronunciation.

This means that all of your preparation must concentrate on these areas. Check the IELTS speaking band descriptor for a more detailed description of the criteria the examiner will use to assess your speaking.

## Part1 - Introduction and interview

During Part 1, the Examiner will introduce him/herself and ask you some questions about yourself. This is the start of the test, and it will set the scene for the remainder.

Think of the Examiner as being just like your teacher. In fact, most examiners are usually teachers, so they'll understand how you feel, because some of their own students will feel the same. They're not there to catch you out. Indeed, they'll want you to do well and will do everything that they can to make you feel comfortable.

The Examiner has a set of questions. When you're asked a question, try to answer it without repeating the whole question in your answer. For example:

**If you are asked** 'What's the most interesting thing about your hometown?'

**Don't reply** 'The most interesting thing about my hometown is...'

**Just say** 'It's...'

**Then, you can expand on your answer, if possible, by adding something like:** 'Most people find this interesting because...'

**You can then add a synonym of the words used by the Examiner. So, instead of interesting say something like:** 'Most people find this fascinating because...'

So, don't try to 'fill up' your answer by repeating the question back to the Examiner and try to add a little 'extra' to show off your English. Remember, it's a conversation with the Examiner. He/she will want to see if you are fluent and coherent. They can't do this if you just repeat back large chunks of a question! Examiners are looking for your own ideas.

The topics are usually very familiar and the Examiner normally asks you about yourself. Try to give examples and create ideas, willingly. Never say, 'I don't know.'

## Giving Full Answers

Impress the examiner with your ability to give full answers to his or her questions. To avoid simple yes or no answers or short responses generally, try using the **REDS** method to add detail to your initial response:

- Give a **Reason**
- Offer an **Example**
- Give **Details**
- **Speculate**

### REDS in Action:

**Question:** What job would you like to do?

**Answer (Reason):** I've always wanted to be a vet. I love animals and I think it would be a very rewarding job.

**Question:** What skills do you need for this job?

**Answer (Example):** I think you need to be sensitive to people's feelings. If you're dealing with their sick or injured pets, you need to be honest but also appreciate how they might be feeling.

**Question:** Where do you come from?

**Answer (Detail):** I come from Mashad in Iran. It's well known as a religious centre and is really crowded most of the year.

**Question:** Do you often go out to restaurants?

**Answer (Speculate):** Unfortunately, since I had my baby, no. If I had the chance I'd really like to eat out more often, especially in Chinese or Italian restaurants.

## Sample Part One Questions

### Family

- Do you have a large family or a small family?
- Can you tell me something about them?
- How much time do you manage to spend with members of your family?
- What sorts of things do you like to do together?
- Did/Do you get on well with your family? [Why?]

### Accommodation

- What kind of accommodation do you live in? What's it like?
- Have you always lived there?
- What are the main advantages of this [accommodation]?
- What changes would you like to make to improve it?
- Would it be easy for you to move to another accommodation?
- Do many people in your country live in such accommodation?

### Neighbourhood

- Which part of town do you live in?
- What's it like?
- What kind of shops are there in your neighbourhood?
- Do you get along well with your neighbours?
- What's difficult about living there?

### Education (students)

- What do you study?
- What is special about this subject?
- Is there anything you find difficult about it?
- Where do you study...? What's your university/college like?

### Education (graduates)

- Do you have higher education?
- What have you studied at university?
- What did you like about your studies?
- Was there anything you found difficult?

### Job

- What's your job?
- Is it a common job in your country?
- What are your working hours like?
- Do you get a lot of vacation and off time?
- Are you thinking of changing your job?

**Cold weather**

- Have you ever been in very cold weather? [When?]
- How often is the weather cold where you come from?
- Are some parts of your country colder than others? [Which parts?]
- Would you prefer to live in a hot place or a cold place? [Why?]

**Laughing**

- What kinds of things make you laugh?
- Do you like making other people laugh? [Why/Why not?]
- Do you think it's important for people to laugh? [Why/Why not?]
- Is laughing the same as feeling happy, do you think? [Why/Why not?]

**Keeping in contact with people**

- How do you usually contact your friends? [Why?]
- Do you prefer to contact different people in different ways? [Why?]
- Do you find it easy to keep in contact with friends and family? [Why/Why not?]
- In your country, did people in the past keep in contact in the same ways as they do today? [Why/Why not?]

**Daily Routine**

- What would you like to change in your daily routine?
- Are all your days the same?
- Tell me about your typical weekday and your typical weekend.
- What is the balance of work/study and free time in your normal day?

**Visitors**

- What would you suggest a visitor should see and do in your country?
- Are there any traditional arts or music you would recommend?
- Tell me about the kind of foreign visitors or tourists who go to your country.
- In what ways has tourism changed your country?

**Festivals**

- Tell me about the most important festival in your country.
- What special food and activities are connected with this festival?
- What do you most enjoy about it?
- Do you think festivals are important for a country? [Why?]

**Dancing**

- Do you enjoy dancing? [Why/Why not?]
- Has anyone ever taught you to dance? [Why/Why not?]
- Tell me about any traditional dancing in your country.
- Do you think that traditional dancing will be popular in the future? [Why/Why not?]

### Musical instruments

- Which instrument do you like listening to most? [Why?]
- Have you ever learned to play a musical instrument? [Which one?]
- Do you think children should learn to play a musical instrument at school? [Why/Why not?]
- How easy would it be to learn to play an instrument without a teacher? [Why?]

### Traffic where you live

- How do most people travel to work where you live?
- What traffic problems are there in your area? [Why?]
- How do traffic problems affect you?
- How would you reduce the traffic problems in your area?

### Your friends

- Do you prefer to have one particular friend or a group of friends? [Why?]
- Are your friends mostly your age or different ages? [Why?]
- What do you like doing most with your friend/s?
- The last time you saw your friends, what did you do together?
- What makes a friend into a good friend?
- Do you think it's important to keep in contact with friends you knew as a child? [Why/Why not?]

### Food and cooking

- What kinds of food do you like to eat?
- What kind of new food would you like to try? [Why?]
- Do you like cooking? [Why/Why not?] What was the last meal you cooked?
- Do you prefer home-cooked food or food from restaurants? [Why?]

### Leisure

- Do you have any hobbies or interests? [What are they?]
- How did you become interested in (*whatever hobby/interest the candidate mentions*)?
- What is there to do in your free time in (*candidate's hometown/village*)?
- How do you usually spend your holidays?
- Is there anywhere you would particularly like to visit? [Why?]

### Your favourite place

- What place do you most like to visit?
- How often do you visit this place? Why do you like it so much?
- Is it popular with many other people?
- Has it changed very much since you first went there? [In what way?]

### Your country

- Which part of your country do most people live in?
- Tell me about the main industries there.
- How easy is it to travel around your country?
- Has your country changed much since you were a child?

**Colour**

- What's your favourite colour? [Why?]
- Do you like the same colours now as you did when you were younger? [Why/Why not?]
- What can you learn about a person from the colours they like?
- Do any colours have a special meaning in your culture?

**Entertainment**

- Do you prefer relaxing at home or going out in the evening? [Why?]
- When you go out for an evening, what do you like to do?
- How popular is this with other people in your country?
- Is there any kind of entertainment you do not like? [Why/Why not?]

**Clothes**

- How important are clothes and fashion to you? [Why/Why not?]
- What kind of clothes do you dislike? [Why?]
- How different are the clothes you wear now from those you wore 10 years ago?
- What do you think the clothes we wear say about us?

**Fruits**

- Do you eat fruits?
- How often do you eat fruits?
- Where do you buy your fruits from?
- Do you think it's important for people to eat fruits? [Why/Why not?]

**Books**

- Do you like reading books?
- What kind of books do you like to read? [Why?]
- Where do you like to read? [Why?]
- Do others in your family read books too?
- Do you usually buy your books from a special place? [Where?]

**Telephone calls**

- How often are you on the phone?
- Do you like calling friends or family more often? [Why?]
- Did you call your friends a lot when you were a child?
- Do you think children should have to pay their own telephone bills? [Why/Why not?]

**Technology at home/office**

- How often do you use electric appliances at home/office?
- How do you think they help you with your chores?
- Are there any other advantages?
- Are there any drawbacks to using these appliances?
- Do you think people should use electric appliances more often or less often than they do now? [Why/Why not?]

## Part 2 - Individual long turn

During Part 2, you'll be given a topic on a task card which you will NOT be able to change. You'll be given about one minute to prepare. Then you'll be required to speak for about two minutes on the topic, by yourself. During this time, the Examiner won't interrupt you and won't ask you any questions.

Use the time to plan what you're going to say! A lot of candidates don't plan what they're going to say. You won't impress the Examiner if you start speaking immediately without planning, whatever your level of English. Always make a brief written plan, as this will help to keep you on the subject. By following the plan, you won't wander away from the points you're being asked about. The point is, if your talk isn't organised, you'll lose marks. Remember, you're being tested on your fluency and coherence. Coherence means that you must follow a logical and clear argument when you speak.

Don't worry if you have to make up what you are going to say. You're not been tested on the factual content of what you say, but more on how you say it in English. Keep to the point, and make what you say relevant. Being relevant is just as important as being fluent. In fact, you won't be able to say more than about 200 to 250 words in the two minutes you have available. So, never worry that you won't be able to fill the time! Two minutes will go really quickly... if you have a plan.

Also, don't worry if you don't get around to covering all the details mentioned in the task card. In other words, if your speech is cut short by the examiner at the end of the two minutes when you are still talking about, say, the third point on the card and have not yet addressed the last question, you would not be penalised for this. The prompts on the task card are to give you ideas to help you sustain the long turn. You are assessed on the sample of language you give rather than on whether you use all the prompts.

