

IELTS

31

High-scoring Formulas to Answer the IELTS Speaking Questions

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Jonathan Palley – Adrian Li
Oliver Davies





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Jonathan Palley • Adrian Li • Oliver Davies

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Copyright © 2011-2014 Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press
Published in Vietnam, 2014

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Preface

Looking back at your past time of speaking English or your latest conversation with a foreigner, did you encounter any of the following problems: so embarrassed that you were empty-minded? thinking of many aspects but not knowing which one to begin with? knowing the answer but unable to express it in English fluently?

31 High-scoring Formulas to Answer the IELTS Speaking Questions can help IELTS candidates solve the problems of “not knowing what to say” and “not knowing how to say it” in the Speaking test. These 31 high-scoring formulas are designed based on effective strategies to deal with actual IELTS Speaking test questions. They cover nearly all topics in the real Speaking test. Mastering them enables the candidates to answer every question naturally and confidently in order to get the highest score possible at their level of proficiency.

Take one common question in the IELTS Speaking test as an example, “How often do you play sports?” So many candidates would answer “Yes, I play sports every day.” The answer may sound grammatically correct, but it fails to earn them a decent score on the IELTS Speaking test. In fact, with this type of question, it is expected that candidates would apply the order of forming responses similar to the following model:

Step 1: Forming the answer

- * Say how frequently you do the activity the examiner asks you about.
- * Explain why you do it that frequently.

Step 2: Applying language skills to elicit the answer

- * Use a range of different adverbs of frequency correctly.

I play badminton *very often*.

I *never* go skiing.

If candidates follow the recommended steps of forming the answer, their responses will be more coherent and well structured. Based on this high-scoring formula, an expected response may be “I play sports a few times a week. Usually I play basketball with my friends, but sometimes I play football instead. I think team sports are a great way to socialise and keep fit.” Compared to the answer “Yes, I play sports every day,” this response is clearly richer and more detailed in content, and more accurate and natural in using language expressions.

Once you have mastered this high-scoring formula, all questions which start with “How often...?” will be solved easily. For example, “How often do you eat in restaurants?, How often do you go for a long walk?, How often do you take public transport?”, etc.

Just in the same manner, a good grasp of 31 essential high-scoring formulas in this book can allow candidates to answer every IELTS Speaking test question with confidence and great effectiveness.

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Overview of the IELTS Speaking Test

The IELTS Speaking test is divided into 3 parts:

Part 1

Part 1 lasts for 4-5 minutes. The examiner will ask you some familiar questions about your hometown, family, hobbies, acquaintances, etc. You are supposed to answer the questions briefly and accurately, along with specific examples.

Part 1 aims to test the candidate's ability to discuss familiar topics and use simple English grammar.

Hints for high scores

In order to get a high score on the IELTS Speaking test, it is necessary to give full answers which are neither too long nor too short. The following steps are recommended:

- State one opinion or feeling of your own
- State the reason why you have that opinion or feeling
- Give examples or specific interesting stories, etc.

Sometimes a complete answer consists of just a few sentences; at other times it needs more. In fact, how much you speak doesn't matter provided that your answer is complete.

Note: Never say **yes** or **no** only, and avoid using a trite and verbose style.

Part 2

Part 2 lasts between 3 and 4 minutes. The examiner will ask you to give a personal monologue about a certain topic for 1-2 minutes. You will be given a cue card on which there are points you should cover. You have 1 minute for preparation; meanwhile, you will be provided with a pen and paper to jot down some main ideas.

Part 2 aims to test the ability of speaking in long turns.

Hints for high scores

“Personal stories outside the book” are some small stories or details that can make your answers more interesting and colourful. Look at the two samples below.

Sample question: Describe a park that you know.

Low-scoring answer:

I really like the park in my building complex because there are lots of trees.

High-scoring answer:

I really like the park near my building complex because there are lots of trees. My little brother and I normally go there to play games when the weather is pleasant. There was one time that we played hide-and-seek when I searched everywhere but still couldn't find him. Later, I got so worried that I almost cried. In the end, Mom called and told me that he had gone home already. Only then did I realise that he was trying to trick me. In general, I always have a good relaxing time in the park.

Note: When answering Part 2 questions, apart from telling stories outside the book, you should add some related content to the answers. To answer a question of place, for instance, you have to tell how often you go there, whom you go with, your feeling about that place, etc. Through high-scoring formulas in this book, we will show you how to answer the questions naturally and confidently.

Part 3

In Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking test, which lasts 4-5 minutes, you will participate in a discussion with the examiner based on the topic in Part 2. You should express and support your opinion clearly, as well as show your skills of using English in discussing various topics in depth.

Part 3 aims to test the candidate's ability to express personal interpretations of argumentative issues and to discuss them in detail.

Hints for high scores

Look at the two samples below.

Sample question: What are the main environmental problems facing the world today? How could they be addressed?

Low-scoring answer:

I think global warming is the largest problem facing the world.

High-scoring answer:

Some people believe that global warming is the biggest problem facing the world today, *while* others are quite sceptical about it. I think that people should make more efforts to take care of the natural environment, *not just* to reduce global warming, *but* to make our air cleaner, our water fresher and our daily lives more comfortable. It is important to boost the economy and give more people the opportunity to buy luxury goods and live a good life; *however*, people should also be aware that the natural environment is also important and consider the long-term effects of some of our action.

Note: Using appropriate linking words can help make your answers sound clearer and more coherent.

How to Use *31* High-scoring Formulas to Answer the IELTS Speaking Questions

Structure of the Book

This book can be used either for self-study or as in-class training material. *31 High-scoring Formulas to Answer the IELTS Speaking Questions* consists of 3 parts corresponding to the IELTS Speaking test components.

Part 1: 20 high-scoring formulas for IELTS Speaking Test Part One

Part 2: 4 high-scoring formulas for IELTS Speaking Test Part Two

Part 3: 7 high-scoring formulas for IELTS Speaking Test Part Three

Each formula consists of 2 sections: **Answer order** and **Language steps**. **Answer order** shows you “what to say”, which indicates the logic of an answer needed for a speaking test question type; and **Language steps** show you “how to say it”, which includes detailed vocabulary and grammar you need to communicate your ideas.

Learning Strategies

It is recommended that you follow the order of content presented in this book, starting with the basic and easier content first to set a firm base for your speaking skill. To maximise your learning results, consider these following steps:

1. Clearly understand the purposes and content of each chapter. After every chapter, check to see whether you have achieved what is intended for that chapter.
2. Master both **Answer order** and **Language steps**. Through **Answer order**, learn how to think logically like natives to plan your answers; through **Language steps**, learn the vocabulary and grammar needed for your answers.
3. Acquire new vocabulary by doing the vocabulary exercises and using these words into practical conversation.
4. Read the model answers and note down how important words and structures are used in context.
5. Study the explanation of model examples and practise with extensive exercises for more accurate expressions and richer answers.
6. Work through the material with your friends, if possible. You all can ask and answer in turn to practise the high-scoring formulas.

Part 01111

Introduction to Part One Formulas

Introduction to Part One of the GRE Speaking Test

Part One of the GRE Speaking Test consists of two sections.

The first section contains two tasks. In this section, you must speak for 1 minute. Both tasks are presented in the table below.

The second section contains two tasks. Answers will require 30 seconds.

General Introduction to Part 1 Formulas

The 10 formulas provided in this part of the book are based on extensive research and are designed to help you answer all questions on the GRE Speaking Test with confidence and effectiveness.

Formula 1

Do you prefer X to Y?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Do you prefer X to Y? type questions.

Do you prefer writing letters or sending emails?

Do you prefer talking on the phone or chatting online?

Do you prefer to travel by bike or on foot?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Do you prefer X to Y? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. State which one you prefer.
2. Compare the two things the examiner mentions.
3. Give reasons and examples to explain why.

Language steps

1. Master prefer + verb-ing

I prefer walking.

and prefer + to verb.

I prefer to walk.

