

IELTS™

Teacher Training Workshop

IELTS Speaking



www.takeielts.org/teachielts

Programme

1. IELTS Speaking: criteria and skills
2. Part 1: problems and activities
3. Part 2: problems and activities
4. Part 3: problems and strategies
5. Review and resources

The Speaking Test

- The test lasts between 11 and 14 minutes
- It is a one-to-one interview
- There are 3 parts:
 - Part 1 - question and answer on personal topics
 - Part 2 - unassisted short talk on a given topic of up to 2 mins (plus 1 min preparation time)
 - Part 3 two-way discussion on more abstract issues
- The test is recorded in case the test taker's performance needs to be re-marked.

Speaking Criteria

Fluency and coherence

This refers to the speed, flow, order and progression, the ability to link ideas and use language to form coherent, connected speech

Lexical resource

This refers to the range and precision of vocabulary with which meaning is expressed, and attitude conveyed. It includes the ability to get round a vocabulary gap by expressing the idea in a different way.

Grammatical range and accuracy

This refers to the range of structures available to the candidate and how accurately and appropriately s/he can use them. Assessment takes into account the length and complexity of utterances as well as the effect of grammatical errors on communication.

Pronunciation

This refers to the candidate's ability to produce comprehensible utterances and to use a range of pronunciation features to communicate meaning. Assessment takes into account the amount of strain caused to the listener, and the noticeability of L1 influence.

Skills required

- Self-confidence
- Spoken coherence
- Producing ideas
- Ability to approach a question from different angles
- Logical organisation
- Presentation-giving

Part 1

- Examiner will check candidate's name and ID
- Examiner will ask questions on either work/ study or town test taker comes from/ their home
- Examiner will ask questions on general areas/ personal topics
- This section should help test takers feel at ease
- This section gives test takers the opportunity to make a good first impression
- This section lasts 4-5 minutes

Part 1 - Problems

Nervousness

Giving too short answers

e.g. Q Where do you come from?
A Cairo.

Giving overlong/rehearsed responses

Part 1 - Activities

Brainstorming pyramid

Improving answers

Noughts and crosses

Brainstorming Pyramid

Aim: to increase students' confidence by familiarising them with the topics that may appear in Part 1

1. Ask students what they think 'familiar topics' means, elicit ideas e.g. holidays, hobbies etc.
2. Ask students to write down as many topics as they can in one minute on their own.
3. After one minute students compare lists in pairs and make a new more comprehensive list together.
4. Repeat exercise in groups of four i.e. two pairs.
5. Groups feedback lists to class and a class list is made.

Brainstorming Pyramid

A final class list may consist of some of the following topics:

hobbies, job, my school, accommodation, my town, my city, my country, learning English, important festivals, food, music, arts, culture, ambitions for the future, transport, TV, reading, travelling etc.

Improving answers

Aim: to raise students' awareness of the need to give *interesting* answers; to help them avoid one-word responses

a) Adding detail

b) Replying in three different ways

a) Adding detail

Interviewer: Where do you come from?

Test taker: Cairo

Interviewer: What do you do in your spare time?

Test taker: I enjoy reading.....

b) 3 different replies

Interviewer: What sports do you enjoy?

- I'm not that fond of sport but I quite like swimming.
- I'm not very sporty but I cycle a bit.
- I don't really like any sports. I prefer reading and going to the cinema.

Noughts & Crosses

Aims: to give practice in answering general questions; to raise students' awareness of what constitutes a good or inadequate answer

Noughts and Crosses

when	where	why
how	what	do
were	is	are

Part 1 Tips

1. This first section is supposed to put test takers at ease. So, relax and try to answer the questions naturally!
2. Don't answer with just 'yes' or 'no'. Try to give more information but don't overdo it either.
3. Don't prepare answers in advance – the examiner can always tell!

Part 2: Individual long turn

- Examiner will give the test-taker a card on which there is a topic and prompts
- The test taker will have 1 minute to prepare to talk
- Paper and pencils are provided for test-takers to make notes
- Examiner will ask test-taker to start talking once the 1 minute preparation time is up
- Test-taker should speak on the topic for 2 minutes and **must** include all the bulleted parts
- Examiner will ask 1 or 2 questions at the end of the test-taker's long turn
- This section lasts 3-4 minutes

Part 2

The topics are carefully chosen to reflect common experiences, so test-takers won't need special knowledge to talk about them. It is extremely unlikely that a candidate would be unable to talk about the topic given

The test-taker is being assessed on their ability to speak at length on a given topic (without further prompts from the examiner), using appropriate language, and organising their ideas coherently.