The task card usually asks you to describe something and then give reasons for your choice. So, for each point, write only one or two words for each prompt. In total, you should only write about 20 words in your plan.

During your planning, try the following:

- Write notes and don't write whole sentences.
- Write the points in a list and in order.
- Make a gap between, or draw a line between, words relating to description and explanation.
- Use nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives for your notes.

As you speak, look at the list that you've made so that you can organise your answer. This will ensure that you answer all parts of the task. Think about connecting words and phrases that will guide you as you speak. However, don't try to write these down in the notes; you won't have enough time. Try to practise your organisation as much as you can before taking the test. Practise making notes and then using them to help you speak. Learn how to build what you say, around your brief notes.

Don't try to learn set phrases before taking the test, as this will just sound false. But, do learn words and phrases that will prompt and guide you when planning your talk. One good way to practise is to record yourself. By making a plan, and then recording yourself for two minutes, you can see how much you need to write down to fill two minutes. Remember, only use headings in your planning notes. Don't try to write full sentences; you simply won't have the time.

Here's a list of prompt words that you can use to help you prepare:

- Introductory phrases - when you start your talk:
  - I'm going to talk about...
  - I'd like to talk about...
  - I want to talk about...
  - What I'm going to talk about is...
  - I'm going to describe...
  
- Developing phrases - when you want to expand your argument:
  - First of all...
  - Secondly,...
  - Additionally,...
  - Another thing...
  - Another reason why...
  - What's more,...
  
- Background phrases - when you want to add some detail:
  - It's near...
  - It happened...
  - It took place...
  - It's been going on for/since...
  - At that time...

- Impression phrases - when you want to say something that made an impression on you:
  - ... impressed me
  - ... motivated me
  - ... moved me
  - ... disturbed me
  - ... touched me deeply
  - ... had an effect on me
  - ... affected me
  - ... influenced me.
  
- Things you like phrases - when you want to describe or talk about things you like:
  - I like... most of all
  - I enjoy...
  - I love doing...
  - I'm a big/great fan of...
  - I'm really keen on...
  - I'm so much into...
  - ... really appeals to me because...

You can also use synonyms of words which appear on the task card given to you by the Examiner. For example, if you see the word 'benefits', think of synonyms such as 'payback', 'profit', 'advantages', 'positive aspects' and so on. By using synonyms in this way, you'll show the Examiner that you're fluent in your use of English and that you're capable of using extra words.

Try to prepare your own examples of synonyms for common words. A good method of doing this is making a list of common words and then, using a word processing package on a PC, making an equivalent list of synonyms.

## Sample Topic One

### Useful Vocabulary

Useful vocabulary and expressions

- turning point
- crucial (adj.)
- decisive (adj.)
- important (adj.)
- graduation (n.)
- marriage (n.)
- marry (v.)
- getting married
- divorce (n.)
- divorce (v.)
- birth (n.)
- promotion (n.)
- death (n.)
- die (v.)
- give up (n.)

I guess my second year at high school was a crucial year for me. 1999 was a turning point in my life. 2001 marked the beginning of my professional career. I was hired by a large company. I was accepted in university for a course in metallurgy. I got married in the summer and I moved to Tehran with my wife in September. I was promoted to sales manager in late November that year. In May, my first child was born and we named her Anahita. 2008 was a great year for me because I gave up smoking and started a new job. My father-in-law passed away in the winter and left us a sizable fortune! My father was diagnosed with cancer and we had to move into my parents' house to look after him. I think the events of this year made me stronger emotionally. At the end of that year, I was on the road to success in my career. The financial accomplishments I had in 1998 helped me develop a better life for my family.

### Talk about an important year in your life.

You should say:

how old you were

what important things you remember from that year

where these things happened

and say why you think that year was important.

### Exam Remedy: Preparing Notes

In the second section you will have one minute to prepare. Use this time to prepare notes to support yourself during the talk. These notes must be very brief and only contain the main points of your answer.

You can use bullet lists to organise your ideas:

**2000**

- 18
- 1. Driving certificate-Eslami Institute  
2. Started university-Birjand
- 1. Could drive  
2. University is important  
3. Met my closest friend there  
4. started to live independently

**Note:** Avoid writing full sentences in your notes. Write keywords or phrases only.

## Sample Topic Two

<p><b>Useful Vocabulary</b></p> <p>ancient (adj.)          historical (adj.)          pre-historic (adj.)          antique (adj.)          palace (n.)          castle (n.)          fort (n.)          amazing (adj.)          breath-taking (adj.)          impressive (adj.)          tomb (n.)          burial place</p>	<p>ruins (n.)          statue (n.)          inscription (n.)          monument (n.)          west/east/south/north of Iran          western/eastern/southern/northern parts of Iran          It is located in the western province of Ilam.          It is situated 20 kilometres to the west of Mashad, a major city in the northeast of Iran.          It is in Naghshe Jahan square in the city of Isfahan.          Its historical value is undeniable.          Pasargad is definitely one of the most interesting historical sites in the region.          Persepolis is a symbol of Iranian historical and cultural heritage.          These inscriptions are remnants of the ancient Maad civilisation.</p>
<p><b>Describe an interesting historic place.</b></p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what it is</li> <li>where it is located</li> <li>what you can see there now</li> </ul> <p>and explain why this place is interesting</p>	
<p><b>Part 3 (Discussion) Questions</b></p> <p>How do people in your country feel about protecting historic buildings?          Do you think an area can benefit from having an interesting historic place locally? In what way?          What do you think will happen to historic places or buildings in the future? Why?          How were you taught history when you were at school?          Are there other ways people can learn about history, apart from at school? How?          Do you think history will still be a school subject in the future? Why?</p>	
<p><b>Sample Answer Notes</b></p> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><b>Pasargad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burial place of King Cyrus</li> <li>• 80km from Shiraz, S-Iran</li> <li>• 1. Cyrus's tomb 2. Castle remains</li> <li>• 1. Symbol of Iranian heritage 2. Great king, yet very simple tomb</li> </ul> </div>	

## Sample Topic Three

### Useful Vocabulary

visit (v.)

located (p.p.)

situated (p.p.)

famous (adj.)

climate (n)

weather (n.)

cuisine (n.)

countryside (n.)

downtown (n.)

suburb (n.)

public transportation

Shiraz is located in south-central Iran, about 920 kilometres south of Tehran.

I went there last summer to visit my uncle.

My trip to Tehran was of business nature.

I went there on business.

Isfahan is famous for Zayanderood, a beautiful river that runs through the city.

Shiraz is host to millions of visitors and tourists every year.

There are many museums to visit.

The people are very hospitable and friendly.

The restaurants are fantastic and the local cuisine is excellent.

What interested me most about this city was that it was very clean and orderly despite all the traffic.

I guess what I liked most about Tabriz was the weather.

Getting around was quite easy.

The city had a fantastic countryside with a river and many farms.

### Describe a city you have visited which has impressed you.

You should say:

where it is located

why you visited it

what is there to see

and what you liked about it.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

What are the main facilities in a large modern city?

How do you compare a modern city with a small town?

Do you prefer to live in a large modern city? Why?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in large cities?

Why, in your opinion, do people migrate from small towns to large cities?

How stressful is life in large cities nowadays? Has this always been this way?

How do you think cities will change in the future?

## Sample Topic Four

### Useful Vocabulary

novelist (n.)

author (n.)

popular (adj.)

character (n.)

detective (n.)

crime (n.)

thriller (v.)

romance (n.)

science-fiction (n.)

fiction (n.)

novel (n.)

masterpiece (n.)

contemporary (adj)

major author

short story

My favourite author is Jules Verne, a French science-fiction writer who lived in the 19th century.

She usually wrote about human connections and relationships.

His stories are mostly concerned with crime and criminals.

She could develop highly-complicated characters.

The plots are very exciting and thrilling.

His stories are quite imaginable and convincing.

The reason why I'm a real fan of his is that he focused on delicate human emotions such as love.

In this masterpiece, he describes the life of a British businessman in India.

The endings of his novels are fantastic and unpredictable.

### Talk about your favourite writer (author).

Talk about:

who he/she is

what he/she usually writes about

what his or her best work is

and why you like this author.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

How interested are people in reading where you live?

How have the reading habits of people in your society changed in the past 20 years?

Do you think writers should be allowed to express their ideas in any way they desire?

Are people nowadays reading more books than they did before?

What kind of books do people mostly read in their free time in your country?

Does people's interest in books change as they get older? How?

## Sample Topic Five

### Useful Vocabulary

publicity (n.)  
 commercial (n.)  
 advertisement (n.)  
 ad (n.)  
 promotion (n.)  
 promote (v.)  
 advertise (n.)  
 business (n.)  
 plot (n.)  
 private business  
 non-profit organisation

A commercial I enjoy watching is an ad for a new car from Ford.  
 This commercial advertises a new toothbrush from Oral-B.  
 Sanford is a privately-owned business and makes markers and pens as well as other school or office stationary.  
 The commercial compares their product with ordinary products from other companies.  
 The commercial demonstrates the capabilities of a new tool.  
 The director has employed special effects and animation to display the effects of this new product.  
 The plot is very amusing.  
 The comparison is made in a very interesting way.  
 This commercial has a moral lesson.

### Describe a TV commercial you like very much.

You should talk about:

- which business or organisation sponsors it
- what it is about
- whether it has been successful
- and why you like it very much.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

To what extent do you think people's decisions are affected by advertisement through the mass media?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of advertising?

What should people do in order not to be deceived by misleading advertisements?

What kind of advertisement is the most popular where you live?

In your opinion, is enough attention paid to marketing in your country?

What are the most important marketing strategies in your country?