2. Use comparatives of convenience or greater benefit like a native speaker.

Travelling by bus is faster than going by car.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
convenient	adjective	fitting in well with a person's needs or plans	Is it convenient for you to meet Friday afternoon?
actually	adverb	in fact; really (usually used before a slightly surprising statement)	Many people think that philosophy is really boring, but it's actually quite fascinating when you start finding out about it.
get stuck		to get into a situation when you cannot move easily (It can be used in an abstract or a specific situation. It is often used when you cannot move in a traffic jam.)	We got stuck in traffic for hours and so we missed our plane.
traffic jam		a lot of vehicles very close together so that they cannot move	Traffic jams are usually just caused by the amount of cars on the road, rather than by accidents. This is why there are always traffic jams during rush hour.
means of transport		all the different types of transport: cars, buses, trains, the subway, planes, etc.	Although a car is probably the most popular means of transport, it is not very suitable for modern life in cities, where they are too expensive and there is not enough space to drive them.
smiley	noun	a small image used in chat rooms online by users to indicate different emotions (It can also be sent by mobile phone or email. Example: ☺)	Whenever I make a joke about somebody while I am on the Internet and I worry that somebody might get angry, I just put a smiley at the end of my message to show I was only joking.
online	adjective/ adverb	on the Internet	I won't let my child surf the Web; there are too many dangerous and dirty things online.
sociable	adjective	describing somebody who likes meeting new people or spending time with people	Mark isn't a very sociable person at all; he hardly ever goes out to have fun and spends all his time alone in his room playing computer games.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer Do you prefer to travel by bike or by bus?

Alice I prefer cycling to travelling by bus. Cycling is so much more convenient than taking the bus if you're not travelling too far. Actually, it's often faster to go by bike because you don't get stuck in traffic jams! Cycling is also better for my health than all other means of transport, including buses.

Interviewer Do you prefer chatting online or talking on the phone?

David Generally, I prefer chatting online. I nearly always find that chatting online can be more sociable as you can speak to more than one person at the same time. Also, chatting online is often much more fun because you can send smileys, photos and even videos!

Language step 1 Prefer

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the verb prefer.

Alice I *prefer cycling to travelling by bus*...

David Generally, I *prefer chatting online*...

Obviously, the first thing you need to tell the examiner for this type of question is whether you prefer X or Y. Prefer can be followed by either verb-ing or to verb.

Notice in the examples below that prefer + verb-ing can be followed by either to or rather than, but prefer + to verb can only be followed by rather than.

prefer + verb-ing + to / rather than + verb-ing

I *prefer cycling to taking* the bus.

I *prefer eating to cooking*.

I *prefer baking cakes at home rather than buying* them in shops.

I *prefer reading a newspaper rather than watching* TV.

prefer + to verb + rather than + verb

I *prefer to cycle rather than take* the bus.

I *prefer to eat rather than cook*,

I *prefer to bake* cakes at home *rather than buy* them in shops.

I *prefer to read* a newspaper *rather than watch* TV.

Both these forms are correct, and mean exactly the same.

Exercise 1.1: Error Correction

Some of the sentences below are incorrect, some are correct. Identify the incorrect sentences and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. I prefer to go to the cinema to watch DVDs at home.
2. My sister prefers writing letters to write emails.
3. I prefer to talk with friends on the phone rather than using emails.
4. I much prefer to live in a town rather than a big city.
5. My mother prefers shopping at the market more than in supermarkets.
6. My friends generally prefer to send text messages to talking on the phone.

Language step 2 Comparatives

Let's look again at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the comparatives.

Alice ...Cycling is so much *more convenient than* taking the bus if you're not travelling too far. Actually, it's often *faster* to go by bike because you don't get stuck in traffic jams! Cycling is also *better* for my health *than* all other means of transport, including buses.

David ...I nearly always find that chatting online can be *more sociable* as you can speak to more than one person at the same time. Also, chatting online is often much *more fun* because you can send smileys, photos and even videos!

After you have told the examiner whether you prefer X or Y, you should compare them, so it's very important to use comparatives correctly.

To form the comparative of an adjective, you should:

add -er if the adjective is one syllable long.

add -ier if the adjective has two syllables and ends in -y.

add more before the adjective if it has two or more syllables.

Look at the table below to see how these rules work.

Short Adjectives		Adjectives ending in <i>y</i>		Long Adjectives	
Adjective	Comparative Form	Adjective	Comparative Form	Adjective	Comparative Form
cheap	cheaper	easy	easier	expensive	more expensive
large	larger	heavy	heavier	comfortable	more comfortable
fast	faster	pretty	prettier	fashionable	more fashionable
slow	slower	ugly	uglier	useful	more useful



These following adjectives have irregular forms of comparative.

good → better bad → worse fun → more fun

To emphasise the comparative, add **much** before the comparative form.

For example: ...*much* more convenient

When you compare X and Y, you should use one of the following comparative structures:

X + be + comparative + than + Y

Watching TV is *more interesting than* listening to the radio.

Cars are *prettier than* buses.

X + be + not as + adjective + as + Y

Listening to the radio is *not as interesting as* watching TV.

Buses are *not as pretty as* cars.

Exercise 1.2: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct answers to complete the sentences below.

- My mother prefers to eat at home rather than eat in restaurants because she says it's _____ for one's health.
A. more better B. best C. better
- I think that I prefer student life to working life because we are allowed to be _____ in our attitude and express ourselves more.
A. more creativity B. more creative C. creativer
- Most people prefer taking the airport express light railway to taking a taxi to the airport because it is _____ .
A. much quicker B. more quick C. more quicker

4. I prefer to go to parties with friends rather than with family – partying with friends is so much _____ because I can drink wine and let my hair down!
 A. exciting B. excitinger C. more exciting
5. To be honest, I prefer travelling to work by bus rather than by foot because it's _____.
 A. easier B. more easy C. more easier
6. I don't like taking the subway – it's definitely _____ as the bus.
 A. more comfortable than B. less comfortable C. not as comfortable
7. For me, sending text messages is _____ sending emails.
 A. funner than B. more fun than C. not as fun
8. I prefer studying to working because I feel _____ and _____ when I study.
 A. freer; more independent
 B. more free; more independent
 C. freer; independent

Extra language point **Discourse Markers**

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use discourse markers in their answers.

Alice ...Cycling is so much more convenient than taking the bus if you're not travelling too far. *Actually*, it's often faster to go by bike because...

David ...I nearly always find that chatting online can be more sociable as you can speak to more than one person at the same time. *Also*, chatting online is often much more fun because...

One reason why Alice's and David's answers are so good is that both candidates put extra little words (called discourse markers) into their answers in a very native way.

Try to use the following words and expressions more often when you speak English, as they will help make you sound more like a native speaker:

actually / in fact

Actually and **in fact** are very often used by native speakers to introduce something that may be surprising or that slightly changes what was being said before.

It is *actually* a lot cheaper to go to that supermarket.

In fact, public buses are a lot more environmentally friendly than many people think.

needless to say

Needless to say is another way of saying obviously or everybody knows that... without sounding rude or arrogant.

I like eating lots of cakes, but *needless to say*, that will make me fat.

He's done very badly in his exams, so *needless to say*, he won't get into university this year.

also/in addition

Also and **in addition** are used to add extra or further information.

I'm a very sociable person. I prefer team sports such as basketball and football and *in addition*, I like going to English club with my friends.


I prefer cycling rather than driving a car because it helps me keep fit; *in addition*, it's better for the environment and it's *also* cheaper!

besides

Besides at the beginning of a phrase means as well as, whereas at the beginning of a clause it means anyway.

Besides watching TV and talking to my friends, I can relax while travelling on the subway.

I like riding a bike as it's a very convenient way to travel. *Besides*, it's cheap and I can't afford a car.

 **Exercise 1.3: Gap Fill**

Write the words and expressions below in the correct spaces.

in fact also needless to say besides actually in addition to

1. _____, writing emails is a lot cheaper than mailing letters.
2. I _____ prefer to eat at home rather than eat in restaurants.
3. Writing letters is a more personal way to communicate. _____, I like writing by hand.
4. I prefer watching TV to going to the cinema because _____ being cheaper, it's _____ more comfortable.
5. Many people think it's dangerous to travel by aeroplane but _____, it's probably the safest means of transport available.

Formula 2

What do you usually/normally do?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for What do you usually/normally do? type questions.

- What do you do on an average day?
- What is your normal daily routine?
- Can you describe your typical day?
- What do you usually do on weekends?

The formula

When the examiner asks you What do you usually/normally do? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say what you do at the time the examiner asks you about.
2. Say how often you do these things.

Language steps

1. Use adverbs of frequency like a native speaker to show how frequently or infrequently you do things.

I often meet up with my classmates.

I sometimes go shopping.

2. Use the present simple tense & times of day correctly for general habits.

I ride my bike every day at 2 o'clock.

We have dinner together in the evening.

3. Show that you can use one or two common sequence markers.

Before class starts we talk.