Test-takers will need to draw on their own experience to complete the long turn.

Part 2 Example Question

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read the topic below carefully. You will be asked to talk about it for 1 to 2 minutes.

You have one minute to think about what you are going to say.

You can make some notes if you wish.

A museum you have visited

Describe a museum or art gallery that you have visited

You should say:

- where it is**
- why you went there**
- what you particularly remember about it**

And say why you would or would not recommend it to others.

Part 2 - Problems

Lack of ideas

Dry up mid-talk

Incoherency - lose structure
- don't sequence
- don't link ideas

Part 2 - Activities

Brainstorming

Tell us about . . .

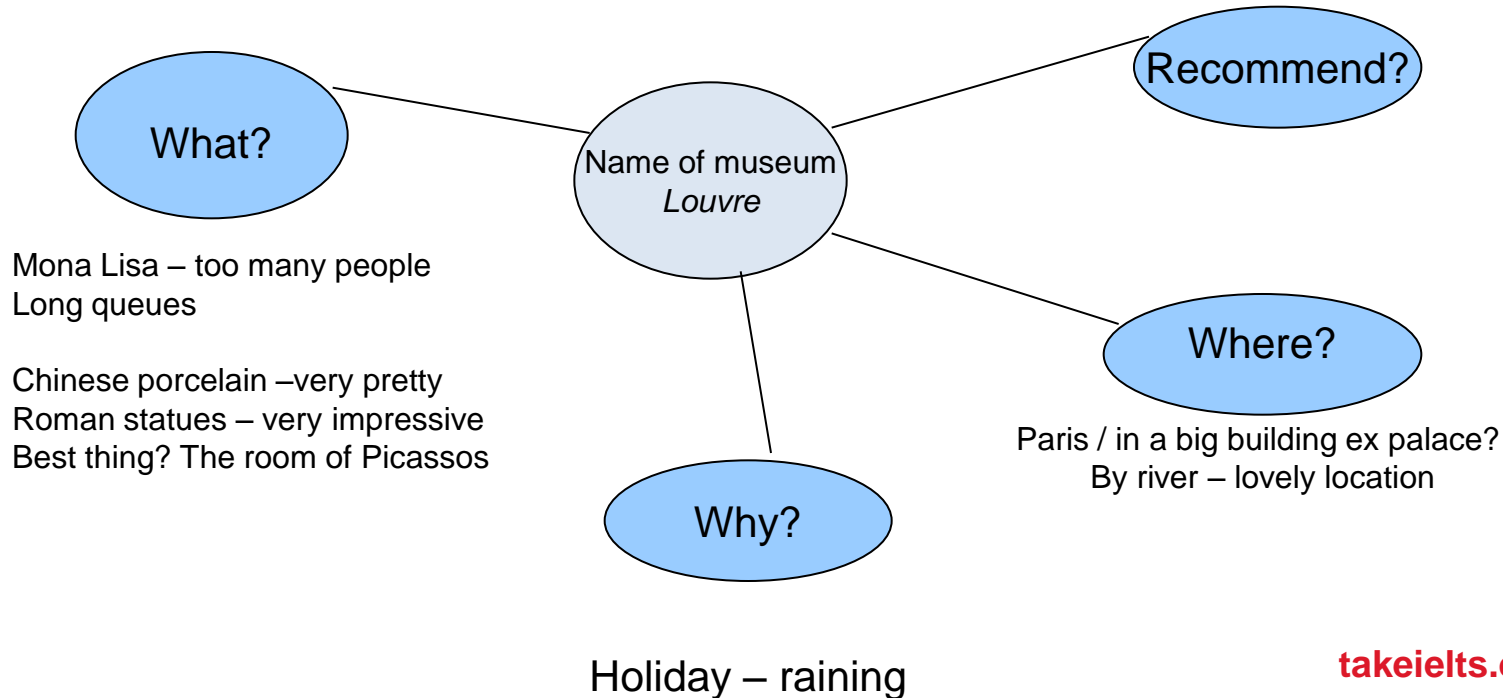
Just a minute

Brainstorming

Aim: to help students generate ideas

Describe a museum or art gallery that you have visited

You should say:
where it is
why you went there
what you particularly remember about it



Tell us about . . .