## Sample Topic Six

### Useful Vocabulary

festival

festivities

celebration

parade

carnival

party

firecrackers/crackers

fireworks

bonfire

chant (n)

chant (v)

It is held on the last Tuesday night of the Iranian year.

It is observed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of the Iranian month of Azar.

This night marks the end of the winter.

This is the longest night of the year.

People go out to the streets and the countryside.

People of all ages indulge in the festivities of the day.

Young people dance around, holding hands and chanting songs.

Bonfires are lit here and there.

It's a day/night of national pride and happiness.

The reason why I like this day/night is that...

I love this festival because...

I always find this a very delightful and enjoyable celebration.

The reason why this festival holds such significance is that...

The reason why this is such an important festival is that...

### Describe a festival that is important in your country.

You should say:

when the festival occurs

what you did during it

what you like or dislike about it

and explain why this festival is important.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

Why do you think festivals are important events in the working year?

Would you agree that the original significance of festivals is often lost today? Is it good or bad, do you think?

Do you think that new festivals will be introduced in the future? What kind?

What role do the media play in festivals, do you think?

Do you think it's good or bad to watch festivals on TV? Why?

How may globalisation affect different festivals around the world?

## Sample Topic Seven

### Useful Vocabulary

once

when

greatly

to some extent

in many ways

in a way

somehow

suddenly

nostalgic (adj.)

homesick (adj.)

happy

delighted/delighting

flattered/flattering

amazed/amazing

confused/confusing

depressed/depressing

embarrassed/embarrassing

irritated/irritating

annoyed/annoying

frightened/frightening

One of the things I can remember most clearly is my first day at school.

I remember once I was thrown out of the class for being mischievous.

One Friday morning, when I was 8 years old, my parents took me to the zoo.

This happened about/nearly 20 years ago when I was 9.

When I was at school, I used to chatter with my classmates during class time.

I had barely learnt how to speak then.

It was really frightening.

I was quite frightened.

This experience influenced my life in a number of ways.

This incident greatly affected my later life.

### Describe a memory of your childhood.

You should say:

when it happened

what exactly happened

whether you remember it as a pleasant or unpleasant memory

and explain how it affected your later life.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

What kinds of memories are more pleasant for people?

Are pleasant memories linked to anything special in people's lives? How?

Does our interpretation of certain memories (such as incidents at school) change as we grow older?

How do memories affect our choices in our lives?

What kinds of memories can you remember more clearly? Is it the same for other people you know?

Why do people talk about their memories for others?

What kinds of memories do people tend to share with others? Why?

Are there any special events in your country where people talk about their memories for others? How?

## Sample Topic Eight

### Useful Vocabulary

stationary store

shoe store

grocery store

clothing store

boutique (n.)

florist (n.)

downtown (n.)

business district

shopping centre

department store

chain store

shopping mall

interior (n.)

exterior (n.)

interior design

windows (n. pl.)

muzak (n.)

promotion (n.)

sale (n.)

bargain (v.)

bargain (n.)

One of the stores I love to shop from is a small boutique, called "Rangarang", which sells designer items and posh clothes.

There's a nice grocery store about half a block from my house, which is one of my favourite places to shop at.

The store has a beautiful decoration.

The store interior is painted in blue and is decorated with stripes of coloured cloth.

The windows are full of colourful items like ties and shirts.

The shopkeeper is very kind and tactful.

The salespeople are polite and helpful.

I usually buy my groceries there every week.

My family and I love to buy our clothes at this boutique.

### Talk about a favourite shop or store.

You should say:

where it is and what it looks like

what it sells

what you like to buy there

and say why you like the shop so much.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

How do people decide on where to shop from in your country?

How popular are department stores and malls in your country?

Why do people tend to shop from malls and supermarkets in large cities?

Are large supermarkets a threat to smaller shops? How?

What are the advantages of shopping from large department stores? Are there any disadvantages?

In what ways can shops improve their service quality?

## Sample Topic Nine

### Useful Vocabulary

Splendid (adj.)

exotic (adj.)

distant (adj.)

forest (n.)

beach (n.)

spa (n.)

sunny/windy/cloudy/warm

cold/cool/humid/snowy/foggy

snow-covered mountains

ski slopes

go skiing

play volleyball

relax (v.)

meditate (v.)

go fishing

go horseback riding

read books

go shopping

collect seashells

My best choice for a holiday resort is Kish Island in the Persian Gulf.

I usually travel to Sar-Eyn to spend my holidays.

It's a 2-hour ride from Tabriz in Western Iran.

It's located about 55 kilometres north of Tehran on the coast of the Caspian sea.

There are exotic beaches and the sun always shines.

The weather is splendid, usually warm and sunny all year round.

The slopes are usually covered with snow all winter long.

I often go there to relax.

We can go fishing and horseback riding all day long.

### Talk about your favourite holiday resort.

You should say:

where it is

when you last visited there

what you can do there

and explain why you like this place very much.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

What sorts of holidaymakers tend to visit your country?

What are some of the major tourist attractions in your country?

What is the attitude of people in your country towards tourism and visitors from other countries?

How has the attitude of people in your country changed towards tourism in the past 20 years?

What are some of the advantages of tourism for local people? Are there any disadvantages?

How do you think international tourism can affect globalisation?

What are some of the consequences of travelling for foreign visitors to other countries?

What financial consequences do foreign visitors have on local economies?

## Sample Topic Ten

### Useful Vocabulary

Admire (v.)  
 respect (v.)  
 look up to (v.)  
 sceptical (adj.)  
 fabulous (adj.)  
 admirable (adj.)  
 approve of (v.)  
 make great friends  
 study (v.)  
 review lessons  
 watch films  
 go shopping  
 chat (v.)  
 talk on the phone

Sanaz has been one of my best friends for the past three years.  
 I have known Mehdi for about fifteen years.  
 My parents initially were sceptical about her, but as they got to know her more, they started to like her too.  
 My parents look up to him very much and approve of our friendship.  
 He is a wonderful friend and a brilliant student.  
 We usually get together to review and study university lessons.  
 We like to chat on the phone every now and then to catch up on each other.  
 We go hiking and mountain climbing together on holidays.  
 I admire her very much for a number of reasons.  
 The reason why I respect him is that he has always been very hardworking and responsible in his career.

### Describe a friend whom you admire very much.

Talk about:

how long you have known him or her  
 whether your parents like him or her too  
 what you do together

and explain what is very admirable about him or her.

### Part 3 (Discussion) Questions

What do you think are the most important qualities for friends to have?  
 Which are more important to people, their family or their friends? Why?  
 What do you think causes friendship to break up?  
 What other types of relationship, apart from friends or family, are important in people's lives today?  
 Have relationships with neighbours where you live changed in recent years? How?  
 How important do you think it is for a person to spend some time alone? Why/Why not?

## Part 3 – Two-way discussion

The last part of the test is where you and the Examiner have a discussion linked to the subject from Part 2. There is no set format to this part of the test and the Examiner is free to develop conversation as he/she sees fit. Again, the Examiner isn't trying to catch you out. However, an Examiner will want to do things such as invite you to comment and expand on a theme.

Remember that the Examiner asks you a range of questions to encourage you to speak English.

Again, remember that this part of the test only lasts for four to five minutes. This means that the Examiner can only really ask you some six to eight questions. So, don't panic!

Here are some hints to help you:

- Listen carefully to the Examiner's questions.
- Try to be fluent and only correct yourself when it's easy to do so.
- Don't focus on your mistakes; move on.
- Try to go into detail when you explain your opinion.
- Give reasons for what you say.
- Keep to the topic.
- If you don't understand the question, ask for it to be repeated. Never answer a question you don't understand.
- Don't worry if you have to make up an answer. You are being marked on your ability to speak English, not the truth of the content!
- Don't speak quickly or slowly just speak clearly.
- Concentrate on the message you are trying to give.
- Don't worry about saying too much! The Examiner will stop you if he/she wants to.
- When you say something, try to qualify it and expand it to support your opinion or reason.
- Don't overuse words such as 'actually', 'moreover', 'what is more' and so on. This will come across as padding and won't demonstrate your use of English.
- If you have time for a conclusion try saying something like: '...and so I ...'
- Follow the Examiner's lead. He/she might change direction quickly by asking an unexpected question for you to comment on. For example: What about...? Here, you might answer something like: 'Well, that's possible, but I think that...'
- Don't try to use one breath to say everything. Pace yourself! Listen to how other people speaking English pace themselves during speech. You will find it useful to listen to spoken English, such as on radio programmes, to see how this is achieved.