We then go to bed.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
routine	noun	something or a number of things you normally do as a habit	I wake up, clean my teeth, get dressed, then read the morning paper while drinking a cup of coffee – that's my usual morning routine.
schedule	noun	an organised or personal list of things that need or must be done at certain times	You want to have a meeting? Let me look at my schedule for next week... OK, I can fit you in about 3 o'clock.
review	verb	to go over; to revise; to casually look at to refresh one's memory	Flashcards are a great way to review vocabulary and native speaker expressions – you can look at them to refresh your memory of the things you cover in your lessons.
meet up with somebody		to meet somebody by appointment	I like to meet up with friends for drinks on Friday night after work. We often go to a quiet local bar and play cards.
corridor	noun	a passage inside a building that people walk along to get to different areas or rooms	I always get lost in my university. There are so many long corridors and so many classrooms – they all look the same!
gossip	verb	to talk openly about the lives of other people or to reveal personal or interesting facts about other people	Be careful what you say to Mr. Power. He always gossips about all the people in the office. If you want to keep a secret, don't tell him about it!
regular	adjective	similar, usually the same, with little change	I think my parents' eating habits are too regular; on Mondays they have fish, Tuesdays they have chicken, Wednesday is soup ... every week is exactly the same!
sharp	adverb	exactly at the time said, not later or earlier at all	You are late! I told you to be here at 8 o'clock sharp and it's now 8:05.
overtime	adverb/ noun	beyond the usual time; extra time spent at work	Many workers in developed countries refuse to work overtime if it is not paid.
hang out with somebody		to spend time with somebody, usually friends or family (informal)	I love hanging out with my friends on the weekend. We go shopping, go to the cinema, play badminton and sometimes go dancing.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer Tell me about your usual daily routine.

Alice Well, usually I wake up around 8 a.m. I always have a cup of coffee while I review my study notes over breakfast. Then I normally ride my bike to school, apart from in winter, when it's way too cold. Before class starts, I often meet up with my classmates in the corridor and we gossip a bit about life and school. After school, I always go straight home and then start on my homework while my mum cooks me dinner. I usually go to bed at about 10 p.m.

Interviewer Do you do the same thing at the same time every day?

David During the week, I have a very regular schedule because of my job. I always wake up just after 7 in the morning, then eat my breakfast on the way to the subway station. I get to work at 8 o'clock sharp, and usually work until 5, sometimes I work overtime until 7 or 8. After I get home, I normally eat dinner with my wife and after that either hang out with friends or watch TV before going to bed at about 11.

Language step 1 Adverbs of Frequency

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adverbs of frequency.

Alice Well, *usually* I wake up around 8 a.m. I *always* have a cup of coffee while I review my study notes over breakfast. Then I *normally* ride my bike to school, apart from in winter, when it's way too cold. Before class starts, I *often* meet up with my classmates in the corridor and we gossip a bit about life and school. After school, I *always* go straight home and then start on my homework while my mum cooks me dinner. I *usually* go to bed at about 10 p.m.

David ...I *always* wake up just after 7 in the morning, then eat my breakfast on the way to the subway station. I get to work at 8 o'clock sharp, and *usually* work until 5, *sometimes* I work overtime until 7 or 8. After I get home, I *normally* eat dinner with my wife...

You must use adverbs of frequency well in your test, and if you can master using a variety of different adverbs of frequency, it will make your English more interesting and much more like a native speaker.

Let's look at two different kinds of adverbs of frequency.

Adverbs that go after the subject and before the verb**always**

I *always* go out partying every night when I'm on holiday.

often

She *often* goes running after class.

never

She *never* rides her bike in winter.

almost never

We *almost never* go out dancing.

rarely

He *rarely* eats rice.

hardly ever

She *hardly ever* exercises.

Adverbs that can go before or after the subject**usually**

Usually I wake up around 8 a.m.

I *usually* wake up around 8 a.m.

normally

Normally I help my mum with the cooking.

I *normally* help my mum with the cooking.

sometimes

We *sometimes* go shopping.

Sometimes we go shopping.



Almost never, hardly ever and rarely mean almost the same thing.

**Exercise 2.1: Word Order**

Rewrite the sentences below in the correct order.

1. eat/I/buns/steamed/usually

2. never/I/almost/exercise/do

3. gets/hardly/ever/home/early/he
4. she/novels/never/reads
5. always/my/bike/rides/a/father
6. lunch/read/magazine/during/I/a/sometimes
7. I/parents/with/watch/my/TV/normally
8. play/I/computer/rarely/games
9. weekend/cycling/often/the/go/on/I

Language step 2 The Present Simple & Times of Day

Let's look again at Alice's and David's answers to see how they use the present simple tense and times of day.

Alice Well, usually I *wake up around 8 a.m.* I always *have* a cup of coffee while I *review* my study notes *over breakfast*. Then I normally *ride* my bike to school, apart from in winter, when it's way too cold. Before class *starts*, I often *meet up with* my classmates in the corridor and we *gossip* a bit about life and school. After school, I always *go* straight home and then *start* on my homework while my mum *cooks* me dinner. I usually *go* to bed *at about 10 p.m.*

David During the week, I *have* a very regular schedule because of my job. I always *wake up* just *after 7 in the morning*, then *eat* my breakfast on the way to the subway station. I *get* to work *at 8 o'clock sharp*, and usually *work until 5*, sometimes I *work* overtime *until 7 or 8*. After I *get* home, I normally *eat* dinner with my wife and after that either *hang out* with friends or *watch* TV before going to bed *at about 11*.

The present simple is used to describe what we do every day or very frequently:

I *get up* at 7:30 in the morning.

She often *goes* to the movies.

They *eat* noodles for lunch.



Do not overlook the usage of present simple tense as many students have lost their points on basic tense errors.

The present simple is often used together with times of day, so make sure you are aware of the following:

at + hour + o'clock

My mum makes me go to bed *at 10 o'clock*,
I get up *at 6 o'clock*,

at + dawn/noon/midnight

I never get up *at dawn*.
I always eat lunch *at noon*.

at + hour + a.m. /in the morning

I usually wake up *at 8 a.m.*
I usually wake up *at 8 in the morning*.

at + hour + p.m. /in the afternoon /evening

My father often comes home *at 9 p.m.*
My father often comes home *at 9 in the evening*.

at / on the weekend

I normally just relax *at the weekend*.
I normally just relax *on the weekend*.



Make sure that you can use time expressions accurately. Common mistakes such as *at 8 a.m. o'clock, in noon, on weekend*, etc. should be avoided.

In everyday English, the 12-hour clock system is the most commonly-used time notation. Therefore, with 23:00 you should say *11 o'clock or 11 p.m.*, not *23 o'clock*.

Exercise 2.2: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

eat	go out	hang out	have	lie
meet up with	play	wake up	watch	watch

Recently I've been very lazy. I _____ pretty late, around 10 a.m., and take a long time over breakfast. I usually _____ television while I _____ my breakfast, then I _____, _____ with friends and _____ football in the street. I go back home and _____ lunch with my family, then I go out again in the evening and _____

my mates. After that I normally
movies.

in bed till the early hours of the morning and

Exercise 2.3: Error Correction

Identify the mistakes in the following sentences and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. I often go to my sister's house for lunch in the weekend.
2. On holiday, I usually get up 10 a.m. in the morning.
3. I always go for a jog on the evening, when it is cool.
4. Normally, I go to bed at 11 p.m. o'clock.
5. I try to have lunch in noon.
6. I leave for work on 6 a.m. o'clock.

Extra language point **Sequence Markers**

Let's take a look at how Alice and David use sequence markers in their answers.

Alice Well, usually I wake up around 8 a.m...*Then* I normally ride my bike to school, apart from in winter, when it's way too cold. *Before* class starts, I often meet up with my classmates in the corridor and we gossip a bit about life and school. *After* school, I always go straight home and *then* start on my homework while my mum cooks me dinner...

David ...I always wake up just after 7 in the morning, *then* eat my breakfast on the way to the subway station...*After* I get home, I normally eat dinner with my wife and *after that* either hang out with friends or watch TV *before* going to bed at about 11.

To talk about your usual or normal routine, you should use sequence markers. These help you logically link the different activities that you do together and also make things much clearer for the listener.

Remind yourself of the following sequence markers:

before

then

after (activity)

after that



Besides **then** and **after that**, Alice and David use other sequence markers to indicate the order of their actions. This is typical of native speakers' speech.

Exercise 2.4: Gap Fill & Ordering

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces and then order the sentences A-D in the order that they occur.

after the shower after that before then

- A. _____ I have something to eat. I rarely have a very big breakfast.
- B. _____, I come home and take a quick shower.
- C. On Sundays, I normally get up fairly early and have a run in the local park _____ doing anything else.
- D. _____, I throw some really comfortable clothes on.

Formula 3

What do you like to do (in your spare time)?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for What do you like to do (in your spare time)? type questions.

- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What do you like to do when you are on holidays?
- What do you like to do when you are not working?

The formula

When the examiner asks you What do you like to do (in your spare time)? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Identify a couple of things you like doing.
2. Describe why you like them.

Language steps

1. Use either **enjoy/like + verb-ing** or **like + to verb**.
I like studying English.
I like to study English.
2. Use one or two native speaker ways to say I like.
I'm quite into playing guitar.
I'm really keen on studying English.
3. Use some adjectives of positive feeling to show the degrees of your interest.
I like playing football. It's exciting.
I'm quite into learning new languages. I find it fascinating.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
be quite into something		to be keen on something ("Quite into" is a way of expressing that you have a strong interest in something.)	He goes to concerts all the time. He's quite into music.
movie / film	noun	a story told by using sound and moving pictures, shown at a cinema (UK: film, US: movie)	The film <i>Titanic</i> is extremely popular with some people, but I don't really like romantic movies.
hip-hop	noun	a type of music with a strong beat that usually involves rapping, not singing to music	Eminem is one of the most famous hip-hop stars.
gig	noun	(informal) a single musical performance by an individual or a band	For me, gigs aren't worth going to; you have to buy expensive tickets, spend a long time getting there, and the performance is usually worse than the band's CD.
be keen on something		to be very interested in something	My father's recently become keen on photography, so he's bought an expensive digital camera and spends a lot of time taking photos of everything.
novel	noun	a long story about imaginary people and events	I think the <i>Harry Potter</i> novels are fantastic.
short story		a short story about imaginary people and events	I often buy those small magazines with short stories in them and read them on the subway on my way to work.
every so often		sometimes; not very often	Although I come from England, I only eat spicy food every so often.
stimulating	adjective	describing something that makes you feel enthusiastic and full of ideas	Students only need to talk to Professor Smith for a while and then they're suddenly bursting with ideas – he's so stimulating.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer What do you like to do in your spare time?

Alice Well, I have lots of hobbies I like to do in my spare time. I'm very interested in studying English and I'm also quite into movies – sometimes I combine these two interests by watching British or American films. What I particularly enjoy doing, though, is playing football – it's so exciting!

Interviewer What do you like to do in the evening?

David I work really hard during the day so in the evening, I like to relax and unwind. I'm a big fan of hip-hop and rock music, and I like hanging out with friends and watching gigs. I'm also keen on reading novels and short stories. I'm involved in a reading group at my university and every so often we get together and discuss the latest books we've read over dinner – it's so stimulating to talk and hear different views about the books we've all read.

Language step 1 Like & Enjoy

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the verbs like and enjoy.

Alice Well, I have lots of hobbies I *like to do* in my spare time. I'm very interested in studying English and I'm also quite into movies – sometimes I combine these two interests by *watching* British or American films. What I particularly *enjoy doing*, though, is playing football – it's so exciting!

David I work really hard during the day so in the evening, I *like to relax and unwind*. I'm a big fan of hip-hop and rock music, and I *like hanging out* with friends and *watching* gigs...

Like and enjoy are two very common verbs that you need to master to do well in your IELTS test.

Like

Notice that David uses like in two different ways to say the same thing.

like + to verb

I *like to relax*.

like + verb-ing

I *like hanging out* with friends.

Enjoy

enjoy + verb-ing

I really *enjoy playing* tennis.



After **enjoy** the verb should take an **-ing** form. For example, we can say I *enjoy practising* the guitar for a couple of hours every day., not I enjoy to practise.

If you or the interviewer has already mentioned an activity, and you continue to discuss that activity, you can refer to that activity as **it**. For example:

I really enjoy studying English. *It* is fun.

In the second sentence, **it** refers back to studying English. Use **it** when you are sure that both you and the person you are speaking to are talking about the same thing. Remember, if what you were talking about before was plural, you must say **they** instead of **it**. For example:

I like watching football matches – *they* are so exciting.



Exercise 3.1: Error Correction

Each of the sentences below has at least one mistake. Identify the mistakes and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. When I'm not working, I really enjoy to cycle in the countryside outside my city. They are a very healthy and exciting pastime.
2. I really like to getting involved in team sports. It is particularly good for building up co-operative skills and healthy competition.
3. I especially liking to spend my free time sleeping and being lazy in my dormitory.
4. My friends and I are really keen on play computer games. It is a really good way to spend an evening.
5. I enjoy to take part in martial arts like kung fu; they can keep you fit and make you strong!
6. She enjoys go out to bars on weekends and hang out with friends.

Language step 2 Native Speaker Ways to Say I Like

Let's look again at how the two candidates, Alice and David, express the idea I like.

Alice Well, I have lots of hobbies I like to do in my spare time. I'm *very interested in* studying English and I'm also *quite into* movies – sometimes I combine these two interests by watching British or American films...

David I work really hard during the day so in the evening, I like to relax and unwind. I'm *a big fan of* hip-hop and rock music, and I like hanging out with friends and watching gigs. I'm also *keen on* reading novels and short stories...

Let's look at the structures for these native speaker ways to say you like something:

I'm quite into + activity/hobby

I'm quite into playing tennis – I get very excited about it.

I'm a big fan of + activity/hobby

I'm a big fan of guitar music – I often go to concerts.

I'm keen on + activity/hobby

I'm really keen on going to eat in Thai restaurants. I love Thai food.

I'm interested in + activity/hobby

I'm very interested in law; I'm always reading about the latest laws and legal cases.



Be careful to use correct prepositions in idiomatic expressions, for example: **quite into**, **a fan of**, **keen on**, **interested in**.

Exercise 3.2: Word Order

Rewrite the sentences below in the correct order.

1. quite/on/detective/into/stories/I'm/TV/watching
2. of/fan/comedies/huge/a/romantic/she's
3. interested/I'm/latest/in/fashions/extremely/the
4. very/dancing/he's/with/at/clubs/on/friends/keen

Language step 3 Adjectives of Positive Feeling

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adjectives of positive feeling.

Alice Well, I have lots of hobbies I like to do in my spare time. I'm very *interested* in studying English and I'm also quite into movies – sometimes I combine these two interests by watching British or American films. What I particularly enjoy doing, though, is playing football – it's so *exciting*!

David ...I'm involved in a reading group at my university and every so often we get together and discuss the latest books we've read over dinner – it's so *stimulating* to talk and hear different views about the books we've all read.

To explain why you like doing something, you should use adjectives of positive feeling. It is often difficult for non-native speakers to use them correctly, and candidates frequently lose marks in the IELTS test because of this type of mistake.

Adjectives of positive feeling come from stative verbs such as *satisfy*, *bore* and *excite*. There are two ways to turn this type of verb into adjectives of positive feeling.

Use **be + verb-ed** when talking about the person who is experiencing the emotion:

- He *is bored* when he has nothing to do.
- She *is fascinated* by music.
- They *are interested* in playing football.
- I *am satisfied* with my lessons.
- The boy *is excited* when I give him food.

Use **be + verb-ing** when talking about the thing that is causing the emotion:

- Football *is boring*.
- Music *is fascinating*.
- Studying English *is interesting*.
- Seeing a concert *is exciting*.
- Eating a big dinner *is satisfying*.

Exercise 3.3: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct forms of the words in brackets.

1. I really enjoy reading; a good book is so _____ (satisfy).
2. I think movies are _____ (bore).
3. My friends are all _____ (excite) about the concert on Sunday.
4. I love studying English. I'm _____ (fascinate) by the grammar.
5. I'm really _____ (interest) in learning more about other countries.
6. Julla finds her art classes incredibly _____ (satisfy).

Formula 4

What do you dislike about X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for What do you dislike about X? type questions.

What do you dislike about parties?

What don't you like about your job?

What do you dislike about eating in restaurants?

The formula

When the examiner asks you What do you dislike about X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Identify which aspects of the topic you don't like – name just one or two things.
2. Describe the degree of dislike you have for them.
3. Give examples why you don't like them.

Language steps

1. Use native speaker expressions of dislike.

I'm not keen on sports.

2. Use native speaker degrees of dislike words and phrases.

I absolutely hate going to the cinema.

