

ROAD TO IELTS

IELTS preparation and practice

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The basics

The Speaking test is the same for Academic and General Training. It is a face-to-face interview with an IELTS examiner lasting between 11 and 14 minutes. In **Part 1**, you answer general questions about yourself, your family, and other familiar topic areas. In **Part 2**, you give a talk for one to two minutes based on a topic card. You have one minute to prepare. The examiner may ask one or two questions. In **Part 3**, the examiner will ask you questions related to the topic in Part 2. This is an opportunity for you to develop ideas raised earlier.

Background preparation

You need to be aware of the language areas the examiner is looking for:

- ✓ **Fluency is a natural, continuous flow of language.** You can only develop this with lots of practice. Take every opportunity you can to speak in English with family, friends, teachers... anyone you know who speaks English.
- ✓ **There are two aspects to vocabulary and grammar.** One is range: use a variety of words for a single concept and use complex sentences. The other is accuracy: your vocabulary and grammar must be correct. Listen to how educated native speakers talk on the BBC (Google *BBC Radio 4 schedule*); practise talking on the same topic. Record and assess yourself.
- ✓ **Pronunciation.** You need to be clear and easy to understand. Consider subscribing to a program such as **Clear Pronunciation** which helps both with individual sounds and with word and sentence stress, intonation, connected speech and consonant clusters.

Four

tips for your Speaking test 

- ✓ When you run a race, you warm up beforehand. So, you can warm up your mind by thinking in English before you go into the test. Talk to other candidates in English while you are waiting.
- ✓ Most people are nervous in the Speaking test, and the examiner understands this. If you have an attack of nerves, pause and say, "I'm sorry, I'm very nervous. Can you give me a second?" Then take a deep breath and carry on.
- ✓ Don't learn your answers by heart. The examiner will spot this and will give **zero marks** for prepared answers.
- ✓ Don't get too stressed about getting everything absolutely correct. Everyone makes mistakes – including native speakers.

ClarityEnglish

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Issue 3

Speaking

The key to doing well in the Speaking test is to know what the examiner is looking for.

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In the test room

The golden rule is to speak as much as possible. In all three parts of the test, give full answers and back them up with reasons and examples: *I like drawing because it gives me a way to express my ideas. For example...* Use the one-minute preparation time in Part 2 to make point-form notes, rather than full sentences. For example, if you are asked to talk about restaurants, you could write: *location – size – style of food – quality of food – decoration – service – price* and refer to restaurants you know. Focus on the time period you are speaking about. If it is the past, use the past tense.



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