# Ideas for IELTS Topics

# Common IELTS Topics

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1. Advertising
2. Animal Rights: testing on animals, vegetarianism, zoos
3. Cities: urbanisation, problems of city life
4. Crime: police, punishments/prisons, rehabilitation, capital punishment
5. Education: studying abroad, technology in education, education in developing countries, higher education, home-schooling, bad behaviour, corporal punishment, single sex education, streaming (grouping children according to ability)
6. Environment: global warming, impact of humans on the environment, solutions to environment problems, waste/rubbish, litter, recycling, nuclear power
7. Family: family size, working parents, negative effects on children, divorce, care for old people
8. Gender: gender and education, gender and work, women's and men's role in the family
9. Genetic Engineering: positives, negatives, genetically modified foods
10. Global Issues: problems in developing countries, how to help developing countries, immigration, multi-cultural societies, globalisation
11. Government and Society: what governments can do, public services, censorship, video cameras in public places
12. Guns and Weapons: gun ownership and possession, police and guns, nuclear weapons, armed forces
13. Health: diet, exercise, state health systems, private healthcare, alternative medicine, stress
14. Housing and Architecture: state housing, old buildings, modern/green buildings
15. International Language: English as an international language
16. Money: money and society, consumerism
17. Personal Development: happiness, success, nature or nurture
18. Sport and Leisure: professional/competitive sport, sport salaries, sport and politics
19. Tourism: positives, negative effects on environment, future of tourism
20. Traditions and Modern Life: losing traditional skills, traditional customs
21. Transport: traffic problems and solutions, public transport, road safety
22. Television, Internet and Mobile Phones: positives and negatives, Internet compared to newspapers and books
23. Water: importance of clean water, water supply, water should be free, bottled water
24. Work: same job for life, self-employment, unemployment, work/life balance, technology and work, child labour

Source: <http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-advice-you-need-ideas-and-opinions.html>

## 1. Advertising

### Positives of Advertising

Advertising is a key part of modern business  
Companies need to tell customers about their products  
Advertisements inform us about the choices we have  
Advertising is a creative industry that employs many people  
Without advertising we would have less choice  
Without advertising there would be higher unemployment  
Advertising is a form of modern art  
People enjoy adverts

### Negatives of Advertising

Advertising manipulates people  
It aims to persuade people that buying a product will make them happier  
Advertisers focus on selling a brand image  
They use glamorous, successful people  
We now live in a consumer culture  
We are persuaded to follow the latest trend  
We are encouraged to associate certain brands with a higher status  
Advertisers often aim their marketing at children  
Children can easily be influenced by advertisements.  
Children put pressure on parents to buy them things

### Opinions about Advertising

Advertising should be regulated  
Advertising aimed at children should be controlled or even banned  
Unhealthy foods should not be marketed in a way that attracts children  
Products that can be risk to healthy should display warnings  
In some countries it is illegal to advertise cigarettes on television  
Warnings must be displayed on cigarette packets  
However, advertising is necessary in free market economies  
It creates demand for products  
Governments should only censor false information or products that are harmful

## 2. Animal rights

### Arguments for Animal Testing

Animals are used in important scientific research  
It is necessary to do medical tests on new drugs  
Animal testing helps to advance medical and scientific knowledge  
Many important medical discoveries involved experimentation on animals

Researchers aim to minimize the suffering that animals experience  
Testing for the cosmetics industry is now banned in many countries

#### **Arguments against Animal Testing**

The benefits of research using animals do not justify the suffering caused  
There are alternative methods of research  
The lives of animals should be respected  
Humans have no moral right to do experiments on animals

#### **Arguments for Vegetarianism**

Vegetarians do not eat foods that are produced by killing animals  
Many people choose a vegetarian diet for moral or health reasons  
A healthy diet is possible without eating meat  
It is unnecessary to kill animal for food  
A vegetarian diet may reduce the risk of disease like cancer  
Many people question the treatment of animals in factory farms

#### **Arguments against Vegetarianism**

Vegetarians do not eat a balanced diet  
In many cultures, meat is the main ingredient in traditional meals  
Meat-eaters argue that animals are below humans in the food chain  
It is completely natural for us to kill them for food  
Our aim should be improve farming methods  
Farms should produce organic food  
Positives of Zoos  
Zoos play an important role in wildlife conservation  
They can help to protect endangered species  
Zoos allow scientists to study animals and their behaviour  
Zoos are educational, interesting and fun  
Children, in particular, enjoy learning about animals  
Zoos provide job opportunities.

#### **Negatives of Zoos**

Zoo animals are kept in artificial environments  
They are kept in cages or have limited space  
Zoo animals rely on humans  
They lose the freedom to hunt for food  
They best way to save endangered species is by protecting natural habitats.  
Some people believe that zoos are unethical  
Zoos exhibits animals with the aim of making money  
We have no right to use animals for entertainment and profit.

### **3. Cities**

**Reasons for Urbanization**

People move to cities in search of job opportunities  
Cities offer greater employment possibilities and a higher standard of living  
People migrate to cities from the countryside  
Traditional activities like farming need fewer workers nowadays

**Negatives of City Life**

Life in cities has its drawbacks  
The cost of living is higher than in rural areas  
Some people do not manage to find work  
Housing is usually much more expensive  
Homelessness and poverty are common on cities  
There is a gap between rich and poor  
Life in cities can be extremely stressful  
There are problems like traffic congestion and crime  
Cities lack a sense of community  
People do not even know their neighbor  
Cities are sometimes described as “concrete jungles”.

**Pedestrian Areas**

Pedestrian zones in city centre can improve the local environment  
Banning cars encourages people to walk or cycle  
Many European cities have built bicycle lanes  
Dependence on cars is linked to health problems like obesity  
People who walk or cycle regularly are generally healthier  
Pedestrian areas are safer and more attractive for both residents and tourists

**4. Crime****Police and Crime Prevention**

The job of the polices is to catch criminals  
They must also prevent crime and make communities safer  
There should be an increase in the number of police officers on the streets  
Police officers should be seen as part of the community  
They should be involved with education and prevention  
The police should be in close contact with schools  
They should focus on young people who have dropped out of school.  
These teenagers may become involved with gangs

**Punishments/Prisons**

Fines are used as punishment for minor crimes  
If the crime is more serious, prison is the most common punishment  
Some criminals pose a threat to society

They are put in prison to ensure the safety of other citizens

### **Negatives of Prisons**

Criminals are put together

They make friends with other offenders

Many prisoners re-offend when they are released

A criminal record makes finding a job more difficult

### **Rehabilitation**

Another aim of prisons is rehabilitation

Prisoners receive education or vocational training

Prisoners should learn personal skills and specific job skills

Punishment could make prisoners' behavior worse

Rehabilitation aims to make them better citizens

Rehabilitated prisoners are less likely to re-offend

### **Capital punishment**

Supporters say that capital punishment deters crime

Fear of the death penalty stops people from committing offences

The death penalty shows that crime is not tolerated

It is a form of revenge

The cost of imprisonment is avoided

The offender cannot pose a threat to others

### **Against Capital Punishment**

Innocent people could be wrongly convicted and executed

Crime rates are not necessarily reduced

Many criminals do not think they will be caught

Capital punishment is not a good deterrent

Executing prisoners creates a violent culture and encourages revenge

We have no right to take another human life

### **Community service**

Community service is a way to reform offenders

It could be a solution to prison overcrowding

It avoids the cost of imprisonment

It makes offenders useful in their local communities

They are required to clean streets or talk to school groups

Offenders repay their community

They avoid the negative influence that prison can have

**Against community service**

Community service is not a sufficient punishment  
Criminals should be locked up, away from their victims

**Crime in the Media**

Crime is one of the main subjects of most news programs.  
The mass media focus on violent and sensational crimes  
This lead to fear of crime among the public  
Sensational stories attract more viewers or readers  
The media report crime stories in order to increase their audience

**5. Education****Benefits of education**

Education gives people knowledge and skills  
People with qualification are more likely to find work  
They can earn a higher salary  
They can contribute positively to society  
Schools aim to teach young people moral values such as tolerance and sharing  
Schools prepare children to be members of a society

**Benefits of Studying Abroad**

Foreign institutions may offer better courses  
Many students want to attend a prestigious university  
The best universities employ teachers who are experts in their fields  
Qualifications gained abroad can open the door to better job opportunities  
Living abroad can broaden students' horizons  
Overseas students are exposed to different cultures and customs.  
They become more independent  
They are responsible for cooking, cleaning and paying bills  
They will learn a foreign language

**Drawback of studying abroad**

Living and studying abroad can be difficult  
Students have problems with paperwork such as visa applications  
The language barrier can be a problem  
Students have to find accommodation and pay bills  
Studying in a foreign language is challenging  
Living alone in an unfamiliar culture can cause homesickness

**Technology in Education: Advantages**

Technology is a powerful tool to engage students

Technology can make lessons much more interesting  
Students can do research using online resources  
Students can study at their own place  
Adults can take distance learning courses  
Students can study whenever and wherever they want  
Students also learn skills which are useful for their future jobs  
For example, they learn to write reports using a word processor

#### **Technology in Education: Disadvantages**

People rely too much on computers  
Young learners do not become proficient in some basic skills  
They use word processors and spelling may suffer  
People should be able to write a letter by hand  
Technology is no substitute for a real teacher  
Learners need a structured course  
An experienced teacher knows what materials to choose  
Computers are expensive to maintain and can be unreliable

#### **Technology in Education: Opinion**

Institutions should supplement traditional teaching with the use of technology  
Technology is part of everyday life  
It can enhance a teacher's lessons  
Students can use online resources to help with homework  
Students must still learn to write by hand  
They should still use traditional sources of information such as books

#### **Education in Developing countries: Problems**

Children often have to work from an early age  
There are no schools in many areas  
Families do not have access to books or computers  
Literacy rates are often low  
People in developing countries need knowledge and skills  
Education is the key to improving the economy of these countries

#### **Education in developing countries: solutions**

Developed countries could help developing nations by providing money  
They could invest in schools and technology  
They could supply the funds to build schools and pay for teachers  
Children need to have access to free schooling  
Computer equipment could be donated  
The Internet can expose students to a world of knowledge and information  
Governments should make education compulsory for all children  
They should encourage parents to send their children to school

Governments of developed and developing countries must work together

### **Higher education: Advantages (also see “benefits of education”)**

There are many benefits to going to university

A degree can open the door to better employment prospects

Economies are becoming increasingly knowledge-based

Most jobs require specific knowledge and skills

Skilled workers are needed for sectors such as information technology and engineering