3. Use very much correctly to express the idea of dislike.

I don't like basketball very much.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
stranger	noun	a person you don't know	Parents often tell small children not to talk to strangers as it can be dangerous.
find oneself doing something		to suddenly realise that you are doing something unintentionally	Tom says he hates rock music, but whenever his son plays a Rolling Stones song, he finds himself singing along.
superficial	adjective	not deep or meaningful, very shallow, without much meaning	People who judge others by their clothes are very superficial.
field	noun	an area of an activity, job or interest	Although lots of university graduates would like to get into marketing, it's a very competitive field and only the very best candidates succeed.
line manager		one's line manager is a manager more senior than you to whom you are responsible for your work on a day-to-day basis	Sometimes, workers have to make complaints about their line managers to the manager of the line managers, which can be very awkward.
commute	noun/verb	the journey between one's workplace and home; to make that journey	I would rather live in a smaller city so that I didn't have to spend so much time commuting to work every day.
rush hour		the time in the mornings and evenings when the roads and pavements are busy because most people are travelling to or from work	I never get the bus during rush hour because the traffic is so bad. If I need to go somewhere in the city, I do it between about 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
jam-packed	adjective	full of things or people; very close together	Beautiful beaches are often ruined during the summer because they are jam-packed with tourists.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer: What do you dislike about parties?

Alice: Well, I generally enjoy the parties I go to, but there are a few things I don't like. I don't like all the drinking that usually happens, and I'm not keen on meeting lots of new people at parties. If there are too many strangers at a party, I find myself having the same conversation again and again: Where are you from? What's your major? What's your job? I can't stand repeating myself and this kind of conversation is very superficial; you don't really get to know the person at all.

Interviewer: What don't you like about your job?

David: I don't particularly like my job. I'm not interested in the field I work in, and I don't like my line manager or many of my colleagues very much – they're all so boring. But what I absolutely hate about my job is the commute. It takes me about two hours to get to work; I have to travel during the rush hour on the subway and public buses which are always jam-packed with people – it's terrible!

Language step 1 Expressing Dislike

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, express the idea of dislike.

Alice: Well, I generally enjoy the parties I go to, but there are a few things I *don't like*. I *don't like* all the drinking that usually happens, and I'm *not keen on* meeting lots of new people at parties... I *can't stand* repeating myself and this kind of conversation is very superficial...

David: I *don't particularly like* my job. I'm *not interested in* the field I work in, and I *don't like* my line manager or many of my colleagues very much – they're all so boring. But what I *absolutely hate* about my job is the commute...

Notice that Alice and David use a variety of phrases to talk naturally about things they don't like. You should also try to use a varied range of ways to say you dislike something. Here are some more expressions you should try to use:

expression + noun

I don't like parties.

I don't enjoy music concerts.


I'm not keen on fashion.

I'm not really a fan of music.

I'm not interested in history.
I hate TV documentaries.
I can't stand supermarkets.

expression + verb-ing

I don't like living in a big city.
I don't enjoy watching television.
I'm not keen on reading about fashion.
I'm not really a fan of listening to live music.
I'm not interested in learning about history.
I hate watching TV documentaries.
I can't stand going to the supermarket.

 **Exercise 4.1: Rephrasing**

Look at the sentences below and rewrite them in the spaces provided using the phrases in brackets.

1. I don't like to travel a lot for work, but my boss makes me. (hate)

2. I dislike formal parties where you have to look very smart and behave very well.
 (not keen on)

3. I don't enjoy it when my manager criticises me in front of all my colleagues. (can't stand)

4. Susan doesn't like English at all and she thinks it's a complete waste of time.
 (not interested in)

5. I don't like to go to expensive restaurants. (not really a fan of)

6. I don't like to watch TV soap operas. (don't enjoy)

Language step 2 Expressing Degrees of Dislike

Let's look again at how Alice and David express degrees of dislike.

<p>Alice <i>I can't stand</i> repeating myself and this kind of conversation is very superficial; you don't really get to know the person at all.</p> <p>David <i>I don't particularly like</i> my job...But what I <i>absolutely hate</i> about my job is the commute...</p>

There are many ways of saying you don't like something in English. Just saying I don't like... all the time is boring for you and for your listener!

Let's look at some ways to express degrees of dislike:

I *absolutely* hate...

I don't *really* like...

I *thoroughly* dislike...

I don't *really* enjoy...

I *can't stand*...

I *really* don't like...

I *strongly* dislike...

Exercise 4.2: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

thoroughly dislike can't stand really don't like absolutely don't really strongly

1. I _____ like Jerry's parties. He always invites boring people.
2. Margaret _____ dislikes office parties because she has to pretend to like all of her colleagues and her job. She finds it quite annoying.
3. I _____ our seminar classes at university because none of my classmates prepare for the classes and everyone is too nervous to discuss the topic. It's a waste of time.
4. My wife _____ hates her job because the work is boring, her boss is an idiot and her salary is terrible!
5. Many parents _____ bringing their children to parties because they have to spend all of their time looking after the kids rather than relaxing and having a good time themselves.
6. My mother _____ travelling to work by bus; it's always so crowded, the journey takes a long time and she hates the TVs they have now.

Language step 3 **Very Much**

Let's take a look at how the IELTS candidate David uses very much.

David ...I don't like my line manager or many of my colleagues *very much* – they're all so boring...

Many students make the terrible mistake of saying the following types of sentences in the IELTS test:

I *very like* playing tennis. (×)

I *don't like very much* going shopping. (×)

This is very bad English and does not sound like a native.

Look at the following correct native speaker sentences and see if you can see the correct word order patterns:

I like playing tennis *very much*.

I don't like going shopping *very much*.

There are three rules you must remember:

You cannot use **very** before a verb.

You cannot use **very much** before a verb.

You can use **very much** after the activity.

Examples:

I like reading romantic novels *very much*.

I *really* like reading romantic novels.

I don't like going climbing in the mountains *very much*.

I *really* don't like going climbing in the mountains.

If you want to sound like a native, we advise you to only use **very much** with short sentences.



The usage of **very much** and **very** differs from that of **really**.

Exercise 4.3: Error Correction

Some of the sentences below are incorrect, some are correct. Identify the incorrect sentences and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. I very enjoy studying English.
2. I very much like going to the seaside and swimming in the sea.
3. I don't very much enjoy going to parties.
4. I very like all parts of my job.
5. I enjoy my job very much.

Formula 5

How often do you do X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for How often do you do X? type questions.

How often do you read books?

How often do visitors come to your home?

How often do you go out to dinner with friends?

The formula

When the examiner asks you How often do you do X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say how frequently you do the activity the examiner asks you about.
2. Explain why you do it that frequently.

Language steps

1. Use a range of different adverbs of frequency correctly.

I *never* go to the cinema.

I *regularly* watch DVDs.

2. Use a variety of adverbs of infrequency to describe something you don't do often.

I *don't always* eat at home.

Every once in a while I play sports.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
once in a blue moon		rarely (Native speakers use this phrase to show that an action happens very, very rarely.)	I am always very good about staying on a diet; it's only once in a blue moon that I might eat a piece of cake.
used to		to show that something usually occurred or was true in the past	Clare used to be a really good student, but lately she's become really lazy.
have somebody over		to invite (when you invite somebody to your home, usually for a meal or drinks)	Last night I had some friends over to my house and cooked dinner for them.
socialise	verb	to spend time with other people for enjoyment	I love parties because I like to socialise – they are a great opportunity to hang out with friends and meet new people.
bookworm	noun	somebody who reads all the time	I don't understand how Jane can date a bookworm like John; he's so boring, always reading and hardly ever going out with friends.
mix something up		to change or vary things from the normal pattern, for fun or to make them more interesting	I've been working on the same project at work for six months and I'm completely bored. I wish our manager would mix the work up and give us some new tasks.
poetry	noun	a type of writing where the text is arranged in lines, which may or may not rhyme (Many students confuse this word with "poet" and "poem".)	Nguyen Khuyen is my favourite poet, whose poetry is very famous. Many poems he wrote are taught at school.
be in the mood		to feel like doing something	Helen has just asked me to go and play tennis with her, but I'm not in the mood; I just feel like sitting on the sofa and reading a book.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer How often do you socialise with friends?

Alice I used to go out to dinner with my friends all the time, but I'm in my last year of university now and I'm really busy. I don't often have the chance to take a break and spend time with my friends. Once in a blue moon I'll have someone over for coffee, or I'll go to a friend's house and hang out. I hope I'll have more time to socialise after I graduate!

Interviewer How often do you read books?

David To be honest, I'm always reading books; I'm a complete bookworm! I usually read novels, but sometimes I mix it up slightly and read books about history or nature. I prefer reading novels because they are a great way to relax and escape from daily life, but I also enjoy history and nature books because they help me learn more about the world we live in. From time to time I might read some poetry, but I have to be in the right mood.

Language step 1 Adverbs of Frequency

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adverbs of frequency.

Alice I used to go out to dinner with my friends *all the time*, but I'm in my last year of university now and I'm really busy...