Aims: to encourage fluency and to increase confidence in ability to speak at length

This can be done as a board game in small groups, or just ‘turn over’ and speak in pairs or small groups.

Do not allow preparation time.

The first few times you do this activity, get students to speak for just 15 seconds. Get their partner or other people in the group to time them, and stop them at the end of the 15 seconds. (Being stopped in full flow, increases confidence.)

Build up the length each time you do the activity.

Just a Minute

Aim: to give students fluency practice

Speak for a minute on the topic given.

There are two rules:

You cannot repeat any *content words*

You cannot hesitate for more than two seconds

Part 2 - Tips

- For section 2, make notes of key words in the task on the piece of paper.
- Write one- or two-word notes.
- Write down some time phrases e.g. 10 years ago / in the future / at present to remind yourself to vary the tenses
- Remember you don't have to tell the truth
- If you can't remember an important word, try to paraphrase
- It is fine to correct yourself (native speakers do it all the time) but don't overdo it
- Listen to the examiner's follow-up questions – notice what tense the question is in, and reply with a short yes/no answer in the same tense

Part 3

In part three of the test the test-taker is asked more in-depth and abstract questions on topics loosely related to the topic in Part 2.

The examiner is testing the ability to take part in a university style discussion and to present opinions on different subjects. It is important to remember that the examiner is only interested in the spoken language and not in the candidates' opinions.

The examiner is testing the ability to talk about topics in a more abstract way, moving away from personal experiences.

Questions of increasing difficulty are asked.

Part 3 - Example questions

Part 2 Question about a visit to a museum

Part 3

Is there a need for museums in society?

How can museums be made more appealing for young people?

Is graffiti art or vandalism?

How has art changed over the last thirty years?

How will art be different in the future?

Why do people's definitions of art differ?

Part 3 - Problems

Having to discuss issues test takers have no opinion on

Having to find the relevant vocabulary

Having to use language to express opinions, possibilities etc. (e.g. modals)

Part 3 - Strategies

Not having an opinion

- hedging/delaying tactics
- giving opinion from different perspectives

Not finding the relevant vocabulary

- paraphrasing – describing/defining

Using modals

- using fixed phrases

Part 3 - Strategies for dealing with not having an opinion

Hedging/delaying tactics

Rephrase the question to 'buy' some thinking time

Interviewer: *Should the state provide cheap housing for low-income earners?*

Test taker: *So, should the government give cheap houses to poor people?*

Define/question the terms used

Test taker: *It depends what you mean by low-income.*

Use expressions such as:

- Let me think, . . .
- I'm not sure about how to answer that, but . . .
- I've never really thought about it, perhaps . . .
- That's quite difficult to answer . . .

Part 3 Strategies for dealing with not having an opinion

Use a different perspective

Look at the question/issue from someone else's point of view.

Interviewer: *Should the state provide cheap housing for low-income earners?*

Test taker: *I've not thought about it. But if I were a local inhabitant / tax payer / someone on a low income, . . .*

Part 3 - Strategies for dealing with not finding the right words

Paraphrasing

Get students to build up a bank of expressions

I don't remember the exact word but . . .

It's a bit like . . .

It's similar to . . .

It's not exactly . . . but . . .

I mean, a sort/kind/type of . . .

It's a thing you . . .

What I mean to say is . . .

Part 3 - Practice for dealing with vocabulary gaps

Communicative Crosswords

Taboo

Don't say the word

Part 3 - Language to help to express possibility and opinion

Get students to build up a bank of expressions:

It's possible

It's likely

It's not impossible

Maybe / Perhaps / Most probably

There's a good chance

For me, it is important

Personally, I believe

From my experience,

Part 3 - Tips

- ✓ Rephrase the question in part 3 and think of key words
- ✓ Signpost your ideas: use set phrases and linking words/phrases
- ✓ Be willing to expand on your points
- ✓ Don't stop speaking to search for a word – paraphrase
- ✓ Remember, the examiner is not assessing your opinion, only how it is expressed