Repetitive manual jobs are now done by machine

Many factories have moved to developing countries

### **Higher education: Disadvantages**

A healthy economy needs a wide range of workers

Some manual workers will always be needed

A university degree is not necessary for many service professions

Practical training is more important in some industries

In the UK, for example, there is currently a shortage of plumbers

Their services are therefore becoming more and more expensive

### **Advantage of Home-schooling**

Some parents decide to educate their children at home

Some families live in isolated areas with poor transport

Other parents are not satisfied with local schools

Parents can respond to what their children need and how they learn best

One-to-one lessons allow much faster progress

The child can work at his or her own pace

Discipline problems are avoided by home-schooling

### **Disadvantages of home-schooling**

Most parents do not have the time to educate their children at home

One parent would need to give up work

School subjects are normally taught by up to ten different teachers

Most parents do not have the necessary knowledge or resources

Private tutors are expensive

Children will miss out on the social experience that school offers

At school, children learn how to get on with each other

Home-schooled children may lack social skills

Schools offer a better overall educational experience

### **Bad behaviour in schools: causes**

Bad behaviour is due to a lack of structure and discipline

There are too many children in some classes

Large classes are difficult to manage

May disruptive students come from an unstable family background  
Other parents are too lenient and spoil their children  
Some children are used to getting whatever they want  
Schools can do very little if they are not supported by parents

**Bad behaviour in schools: solutions**

Schools need a clear code of conduct  
Schools need a clear set of rules about behaviour  
They need to create a positive working atmosphere  
Teachers must have the power to punish disruptive students  
Schools should remove difficult children from lessons  
Schools need to work closely with parents  
Discipline could be lacking at home  
Parents must support the school rules  
They should take responsibility for their children's behaviour

**Corporal Punishment: Opinion**

Corporal Punishment is not a good idea  
Physical punishment is a way of controlling children using fear  
This does not promote trust between adults and children  
Children who are punished physically may become shy or resentful  
Corporal punishment creates an atmosphere of fear and anger

**Single Sex Education: Advantages**

Some people believe that male and female students should go to separate schools  
This is often for religious or cultural reasons  
Discipline problems might be avoided by separating boys and girls  
Boys and girls may learn in different ways and have different needs  
Student at single-sex schools often get better exam grades.

**Single-sex Education: Disadvantages**

Separating boys and girls is unnecessary  
It is unhealthy in terms of children's social development  
Many coeducational schools are extremely successful  
A mixed-sex environment is more representative of real life  
Coeducational schools provide children with better social skills for adult life

**Advantages of Streaming (grouping children according to ability)**

Some schools separate students according to their academic ability  
Teachers can work at the right speed for their students  
Teachers can plan more suitable lessons

High-level groups may progress faster  
Lower level groups can benefit from a slower pace  
Some teachers and parents support streaming for these reasons

### **Disadvantages of Streaming**

Grouping by ability may have a negative impact on students  
Children do not want to be seen as less intelligent than others  
Streaming could damage students' self esteem  
They may lose motivation  
Students from wealthier families tend to be better prepared  
Children from poorer families may receive less support from parents  
Mixed ability classes encourage everyone to achieve their potential.

## **6. Environment**

### **Global warming**

Gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat from the sun  
This causes global temperatures to rise  
This process is known as the greenhouse effect  
Human activity is a major factor in the rise of the greenhouse gases  
Factories and vehicles produce emissions and exhaust fumes  
Many developing countries are becoming industrialized  
The number of cars on our streets is growing  
Cheap air travel is allowing more people to fly

### **Effects of Global Warming**

Global warming will have a significant impact on our planet  
Rising temperature will cause melting of the polar ice caps  
Sea levels will rise  
We can expect more extreme weather conditions  
Flooding and droughts may become more common

### **Impacts of humans on the environment**

The increasing world population is putting pressure on natural resources  
Fossil fuels like oil and gas are running out  
We are destroying wildlife habitats  
We have cut down enormous areas of rainforest  
This has led to the extinction of many species of animals and plants

### **Solutions to environment problems**

Governments could introduce laws to limit emissions from factories  
They should invest in renewable energy from solar, wind or water power  
They could impose "green taxes" on drivers and airlines companies

Government campaigns should promote recycling  
Natural areas and wild animals should be protected  
Individuals should also try to be greener  
We should take fewer flights abroad for holidays  
We should take public transport rather than driving  
We should choose products with less packaging  
We should recycle as much as possible

### **Waste/rubbish**

The amount of waste we produce has increased  
This problem is a result of our consumer culture  
Products are not made to last  
If something breaks, we throw it away and buy a new one  
Advertisers encourage us to buy the newest fashions  
Packaging is an important part of selling  
Most foods are sold in non-biodegradable plastic packaging  
The amount of household waste is growing  
This waste ends up in landfill sites

### **Litter**

People do not think about the consequences of dropping rubbish  
They assume that somebody is paid to clean the streets  
Plastic packaging does not break down easily  
Most of the litter seen on streets is fast food packaging

### **Recycling and other solutions**

Companies should make goods that last longer  
They should not use so much packaging  
Governments should be stricter, about waste produced by companies  
They should put legal limits on packaging  
Consumers should avoid buying over-packaged products  
We should recycle and reuse useful materials.  
There are collection banks for glass, paper and plastic bottles  
Households can use several rubbish bins to separate waste  
Recycling saves energy and raw materials.

### **Nuclear Power: Positives**

There are several benefits to build more nuclear power stations  
Fossil fuel like oil and gas are running out  
Nuclear power is a sustainable energy source  
It can be used to produce electricity without wasting natural resources  
It could be replaced by the use of natural resources like coal, oil or gas  
Nuclear power stations are cleaner than fossil fuel power stations

They could help to reduce carbon emissions that cause global warming  
The risks of accidents are being reduced

### **Nuclear Power: negatives**

Opponents of nuclear power worry about the safety of power stations  
The building of new nuclear power stations is unpopular  
Nobody wants to live near one  
Nuclear waste disposal is a significant problem  
There is currently no way to decontaminate radioactive material  
People worry that terrorists could steal radioactive materials  
It is safer to produce energy from solar, wind or water power.

## **7. Family**

### **Family size**

Families in many countries are not as large as they used to be  
We tend to live in small nuclear families rather than large extended families  
Parents tend to have fewer children  
Young children are no longer expected to work  
Nowadays both parents often work  
It costs so much to bring children up  
It is more difficult to raise a large family

### **Working parents (also see “gender” topic)**

Children and their parents seem to be less close nowadays  
Parents spend less time with their children  
Women traditionally stayed at home to cook, clean and look after children  
Nowadays both parents often work full time  
Children may be left alone, or with nannies or babysitters  
Busy parents have less contact with their children  
Many families no longer eat meals together  
Children spend more time with friends or surfing the Internet

### **Negative effects on Children**

The lack of closeness in families can have a negative effect on children  
Many parents have no idea how their children spend their time  
Friends, television and the Internet become the main influence on children’s behavior  
Teenagers are influenced by peer pressure  
Some of them join gangs  
Juvenile delinquency is on the increase  
Parents should be more involved with their children’s upbringing  
Young people need positive role models

### **Divorce**

In the past, divorce was unacceptable

It was considered to be embarrassing for a family  
People stayed together for religious or family reasons  
Divorce is more socially acceptable nowadays  
It has become much more common  
Divorce can be extremely stressful  
Lone parents may face financial difficulties  
Many single parents have to rely on benefits paid by the state  
Divorce can have a negative effect on children  
Children from single-parent families are more likely to get lower grades or drop out of school.  
The rise in divorce rates may be connected to some social problems

### **Care for Old people**

Caring for elderly people was traditionally the responsibility of families  
Adults had to look after their elderly parents  
A woman's job was to stay at home taking care of her family  
Nowadays, fewer elderly people are looked after by their relatives  
Residential homes provide care for large number of elderly people  
Some families are unable to look after elderly relatives  
Families tend to be smaller these days, and women often have full-time jobs  
Cares homes provide a professional service for senior citizens  
Nurses are better trained than family members

### **Care for Old people: Opinion**

The best form of care for the elderly depends on the family situation  
It depends on whether family members have the time resources  
We all have a responsibility towards the older people in our society  
Governments should invest money in facilities and training for care workers.

## **8. Gender**

### **Gender and education**

Men and women should have access to the same educational opportunities  
Males and females should be accepted onto courses according to their abilities  
It is wrong to discriminate against students because of their gender  
Gender should be irrelevant in education  
Student's achievements should depend on hard work and individual merit  
In the UK, there are similar numbers of male and female students in higher education

### **Gender and work**

Men and women should have access to the same professional opportunities  
Both man and women should be able to pursue a career  
They should earn equal salaries  
They should be employed according to their abilities, qualifications and experience  
Traditionally women have been restricted to certain roles  
They were often employed as secretaries or receptionists  
Nowadays, a range of occupations is available to both sexes

Career success depends on individual merit

### **Women's and Men's roles in the Family**

Some people argue that a mother should not work

She should stay at home and bring up her children

The father should be the breadwinner of the family

Others believe that both parents should share these responsibilities

Working women can take maternity leave during and after pregnancy

Many mothers continue to work after this period

Many fathers and mothers share their parenting and domestic responsibilities

They contribute equally to childcare, cooking and cleaning

Some women many have better career prospects than their husbands.

Paternity leave and "househusbands" are becoming more common

Traditional gender roles and gradually changing

Families can divide roles and responsibilities in the most convenient way.

## **9. Genetic Engineering**

### **Positives of genetic engineering**

Genetic engineering is the practice of manipulating the genes of an organism

It is used to produce crops that are more resistant to insects and diseases

Some genetically modified crops grow more quickly

Some drugs and vaccines are produced by genetic engineering

It may become possible to change human's genetic characteristics.

Scientists may use genetic engineering to cure diseases.