David To be honest, I'm *always* reading books; I'm a complete bookworm! I *usually* read novels, but *sometimes* I mix it up slightly and read books about history or nature...

Remind yourself of the following groups of adverbs of frequency:

Adverbs of frequency that go before the verb

always

I *always* read the Sunday papers.

seldom/rarely

Jonathan *rarely* goes to fast food restaurants.

never

I *never* read the Sunday papers.

Adverbs of frequency that can go before the verb or at the end of a sentence

often

I *often* listen to music.

I listen to music *often*.

frequently

I *frequently* go to bars with my friends.

I go to bars with my friends *frequently*.

Adverbs of frequency that can go at the beginning of a sentence or before the verb or at the end of a sentence

usually

Usually I play football on Sunday.

I *usually* play football on Sunday.

I play football on Sunday *usually*.

sometimes

Sometimes I go to nightclubs.

I *sometimes* go to nightclubs.

I go to nightclubs *sometimes*.

occasionally

Occasionally Lee reads a newspaper.

Lee *occasionally* reads a newspaper.

Lee reads a newspaper *occasionally*.


Adverbs of frequency that can only go at the end of a sentence

all the time

I listen to my MP3 *all the time*.



Always and never are adverbs of frequency at the extreme level. They are appropriately used for actions that happen all the time or have not happened once, respectively. Practise using them as well as other adverbs of frequency to say how often you do things. This may help you sound like a native.


Exercise 5.1: Word Placement

Circle the letters that represent the appropriate positions for the adverbs of frequency in brackets.

1. A I B go cycling with my friends C. (sometimes)
2. A she B smokes cigarettes C. (never)
3. A I B go to concerts C. (often)
4. A she B goes swimming on Thursday nights C. (usually)
5. A he B invites me to his house for dinner C. (occasionally)
6. A I B read the newspaper each morning while I eat breakfast C. (always)
7. A my mother B cooks dinner or lunch for her friends and neighbours C. (frequently)

8. A I B watch TV C. (all the time)
9. A he B listens to the radio C. (seldom)

Language step 2 Adverbs of Infrequency

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use certain adverbs to describe things they rarely do.

Alice ...I *don't often* have the chance to take a break and spend time with my friends. *Once in a blue moon* I'll have someone over for coffee, or I'll go to a friend's house and hang out...

David ...*From time to time* I might read some poetry, but I have to be in the right mood.

When you do not do the activity the examiner asks you about frequently, you should use a varied range of adverbs of infrequency.

Colloquial expressions

In addition to **never**, **seldom** and **rarely** (see Language step 1), you can also use the following colloquial expressions to sound more like a native:

every once in a while (= sometimes)

I play football on Sunday morning *every once in a while*.

from time to time (= occasionally)

I have friends over *from time to time*.

once in a blue moon (= rarely)

I drink alcohol *once in a blue moon*.

hardly ever (= almost never)

I *hardly ever* play video games.



Of all the expressions listed above, only **hardly ever** can come before the verb. Others should come either at the beginning or at the end of a sentence.

Using don't

It's also often useful to form adverbs of infrequency by adding **don't** before an adverb of frequency. **Don't** can be used with the following adverbs:

always

I *don't always* go to the university canteen to eat.

usually

She *doesn't usually* have guests to dinner.

often

He *doesn't often* socialise with friends.

all the time

I *don't* go to expensive restaurants with friends *all the time*, just occasionally.



We cannot put **don't** before **sometimes**, **rarely**, **occasionally** or **never**. Therefore, we do not say *don't sometimes...*, *don't rarely...*, *don't occasionally...* or *don't never...*

Native English speakers also use the structure **don't really + verb + much** to describe something that does not frequently occur. For example: I *don't really* read *much*.


Exercise 5.2: Practice with a Friend

On your own or with a partner, try answering the following questions using the adverbs of infrequency below.

every once in a while
from time to time
once in a blue moon
hardly ever

don't always
don't usually
don't often
don't...all the time

1. How often do you read books in English?
2. How often do you go to expensive restaurants?
3. How often do you cook dinner for guests?
4. How often do you go to music concerts?
5. How often do you watch soap operas?
6. How often do you go on holiday with your friends?
7. How often do you read science magazines?
8. How often do you watch American films?

Extra language point Explaining Frequency

Let's take a look at how Alice and David explain why they usually or don't usually do something.

Alice I used to go out to dinner with my friends all the time, *but I'm in my last year of university now and I'm really busy – I don't often have the chance to take a break and spend time with my friends...*

David ...I prefer reading novels *because they are a great way to relax and escape from daily life*, but I also enjoy history and nature books *because they help me learn more about the world we live in*. From time to time I might read some poetry, but I have to be in the right mood.

Remember that the second thing you should say to the examiner when answering How often do you do X? type questions is why you do the action frequently or infrequently.

Practise using the following phrases:

I (adverb of (in)frequency) do (it) because...

I always play basketball after work because I can keep fit and socialise with my colleagues.

I don't often go to the cinema because it's too expensive.

I can't do (it) because...

I can't socialise with my friends very often because I live in a completely different part of the city.

I would like to read more books but I can't because I don't have the time.

I (adverb of (in)frequency) have the chance to do (it) because...

I don't usually have the chance to hang out with my old friends because I recently moved to a new city.

I don't often have the chance to read long novels because I am so busy at work.



Exercise 5.3: Matching

Match the sentence halves 1-5 with the sentence halves A-E.

1. I don't often wake up later than 8 a.m...
2. I can't drink coffee with breakfast...
3. I sometimes have the chance to go to the theatre in the evenings...
4. I rarely have the chance...
5. I usually hang out with my friends on the weekend...

- A. ...because it helps me relax after the working week.
- B. ...because my girlfriend can occasionally get free tickets.
- C. ...because it makes me nervous and it isn't good for the stomach.
- D. ...because I don't like to lie in bed late in the morning.
- E. ...to have people over for dinner.

Formula 6

What do you like most about X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for What do you like most about X? type questions.

- What do you like most about student life?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What is the best thing about your city?
- What is your favourite type of weather?

The formula

When the examiner asks you What do you like most about X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say which aspect of X you like the most.
2. Explain why.

Language steps

1. Use adverbs modifying verbs to express degrees of like.
I *especially* like playing the piano.
Students *particularly* enjoy going to bars and restaurants.
2. Use parallel structures correctly.
I like *going* to the cinema, *watching* TV and *playing* video games.
3. Use simple linking words accurately.
Although the city has developed very fast, it's still not very expensive.
I don't like travelling to work, *but* I enjoy my job.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on page 49 more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
golden opportunity		a very good opportunity or chance to do something	Getting a scholarship to study at Harvard University was a golden opportunity for David.
expand/broaden/widen (somebody's) horizons		to increase somebody's knowledge so that they think about or consider things they didn't before	My father always told me that I should go travelling and see the world as it would help expand my horizons.
Salsa (dancing)	noun	a type of dance from South America, where couples dance together	I've also wanted to try Salsa dancing because it looks like a lot of fun and the men seem so sexy!
yoga	noun	a type of exercise originally from India which exercises the body through stretching and breathing exercises	Although I don't play any sports, I'm quite fit because I do yoga frequently.
coast	noun	the area of land next to the sea	Susan wanted to move nearer the coast so she could go swimming and sailing whenever she wanted.
the odd		not often; rarely	I don't like my current company. I work really hard and although I get the odd "well done" from my manager, I don't feel my work is appreciated at all.
typhoon	noun	a very strong, violent and dangerous type of storm with strong wind	Pete was sailing in the Pacific Ocean when his yacht was caught in a typhoon. The storm blew his boat about 500 kilometres, but he was lucky and survived.
breeze	noun	a very soft and gentle wind	We had a lovely afternoon together, drinking tea and chatting in the garden with lots of sunshine and a gentle breeze.
value	verb	to think that something is important or valuable	Most companies value experience over education qualifications.
all year round		all year; at all times of the year	I could tell my grandmother's health wasn't very good because she felt cold all year round.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer What do you like most about student life?

Alice What I particularly like about student life is the golden opportunity it gives me to expand my horizons. At university, I can not only increase my knowledge about my major and learn new things like Salsa and yoga, but I can also meet lots of new people.

Interviewer What is the best thing about your hometown?

David My hometown is Nha Trang, in Khanh Hoa Province. The best thing about my hometown is its location. It's right on the coast, and from most places in the city, there are beautiful views of the sea. Although we get the odd typhoon every year because we are by the seaside, we also enjoy light sea breezes during the summer. But what I especially value about Nha Trang's location is the fresh seafood we can eat all year round.

Language step 1 Expressing Degrees of Like

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, express degrees of like.