Inherited illnesses would no longer exist

Genes could be changed before a baby is born

It could also be possible to clone human organs

We could all have replacement body part

Humans could live longer, healthier lives

### **Negatives of genetic engineering**

There are ethical concerns about human genetic engineering

Parents might want to choose their children's characteristics

This would be unnatural

It would be unacceptable in most religions

Soldiers could be cloned from the genes of the strongest people

Clones might be used like robots to do certain jobs

Clones might even be developed just for organ replacements

Society and human evolution would change completely

Currently, human genetic engineering is prohibited

### **Genetically-Modified (GM) foods: Advantages**

Farmers can produce crops that grow bigger and faster

Some GM crops are more resistant to disease or insects

This could be important for food production in developing countries  
Faster growing cereals, fruit and vegetables will mean more profit  
GM foods can be modified to look perfect  
They may be more attractive to customers

### **Genetically-Modified (GM) Foods: Disadvantages**

There may be risks involved in the genetic engineering of foods.  
GM crops might change whole ecosystems  
Food chains could be broken if crops are resistant to predators  
Organic foods are produced without chemicals or genetic modification  
Organic farming may be slower and more expensive  
However, the environment is not damaged by fertilizers or pesticides.

## **10. Global issues**

### **Problems in developing countries**

Developing countries face a range of problems  
Standards of healthcare and education are low  
Life expectancy is usually lower than in developed countries  
There is a lack of infrastructure, employment and good quality housing  
Many people are forced to live in poverty  
Food, drinking water and basic medicines are in short supply

### **How to help developing countries**

The best form of help for developing countries is development aid  
Richer nations can help by investing in long-term projects  
Governments and charities can help by building new houses and schools  
Globalization may also help developing countries  
Multi-national companies can create jobs in developing countries  
On the other hand, many people emigrate to find work in richer countries  
They often send money back home to their families  
This money helps to improve the standard of living in developing countries

### **Immigration**

Some people move to another country in search of a better life  
Many immigrants come from less developed countries  
Richer, industrialized countries may offer opportunities for employment  
Free healthcare and schooling are available in some developed countries  
Other people migrate to a foreign country to improve their academic qualifications

### **Positives of immigration and Multi-cultural societies**

From an economic perspective, immigration can be extremely positive  
Many immigrants have skills that are needed in the country they move to  
Immigrants who find work contribute to the economy of their new country  
Many immigrants send money home to help family members

Immigration also creates cultural diversity  
People of many different nationalities learn to live together  
This can help people to become more open-minded and tolerant

### **Negatives of Immigration**

Some people believe that immigrants take jobs that should go to local people  
Some immigrant workers work longer hours for less money  
Companies might pay lower salaries to immigrant workers  
Unemployment rates could rise if there are too many immigrants

### **Opinions about Immigration**

Immigration can help the economy of a country  
It can create multi-cultural societies  
However, immigration needs to be controlled  
In many countries, immigrants need visas or work permit  
Governments should stop companies from exploiting immigrant workers  
Foreign and local workers should have the right to equal pay and conditions

### **Positives of Globalization**

Business of becoming increasingly international  
Multi-national companies do business across the world  
Companies like MacDonal'd's can be seen on high streets in most cities  
Goods are produced in one country and sold in many others  
A global economy means free trade between countries  
This can strengthen political relationships  
Globalization can also create opportunities for employment  
It encourages investment in less developed countries  
It could reduce poverty in the developing world

### **Negatives of Globalization**

Globalization is not always beneficial to everyone  
Companies can move to countries where labour is cheap  
This creates redundancies, or job losses  
Employees cannot be confident that they have stable jobs  
Companies sometimes exploit their employees in developing countries  
Global trade creates more waste and pollution

### **The future of Globalization**

There should be global regulations for salaries and working conditions  
Governments should impose laws to protect the environment

## **11. Government and Society**

**What governments can do**

Governments provide public services like healthcare and education  
They support people who are living in poverty or unable to work  
Governments raise money by taxing working people  
They can spend money on resources and campaigns  
They can introduce new laws  
They can impose taxes  
They can raise people's awareness of issues (e.g climate change/healthy eating)  
They can influence people's habits and opinions  
They can create jobs  
They can regulate the activities of companies such as banks  
They can provide resources for schools  
They are also responsible for the security and well-being of their citizens  
They control armed forces and police forces

**Public services**

Governments pay the salaries of public sector workers like police officers and teachers  
The necessary money is raised by taxing people's income  
Free education and healthcare may be provided by the state  
Some governments control public transport systems and even TV channels  
In other countries, these services are provided by private companies  
Some people believe that competition between private companies is good  
It helps to improve quality while bringing prices down  
Other people think that essential services should be free  
Governments should pay for them

**Censorship: Opinion**

Governments can censor what public sees or reads in the media  
To a certain extent censorship is necessary  
We should use censorship to protect children from violent images  
Some computer games involve killing people or committing crimes  
The Internet also needs to be controlled  
Many websites show pornography and violence  
There should be age limits for websites and computers games  
Parents need to take responsibility for checking what their children watch  
It is impossible for governments to control everything we see

**Video cameras in public places**

The use of CCTV is becoming widespread  
Video cameras have been installed in many public places  
They are supposed to protect us and deter criminals  
Many people think that this surveillance violates our privacy  
The authorities could build databases with our pictures and identities  
We should not be treated like criminals

**Smart cards: Positives**

Governments will probably introduce a digital identification card system

Smart cards will have benefits and drawbacks

They could help to reduce crime

They could hold personal information, such as DNA

Digital bank cards could contain fingerprint information

It would be very difficult for criminals to use a stolen card

It would be easier for police to identify people and catch criminals

**Smart cards: Negatives**

Many people are worried about losing their privacy

Governments could store all our personal and medical information

This information could be used by insurance companies

Employers could check our health records

**People with Disabilities**

People with disabilities should be treated the same as everybody else

They should have the same rights as other people

They should have access to the same jobs as other citizens

Discriminations against disabled people is illegal in many countries

Ramps and lifts for wheelchairs should be installed in public buildings

Support teacher can be employed to help children with learning difficulties

**12. Guns and Weapons****Why guns should be legal:**

In some countries, people are allowed to own firearms

Individuals have the right to protect themselves

People can use guns in self defence

This deters criminals

**Why gun ownership should be illegal:**

There is a risk of accidents with guns

The number of violent crimes increases when guns are available

Criminals may be armed

The police then need to use guns

Suicide rates have been shown to rise when guns are available

Guns create violent societies with high murder rates

**Why polices should use guns**

Many criminals use weapons

The threat of a gun can deter criminals

Police officers can force a criminal to surrender

It is easier to arrest someone and avoid physical violence

The police may shoot violent criminals in self defence

They can protect the public

They can shoot an escaping criminal who poses a serious danger to the public

#### **Why police should not carry guns**

There is a risk of accidents and mistakes

The police might shoot an unarmed criminal or an innocent person

Accidents can happen in public places

There are several alternatives to guns (e.g tear gas, sprays and electric shock weapons)

Only special police units should use guns

#### **Arm Trade: Positives**

The export of arms, or weapons, is an extremely controversial issue

Governments of rich, industrialized countries sell arms to each other

This industry creates jobs and wealth

The trade of weapons may improve relationships between governments

#### **Arms Trade: Negatives**

Weapons may be used in conflicts and wars

The supply of arms could be responsible for deaths

Governments are promoting war in order to make a profit

Rich countries can influence the politics of other nations

#### **Nuclear weapons**

Nuclear weapons are capable of destroying whole cities

A nuclear war between two countries would destroy both countries

Nuclear weapons are used as a deterrent

They prevent wars from starting

#### **Nuclear weapons: Opinion**

Nuclear weapons should be prohibited

Governments should limit the production of nuclear weapons

There is a danger of nuclear weapons being obtained by terrorists

Nuclear weapons cannot be used against terrorist organizations

#### **Armed Forces: Positives**

Armed forces provide security and protection

They deter military attack by another country

They can also be used to maintain peace within countries

They can be used to give the police extra support

Soldiers are also used to help in emergency situations, such as after a natural disaster

#### **Armed forces: negatives**

Armies require a lot of funding from governments

Too much money is spent on weapons and military technology

This money could be spent on schools, hospitals and other public services

### 13. Health

#### Diet

The human body requires a balanced diet

An unhealthy diet can cause various health problems

Obesity, diabetes and heart disease are on the increase

Many people nowadays rely on fast food or pre-prepared meals

These foods often contain too much fat, salt and sugar

They are cheap to buy and very easy to prepare

Many young people have grown up on a diet of convenience foods

Populations in developed countries are increasingly overweight

#### Exercise

Regular exercise is essential in maintaining a healthy body

Exercise burns calories and helps to build healthy bones and muscles

Doctors advise exercising at least three times a week for 20 minutes

Most people nowadays lead a sedentary lifestyle

We tend to walk less and do desk jobs

Most adults relax by watching television

Children play video games rather than doing outdoor sports

In the past, people were more active in their jobs and at home

#### Government's Role

Governments have a significant role to play in reducing obesity

More and more people, including young children are seriously overweight

They are at risk of heart disease and diabetes

This situation will increase the burden on hospitals and taxpayers

Hospitals rely on the government for money and resources

Governments should promote a healthy diet and regular exercise

There should be more time for sports on school timetables

Unhealthy junk food should be banned from school menus

People need information about what foods contain

Food packaging must show the food's nutritional content

The British Government recommends eating five portions of fruit and vegetables per day

#### State Health system: advantages

Good healthcare should be available to everyone for free

State healthcare is paid by the government using money from taxes

Everyone has access to the same quality of care and treatment

Private healthcare is unfair because only wealthy people can afford it

The National Health Service in the UK provides free healthcare for every resident

#### Private Healthcare: advantages

State hospitals are often very large and difficult to run

Private hospitals have shorter waiting lists for operations and appointments

Patients can benefit from faster treatment

Many people prefer to pay for more a personal service  
Patients have their own room and more comfortable facilities

**Alternative medicine: Positives**

People are increasingly using alternative medicines to treat illnesses.  
For example, acupuncture can be used to treat backache  
Herbal medicines can be used to treat allergies or viruses  
Many patients report positive experiences with these treatments  
Some traditional cures have been used for hundreds of years

**Alternative medicine: Negatives**

Many alternative medicines have not been tested scientifically  
They may have no beneficial effect at all  
They may cause unknown side effects  
People should trust the opinions of qualified doctors  
An illness could get worse without treatment from a doctor

**Stress**

Modern lifestyles are increasingly stressful  
People work long hours with strict deadlines  
Our busy lifestyles mean we have less time to relax  
Unemployment is a major cause of stress  
Children may be affected by their parents' relationship problems  
Tests and exams can also cause stress

**How to reduce stress**

Stress can be reduced by taking regular exercise and eating a healthy diet  
It is also important to get sufficient sleep and make leisure time a priority  
People should work less overtime and take regular holidays  
Schools have started to employ psychologists  
They can offer emotional support to students  
They can help students to cope with exam stress

**14. Housing and Architecture****State/council housing**

In some countries the government provides state or council housing  
This helps people who cannot afford to buy their own house  
It can be argued that state housing creates dependence on the government  
People should be rely on the government to look after them  
People have no incentive to earn money and buy their own home  
Council properties are often made with cheap, poor-quality materials.

**Old Buildings**

Historic buildings are part of a country's heritage

They should be protected  
Old buildings are often considered to be works of art  
They give character to cities and attract tourists  
They show us how people lived in the past  
We identify countries by architectural symbols like the pyramids in Egypt  
Governments should spend money on looking after historic buildings  
They need regular repairs and maintenance  
New buildings should be designed to complement them

### **Modern/green buildings**

Modern buildings should be designed to be environmentally friendly  
They should use less energy and produce less waste  
Modern insulation can make houses more energy-efficient  
Solar and wind power can be used to generate electricity  
Rainwater and waste water can be recycled and used to flush toilets.  
Modern glass buildings take advantage of natural light

## **15. Language**

### **English as an international language**

English is widely used around the world  
It is becoming a global second language  
It is the dominant language of technology, science and international business  
International business meetings are regularly held in English  
The most important textbooks and journals are published in English  
The ability to speak English is a necessary skill in the modern world

### **Negative of English as an International Language**

If one language is dominant, other languages may disappear  
The dominant language brings its own culture  
American culture has become popular around the world  
Other cultures may be damaged  
As an alternative to English, a new global language could be invented  
It would have no nationality or culture attached to it  
This could help to promote international peace and understanding  
Esperanto is an example of a language that was invented with this aim

## **16. Money**

### **Money and Society**

Society has become increasingly materialistic  
People aspire to earn more money  
They want a bigger house or a better car  
We connect wealth and material possessions with happiness and success  
Brands like "Armani" or "Mercedes" are status symbols

Advertising creates new desires and needs  
It persuades us to buy the latest styles

#### **Positives of Consumerism**

Consumerism creates employment  
It helps to reduce poverty  
It encourages innovation and creativity in business  
We live in a global economy  
We have a better quality of life

#### **Negatives of Consumerism**

Consumerist societies create more waste  
They use more natural resources  
They cause damage to the environment  
Consumerism creates a “throw-away” culture  
Advertisers tell us who we are and what we want  
Wealth does not lead to happiness  
Materialism causes greed and crime  
We should return to traditional values like sharing

### **17. Personality**

#### **Happiness**

Happiness means different things to different people  
It can be described as a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment  
People enjoy spending time with family and friends  
Hobbies, sports and games can be a source of fun and enjoyment  
Some people see money as a source of happiness  
Other people define happiness as something deeper  
In order to be truly happy it is necessary to live a good life  
We need to feel that we are doing something useful with our lives  
Some people get a sense of achievement from their work  
Others find happiness in bringing up their children  
Religion or a sense of purpose can also be a source of happiness

#### **Success**

People define success in different ways  
Some people get a sense of achievement from raising a family  
For others, success is defined by wealth or status  
We often think of rich and famous people as being successful in life  
Millionaires like Bill Gates are considered to be successful  
They have risen to the top in their chosen professions  
For some, being successful means achieving personal or professional goals  
They see success as the result of hard work  
Success in any field requires long-term planning and effort

**Nature or Nurture**

Some people believe that our personalities are determined mainly by genetics

We inherit our abilities and talents from our parents

Others think that our education and upbringing are more important

We develop according to the influences around us

Our personalities and achievements depend more on nurture than nature

Many people argue that we control our own destinies

We can shape our own personalities

By working hard we can achieve and goal that we put our minds to

Many successful people are “self-made”

We are not limited by our genetic characteristic or upbringing

**18. Sport and Leisure****Arguments against Professional/competitive sport**

Sport has become a business

Professional sport encourages people to compete for money

Many sports stars are only concerned about money and fame

Some athletes take drugs in order to win at any cost

Competitors are often selfish and rude

They are not good role models for children

All sports should be amateur

Sports should be leisure activities rather than jobs

People should do sporting activities for enjoyment and health reasons

Taking part is more important than winning

**Arguments for Professional sport**

Professional sports are the same as any other business

Many people are employed in the sports industry

People should be able to use their talents to earn a salary

Sports stars entertain millions of people

Money is necessary to improve facilities and train athletes

The level of professional sport is much higher than that of amateur sport

**Arguments for Competitive sport**

Competition is a natural instinct in humans

In daily life we compete to get jobs or the highest grades

Sports are a safe form of competition

Competition is healthy because it pushes us to give our best

Competitors and fans can release energy and aggression

Supporters of teams feel a sense of belonging to a community

**Opinion: professional sport salaries are too high**

Sports professionals earn too much money

They do not provide a vital service

Football players, for example, earn enormous salaries by simply kicking a ball  
We could all live happily without professional football  
Life would be difficult without doctors, engineers and other vital professionals.  
Society does not seem to value these professions as highly as professional sport  
Sports salaries should be compatible with the wages most people earn

**Opinion: professional sport salaries are fair**

It is fair that the best professional earn a lot of money  
Sport is a multi-million-pound industry  
There is a large audience of sports fans  
Sports on television attract many viewers  
Sports stars have dedicated hours of practice to developing their fitness and skills  
Only the most talented among them will reach the top  
A sports career many only last 10 years  
Sports fans are willing to pay to support their teams

**Sports and Politics**

Some people think that sport and politics should remain separate  
Governments are involved in the hosting of sporting events such as the Olympics.  
These events attract investment and create jobs.  
The Olympic Games are an advertisement for the host nation  
They attract huge numbers of visitors and sports fans  
Wealthy countries tend to hold these events  
Developing countries should be given the chance to become hosts

**19. Television, Internet, Phones**

**Positives of television**

Watching television is a good way to relax  
It is many people's favourite way to wind down after a hard day at work  
Television programs can be entertaining and enjoyable  
Viewers have access to a huge variety of entertainment channels  
Television brings the best comedians, musicians and actors into our homes  
Programmers can also be informative and educational  
News coverage makes the public aware of events around the world  
Documentaries can make learning more interesting

**Negatives of Television**

Television is having a negative impact on society  
Some people link violence on television with crime rates in the real world  
Children copy the behaviour they see on the screen  
Children are less healthy because they spend less time playing  
Advertisers direct their marketing at children  
Most programs do not require much thought  
Watching TV is a waste of time

### **Opinions about Television**

Television has many benefits

However, it can be addictive

Children should play outside rather than sit in front of a screen all day

Behaviour shown on TV can influence people

Parents should choose carefully what their children watch

Children should not be exposed to violence, swearing or sexual images

Advertising during children's programs should be strictly controlled

TV companies should make more positive, educational programs

### **Positives of the Internet**

There are many advantages to using the Internet

It gives us instant access to information on almost any subject

Shops and other services are now available online

People can buy goods and services from the comfort of their homes

The Internet is starting to replace other forms of entertainment

It has revolutionized communication

We can keep in touch by email or instant messenger services

Video messaging is becoming common for business meetings

### **Negatives of the internet**

Many websites contain offensive content

Some sites show violent or sexual images

Parents find it difficult to control what their children see online

They do not always know who their children are chatting to

With so many websites it is difficult to search for good information

Criminals increasingly use the Internet to steal people's money

### **Internet compared to newspaper and books**

Newspapers and books are now published online as well as in print

We can read the news in any language from any country in the world

It costs nothing to publish or access information on the Internet

The Internet allows anybody to publish their own writing

Newspaper articles and books are written by professionals

Professionals produce better quality writing than amateur

People still buy newspapers and books because they are portable

People do not like reading from a screen

### **Positives of Mobile Phones**

The mobile phone is the most popular gadget in today's world

Mobile phones have revolutionized the way we communicate

We can stay in touch with family, friends and colleagues wherever we are

Users can send text messages, surf the Internet, take photos and listen to music  
Mobiles have also become fashion accessories

### **Negatives of Mobile Phones**

Mobiles phones can be a problem in some public places  
Ringing phones cause disturbance in cinemas and school lessons  
Some people are not aware that others can hear their conversations  
Mobile phones may also interfere with electronic equipment  
Their waves could cause damage to our brains  
Mobile phones can also be a dangerous distraction  
Using a phone while driving reduces the driver's concentration  
Mobile phones are a popular target for thieves

### **Opinion about Mobile Phones**

The benefits of mobile phones outweigh the drawbacks  
We need to use these phones with care