Alice What I *particularly* like about student life is the golden opportunity it gives me to expand my horizons...

David ...But what I *especially* value about Nha Trang's location is the fresh seafood we can eat all year round.

As you can see, Alice and David use different ways to express how much they like different aspects of X. Let's look at some more native speaker ways to express degrees of like:

	Adverb	Verb	Activity / Place
	really	like	
	especially	enjoy	verb-ing
	particularly	love	noun

Examples:

I *really enjoy watching* the trees by the lake bend in the wind.

I *particularly like* my hometown's food.

I *especially love attending* my Psychology lectures.

Any of the above combinations are fine, and using some varied language will make you sound more like a native speaker.

Notice that **like, love and enjoy** can be followed by either a verb-ing or a noun; for examples:

I especially like/enjoy/love *walking* in the countryside.

I especially like/enjoy/love *the countryside*.

You cannot say:

I like/enjoy/love *to walking*.



In English, **very** never comes before **like, enjoy and love**. Thus, *I very like* walking in the countryside is a wrong way of expressing degrees of like. Instead, you should say *I really/particularly/especially like* walking in the countryside.

Exercise 6.1: Error Correction

Some of the sentences below are incorrect, some are correct. Identify the incorrect sentences and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. I really liking meeting new people.
2. I particularly to love travelling as part of my job.
3. She especially enjoys visit the famous sights in my hometown.
4. I enjoy to taking photographs and sending postcards home.
5. I very like living with my classmates in our dormitory.
6. I really love snowy weather.

Language step 2 Parallel Structures

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use parallel structures.

Alice ...At university, I can not only *increase* my knowledge about my major and *learn* new things like Salsa and yoga, but I can also *meet* lots of new people.

David ...Although we *get* the odd typhoon every year because we *are* by the seaside, we also *enjoy* light sea breezes during the summer...

Language step 3 Linking Words

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use linking words.

Alice ...At university, I can *not only* increase my knowledge about my major and learn new things like Salsa and yoga, *but* I can *also* meet lots of new people.

David ...*Although* we get the odd typhoon every year *because* we are by the seaside, we *also* enjoy light sea breezes during the summer. *But* what I especially value about Nha Trang's location is the fresh seafood we can eat all year round.

To sound like a native and to improve your score on your speaking test, it's good to show slight comparison, contrast and consequence between ideas and feelings using transitional or linking words.

Take a look at the following linking words, and how they are used:

but

I really like my maths teacher, *but* I like my science teacher more.

however

My major is history; *however*, I find art class more exciting.

although

Although I study hard most of the time, I always find time for fun on the weekends.

I always find time for fun on the weekends, *although* I study hard most of the time.

though

I enjoy learning to play the violin, *though* it is difficult at times.

Though it is difficult at times, I enjoy learning to play the violin.

as opposed to

Students discuss ideas, *as opposed to* just copying from books.

besides

Besides cooking and painting, I often do other activities like singing and hanging out with my friends.

I often do other activities like singing and hanging out with my friends *besides* cooking and painting.

as well as

She is my classmate *as well as* my best friend.

As well as being my best friend, she is my classmate.

also

I love running in the park. I *also* run in the gym.



In English, **although** and **but** do not go together to express concessions. Therefore, instead of *Although* I live near the coast, *but* I don't like the sea, you should say *Although* I live near the coast, I don't like the sea.

Exercise 6.3: Matching

Match the sentence halves 1-8 with the sentence halves A-H.

1. I am really happy with my university's appearance, the sports facilities and the sculptures,...
 2. I enjoy a lot of things about being a student,...
 3. I like my city because it is old, historical and...
 4. I love the winters because of the snow, ice and clear skies,...
 5. As well as being a modern, clean and fashionable place to live,...
 6. Although I am generally not a very social person,...
 7. My job offers me lots of opportunities to be creative and work in a team...
 8. When I go travelling I enjoy going for long walks;...
-
- A. ...however, I don't really like going too far into unknown territory – I'm afraid of getting lost!
 - B. ...I really like my hometown because it's so interesting.
 - C. ...the thing about working life I enjoy the most is going out to lunch and dinner with my workmates.
 - D. ...though my favourite thing is most certainly the new restaurant on campus – it's great!
 - E. ...besides having flexible working hours.
 - F. ...also a friendly place to live.
 - G. ...but the thing I like most is the opportunity to meet lots of clever, thoughtful people.
 - H. ...as opposed to the awful summers with hot, dry air.

Formula 7

Is X popular (in your country)?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Is X popular (in your country)? type questions.

- Are bikes popular in your country?
- Is watching team sports popular where you live?
- Is playing sports popular in your university?
- Is music popular in your country?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Is X popular (in your country)? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Show you understand the question which is asking about people in general and not about you.
2. Talk about types of people in society like a native.
3. Talk about how many people like to do X.

Language steps

1. **Talk about types of people.**
People of all ages like to ride bikes.
Most businessmen own cars.
2. **Use quantity words to talk about how many people like X.**
I think most people ride the subway.
The majority of British people drink milk with their tea.
3. **Use one or two expressions of habit like a native.**
In general, our people enjoy spicy food.
As a rule, older generations are more traditional.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
generally speaking		in most situations; usually; ordinarily	Generally speaking, I don't eat fast food but sometimes – perhaps just a few times a year – I might go to McDonald's.
regularly	adverb	frequently; often	Steve is so fit and strong because he exercises regularly.
as for		used to change the topic of what you are talking about	I love playing golf and tennis. As for cooking, I have no real interest in it.
sexist	adjective	describing somebody or something that says men are better than women or women are better than men	In the past, most men were sexist; they didn't believe women could be trusted with money, power of responsibilities.
depend on		whether something is true or not is determined by something else	Is Italy a good place to go on holiday? It depends on what kind of holiday you want – if you want to see ancient buildings, eat pizza and drink red wine, it'll be great.
as a rule		usually; generally true	As a rule, I'm a very calm person but sometimes I get really annoyed.
pop (music)	noun	the most popular music in a society, usually uncomplicated and easy to remember	Some modern pop music is fantastic – like Take That and Blue – but most of it is pretty terrible.
tend	verb	to be likely to happen; to usually do something	Bikes tend to be popular with older people and students.
folk music		a traditional style of music, often from the countryside	I don't think anyone listens to English folk music anymore; it's too old-fashioned.
concert	noun	an event where musicians play music to a very large audience	I love going to concerts; it's so exciting to see my favourite stars singing and dancing on the stage, and the atmosphere is fantastic because there're thousands of people.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer Is football popular in your country?

Alice Yes, football is extremely popular in Vietnam. Generally speaking, I would say that the majority of high school and university male students regularly play football. As for watching football, I think most Vietnamese men of all ages frequently watch English Premier League matches. Although it sounds a bit sexist, I don't believe football is very popular with many Vietnamese women.

Interviewer Is music popular in Vietnam?

David I think it depends on what kind of music you are talking about. Most people in Vietnam listen to music every day. As a rule, the younger generation usually listens to pop, rock or hip-hop music, whereas the older people tend to listen to older Vietnamese songs or folk music. I think many wealthy people listen to classical music, sometimes going to live concerts.

Language step 1 Types of People

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, describe different types of people.

Alice ...Generally speaking, I would say that the majority of *high school and university male students* regularly play football. As for watching football, I think most *Vietnamese men of all ages* frequently watch English Premier League matches...I don't believe football is very popular with many *Vietnamese women*.

David ...As a rule, *the younger generation* usually listens to pop, rock or hip-hop music, whereas *the older people* tend to listen to older Vietnamese songs or folk music. I think many *wealthy people* listen to classical music, sometimes going to live concerts.

Notice that both Alice and David say what types of people X is popular with. Talking about types of people is a great way to sound like a native speaker when answering Is X popular (in your country)? type questions.

Remember:

A country is made up of different types of people, different groups. These different groups have different interests and likes and dislikes.

So, don't just speak for the whole nation and say:

People in my country like to drink tea.

A native speaker will talk about the types of people that X is popular with, rather than saying that all people like it. So, a better answer – that does not generalise – would be:

In general, a lot of *elderly Vietnamese people* like drinking tea, though there are some who do not like tea.