## **20. Tourism**

### **Positives of Tourism**

Tourism is a popular leisure activity  
People go on holiday to relax and have fun  
Tourists can experience different cultures  
They can sunbathe on beaches or go sight-seeing  
Travelling abroad opens our minds  
We can learn to speak other languages  
The tourist trade is vital for some economies  
It creates employment in services like accommodation, transport and entertainment  
Some areas rely on tourism for their income  
Tourists spend money  
Tourism attracts investment from multi-national companies  
It helps to improve the standard of living  
Low-cost airlines are making it cheaper to travel abroad

### **Negative effects of tourism**

Tourism can have a negative effect on the natural environment  
The building of facilities and infrastructure can destroy the habitat of wild animals  
Beautiful beaches are spoilt by the building of hotels  
Tourism creates pollution and waste  
It puts pressure on local resources  
Local traditional and cultures may be endangered  
A rise in the cost of living affects local people  
The price of goods, services and housing may increase significantly

### **The future of tourism**

Government should introduce laws to protect natural environments and local cultures  
Tourism should have a low impact on wildlife  
Renewable resources like solar or water power should be used  
Waste should be recycled  
Local businesses such as farms should be supported

## 21. Traditional vs. Modern

### Losing traditional skills

Because of industrialization and global trade, many traditions have disappeared  
Global advertising encourages everyone to buy the same products  
Most products are now made in factories  
Machinery has replaced skilled human labour  
Factory work is boring and leaves people feeling unfulfilled  
Goods are produced very quickly and in large numbers  
Products are cheaper, which means that more people can buy them

### Examples

Clothes are mass produced in standard sizes  
People wear similar clothes, rather than traditional costumes  
Jeans and T-shirt are now worn throughout the world  
Historic buildings took skilled craftsmen years to build  
Modern concrete, steel and glass buildings are built in only weeks or months  
There are fewer people who can create hand-made goods

### Traditional customs

Traditional customs are still important during weddings and religious festivals  
People wear traditional costumes and eat special foods  
It is important to maintain our different cultural identities  
We should celebrate festivals, teach traditional skills and protect historic places

## 22. Transport

### Traffic problems

Traffic congestion is caused by commuters travelling to work  
Most people live in the suburbs outside city centre  
Commuters tend to travel at the same time of day  
They tend to travel alone  
Cars and road space are not used efficiently  
This causes traffic jams during the rush hour

### Traffic solutions

In order to reduce traffic we should change our working habits  
The internet can now be used to connect people  
More people could work from home  
Meetings can be held as video conferences

Workers could be given flexible timetables  
Another solution would be to tax drivers  
Workers should share their cars and travel together  
In London, for example, there is a congestion charge  
This helps to raise money for better public transport  
Public transport needs to be reliable and efficient

**Positives of Public transport**

We need to reduce our dependence on cars  
Parking a car can be extremely difficult in big cities  
Well-designed transport systems are comfortable and convenient  
Modern public transport can be fast and cheap  
Public transport can help to reduce pollution in cities  
Investment in buses and trains will ease traffic congestion  
Buses can be given special lanes to avoid traffic

**Negatives of public transport**

Public transport is often slow and unreliable  
Metro systems and trains are often dirty and crowded  
People feel like "sardines in a can"  
Cars are much more comfortable

**Road safety**

Driving while tired or drunk is extremely dangerous  
Mobile phones can be a dangerous distraction for drivers  
They draw the driver's attention away from the road  
The use of phones while driving has been banned in many countries  
Punishments are becoming stricter  
Television campaigns are used to remind people to drive safely  
Speed cameras have become more common  
Speed bumps are another form of traffic calming  
Many streets are designed with the aim of slowing traffic down

**23. Water****Importance of clean water**

Water is a necessary natural resource  
Humans need access to clean, safe drinking water in order to live  
Poor water quality is a major cause of disease and death in some countries  
Water usually needs to be treated before we can drink it  
Developing countries often lack the means to treat and supply water to citizens  
Developed countries tend to have much better sanitation  
Citizens have access to clean tap water  
Drinking water is not contaminated by sewage or waste water  
The supply of clean water would improve public health in many developing countries

**Water supply**

Urban life would be impossible without water supply systems  
These systems are massive engineering projects  
Many professionals are involved in their planning, construction and maintenance  
The supply and distribution of water are major concerns  
Water is becoming scarce in some countries  
Areas that suffer droughts often need to import water  
As populations grow, there is more pressure on water supplies  
This could lead to a water crisis

**Water and politics**

The supply of water is also an important political issue  
Huge amount of water are needed for agriculture and industry  
The irrigation of crops accounts for a large proportions of water use  
A water crisis could lead to political conflicts or even wars

**Argument: water should be free**

Some people believe that water should be free for everyone  
Governments should supply water to all homes at no cost  
Private companies should not be allowed to profit from this natural resource  
Money from taxes can be used to pay for water supply systems

**Argument: water should not be free**

If water is free, people take it for granted  
They do not think about how much water they waste  
They leave taps running while washing or brushing their teeth  
If we have to pay for water, we will use it more responsibly  
Water supply systems are extremely expensive  
Investment is needed to maintain and improve them  
Private companies may provide a better service than governments  
If they provide an efficient service, they will make more money  
They will repair leaks to avoid losing money

**Bottled Water: Opinions**

Some people carry bottles of water wherever they go  
For example, they take bottles of water to work or to the gym  
They believe that bottled water is healthier than tap water  
They also argue that it tastes better  
However, other people believe that we should consume less bottled water  
Plastic water bottles add to litter and waste problems  
Companies should not be able to make a profit from water  
It is unethical to make money by selling packaged water  
There is no difference in quality between bottled and tap water

## 24. Work

### **The benefits of staying in the same job for life**

Employees have a stable career with one employer  
They have a good pension and health insurance  
Their salaries gradually increase  
They may be promoted within the organization  
They demonstrate loyalty  
Experienced staff can be trusted with more responsibility  
They become part of a team  
There is a clearly defined path for development

### **The benefits of not staying in the same job**

People often change jobs in order to further their career  
Another company may offer a promotion or a higher salary  
People who change jobs can gain experience  
They can learn different skills  
Changing jobs is interesting and challenging  
People can retrain in a different occupation  
In a fast-changing world workers need to be flexible  
People need to develop a range of experience and skills

### **Self-employment**

Nowadays, it is easy to set up a company  
The Internet provides a global marketplace  
Self-employment offers greater freedom than working for a company  
However, there are risks to starting a new business  
Self-employed people may face financial difficulties  
Many businesses fail to make a profit  
There is less stability in self-employment  
There are no benefits like pensions, sick pay and holiday pay  
Self-employment involved hard work, long hours and total responsibility

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment is a big problem for individuals, communities and society  
Some people are unable to find a job  
They may not have the sufficient level of education or qualifications  
They may find themselves homeless  
Unemployment causes frustration and stress  
Jobless people may become involved in crime as a means to get money  
The unemployed need careers advice  
Governments need to provide vocational courses and retraining

### **Unemployment benefits: positives**

Some governments pay unemployment benefits in order to help jobless people  
Unemployed people need financial support until they find a new job  
By claiming benefits they can continue to pay for their homes  
The benefits system helps to reduce poverty, homelessness and crime

**Unemployment benefits: negatives**

Some people claim benefits rather than working  
They become dependent on the government  
They are not motivated to find a job  
The benefits system is a burden on taxpayers  
All citizens should work to earn a living and support themselves  
Receiving benefits affects people's self esteem

**Work/Life Balance**

It is important to achieve a balance between work time and leisure or family time  
Too much work can result in stress and poor health  
"workaholics" may neglect their families and friends  
People need to take regular holidays  
Companies should be expect employees to work overtime  
Nowadays, many people work part-time or have flexible working hours  
Technology allow people to work from home  
Many companies provide childcare facilities  
A good work/ life balance can raise job satisfaction  
Happy, healthy workers are more productive

**Technology and work**

Internet, fax and mobile phone technologies have revolutionized working life  
Workers can communicate via email, online networks and video conferencing  
Technology can connect workers in different countries  
It gives people more freedom  
It can also save time and money  
Some people believe that offices could disappear in the future  
Virtual online offices may replace them

**Child labour**

In some countries, children are exploited  
They do repetitive jobs for very low pay  
Children are often used in agriculture and factory work  
The employment of children is prohibited in other countries  
Many people think that children should be free to enjoy their childhood  
Governments should make education a priority  
They should build new schools  
They should supply the resources to educate children  
Children need to be given the knowledge and skills for adult life

# IELTS Speaking band descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar</li> <li>speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features</li> <li>develops topics fully and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics</li> <li>uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately</li> <li>produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety</li> <li>sustains flexible use of features throughout</li> <li>is effortless to understand</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language</li> <li>develops topics coherently and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning</li> <li>uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies</li> <li>uses paraphrase effectively as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of structures flexibly</li> <li>produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inaccuracies or basic/non-systematic errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of pronunciation features</li> <li>sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses</li> <li>is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence</li> <li>may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction</li> <li>uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics</li> <li>uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices</li> <li>uses paraphrase effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility</li> <li>frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation</li> <li>uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inaccuracies</li> <li>generally paraphrases successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility</li> <li>may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control</li> <li>shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained</li> <li>can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going</li> <li>may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers</li> <li>produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility</li> <li>attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy</li> <li>uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction</li> <li>links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice</li> <li>rarely attempts paraphrase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare</li> <li>errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a limited range of pronunciation features</li> <li>attempts to control features but lapses are frequent</li> <li>mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaks with long pauses</li> <li>has limited ability to link simple sentences</li> <li>gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information</li> <li>has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances</li> <li>makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pauses lengthily before most words</li> <li>little communication possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only produces isolated words or memorised utterances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot produce basic sentence forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speech is often unintelligible</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no communication possible</li> <li>no rateable language</li> </ul>			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not attend</li> </ul>			