Now let's look at some more words talking about the different types of people that make up a society:

Age Groups & Generations	Work-related Groups	Social Classes
the older generation	retired people	poor people
the elderly	office workers	rich people
younger people	white-collar workers	the working classes
school kids	unemployed people	the middle classes
the younger generation	housewives	the upper classes
adolescents	job seekers	the lower classes

Exercise 7.1: Matching

Match the words on the left with the words on the right that have a similar meaning.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. elderly people | A. the unemployed |
| 2. office workers | B. wealthy people |
| 3. the lower classes | C. adolescents |
| 4. teenagers | D. the older generation |
| 5. the upper classes | E. poor people |
| 6. job seekers | F. white-collar workers |

Exercise 7.2: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

adolescents	white-collar workers	the unemployed
elderly people	wealthy people	

- Traditional Vietnamese activities such as playing Chinese chess and drinking tea are still very popular with _____ in Vietnam.
- Bikes are not as popular as they were a few years ago. Now, bikes are mostly ridden by poor people (such as _____) and _____ at school and college.
- The bus is mainly popular with students and _____ travelling to and from work; most tend to have their own cars and take taxis everywhere.

Language step 2 Quantity Words

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the quantity words.

Alice ...Generally speaking, I would say that *the majority of* high school and university male students regularly play football...I think *most* Vietnamese men of all ages frequently watch English Premier League matches...I don't believe football is very popular with *many* Vietnamese women.

David ...*Most* people in Vietnam listen to music every day...I think *many* wealthy people listen to classical music, sometimes going to live concerts.

Again, you will have noticed that both David and Alice use quantity words in their answers so that they do not generalise.

Look at the following quantity words which you should master so that you also don't generalise about people:

most

I think *most* people like to occasionally watch and play sports.

the majority of

The majority of teenagers listen to pop music at least once a week.

a lot of

I believe *a lot of* people will decide to study abroad in the future.

(not) many

Not many elderly people are interested in basketball.

a small percentage of

Only *a small percentage of* students have their own cars.

very few

In my opinion, *very few* poor people have the chance to study English.

Exercise 7.3: Rephrasing

Rephrase the sentences below using the words in brackets.

1. All Vietnamese people regularly play badminton when they are young. (a lot of)
2. No women play golf in Vietnam. (not many)

3. Every single Vietnamese person likes to listen to music. (the majority of)
4. Nobody at my university play table tennis. (very few)
5. Everyone watched the Thang Long-Ha Noi 1,000-year Anniversary Celebration. (most)
6. No rich people ever ride a bike. (a small percentage of)

Language step 3 Expressions of Habit

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use expressions of habit.

<p>Alice ...<i>Generally speaking</i>, I would say that the majority of high school and university male students regularly play football...</p> <p>David ...<i>As a rule</i>, the younger generation usually listens to pop, rock or hip-hop music, whereas the older people <i>tend to</i> listen to older Vietnamese songs or folk music...</p>

When you are trying to talk about a lot of people, you should also use different expressions of habit so that you don't generalise too much.

Look at the following expressions to say what people usually or normally do:

in general

In general, people in India like to eat spicy food.

generally speaking

Generally speaking, English people don't really learn many other languages.

as a rule

This expression simply means generally, and has nothing to do with rules.

As a rule, the older generation tends to be more traditional than the younger generation.

more often than not

Businessmen drive cars to work *more often than not*.

tend to

Most people in my country *tend to* enjoy playing chess.

Exercise 7.4: Word Order

Rewrite the sentences below in the correct order.

1. football/more/as/boys/a/rule/is/with/popular
2. eat/people/speaking/rice/Vietnamese/a lot of/generally
3. regularly/more/than/university/often/sports/students/play/not/very
4. together/sport/watching/to/like/tend/men
5. like/rich/drive/general/to/cars/in/people

Formula 8

What is the best time (of year) to do X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for What is the best time (of year) to do X? type questions.

What time of year is best for outdoor activities where you live?

What is the best time of day for studying?

What time of year is best for travelling in your country?

The formula

When the examiner asks you What is the best time (of year) to do X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Tell the examiner which time is best for X.
2. Describe what the conditions at that time are (i.e. weather, social conditions).
3. Explain why that is the best time.

Language steps

1. **Use superlatives correctly.**
 Da Lat is *the most beautiful* place in Vietnam.
 This is *the best* time to travel.
2. **Use prepositions of time correctly for times of day, month and year.**
 Ha Noi is beautiful *in* the late fall.
 Ba Na Hills is beautiful *at* any time *of* the year.
3. **Use a few colloquial expressions for advantageous conditions.**
 The winter months are *ideal for* skiing.
 The summer is *perfect for* cycling in the mountains.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
outdoor	adjective	done outside (It is usually used to describe activities that take place in the open air, away from buildings.)	I don't want an office job; I want a job that involves lots of outdoor tasks so that I'm not stuck in an office all day.
depend on		to be determined by, changeable according to a particular circumstance or situation	Whether or not you like Hue food depends on if you like a lot of spice.
provide	verb	to give somebody something; to supply	Many companies have a bonus scheme to reward staff that work hard. This obviously provides an incentive for the staff to do a good job.
rock climbing		an activity where you use your arms and legs to climb up very steep rocks/mountain sides	I've never been good at rock climbing; I think it's because my arms aren't strong enough.
hiking	noun	a long walk in the countryside, often including hills and mountains	I absolutely love hiking; it's great to walk through green fields, meadows, up hills and through valleys.
be into something		to be interested in something	My little nephew Daniel is really into aeroplanes; he's always running around the house with a toy aeroplane in his hand and making engine noises.
sledging	noun	an activity where one sits on a wooden "sledge" and slides down snowy hills, usually popular with children	A few years ago, my sister broke her leg when she tried sledging – the hill she went down was far too big.
snowboarding	noun	an activity where one stands with both legs on one "board" and in this way slides down a mountain; much the same as to skateboard, but on snow	Although snowboarding is really fashionable, I'm too frightened of hurting myself to try it.
depth of winter		the coldest part of winter, usually around the middle of winter	My favourite time of the year is the depth of winter. Then, there's usually lots of snow, people are on holiday from work and I can enjoy sitting in front of the fire with a good book.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
dawn	noun	the very early time in the morning when the sun first rises	I've only seen the dawn once or twice in my life; I'm far too lazy to get up so early!
get into something		to be able to concentrate on something	This weekend Adam's family is going away and he'll be in the house by himself. He hopes he'll finally be able to get into that big history book he bought recently.
distract	verb	to stop somebody concentrating on something	Whenever I write papers or revise for exams, I must be alone – otherwise I will be distracted by the other people and I can't concentrate.
productive	adjective	producing a lot; providing a large amount of something	Many firms have far too many meetings; often they do not have a clear focus and are not very productive. The company would be better off if the staff kept working.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer: What time of year is best for outdoor activities where you live?

Alice: I think the best time of year to do outdoor activities is either in the summer or in the winter because it depends on what activities you would like to do. The weather between June and early September provides the best conditions for rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking or playing sports like tennis and football because it is warm, sunny and bright. However, if you are into winter activities like ice skating, sledging and snowboarding, then the depth of winter is the best time to do them.

Interviewer: What is the best time of day to study?

David: I think the best time of day to study is in the very early morning, just after dawn. This is the quietest time of day, when there is no one else around and everywhere is completely silent. This means I am able to really get into what I'm studying and not be distracted by friends or family. It's definitely the most productive time of day for me, I just find it difficult to get up so early!

Language step 1 Superlatives

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the superlative forms.

Alice	I think <i>the best</i> time of year to do outdoor activities is either in the summer or in the winter...The weather between June and early September provides <i>the best</i> conditions for rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking or playing sports like tennis...
David	I think <i>the best</i> time of day to study is in the very early morning, just after dawn. This is <i>the quietest</i> time of day...It's definitely <i>the most productive</i> time of day for me, I just find it difficult to get up so early!

Notice that both Alice and David use a number of different superlatives in their model answers. This is also something you should master so that you can answer this type of question correctly.

Let's review some rules about correctly changing adjectives into superlatives.

Adjectives with one syllable

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
hot	hotter	the hottest
small	smaller	the smallest
light	lighter	the lightest
big	bigger	the biggest

Adjectives with more than one syllable

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
beautiful	more beautiful	the most beautiful
interesting	more interesting	the most interesting
exciting	more exciting	the most exciting
enjoyable	more enjoyable	the most enjoyable

Remember these exceptions

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	the best
bad	worse	the worst
fun	more fun	the most fun



Superlatives seem to be a good indication of your language proficiency, which will help you earn high scores of course, if you can use them appropriately and accurately in your speaking test.

Exercise 8.1: Sentence Completion

Complete the following sentences by writing the appropriate comparative or superlative forms of the adjectives in brackets.

1. Winter is probably _____ (bad) time of year; there are no leaves on the trees, the weather is freezing cold and the people are not happy!
2. Spring is _____ (beautiful) time of year. It's lovely and warm and the flowers are all in bloom.
3. Summer is a _____ (suitable) time of year to visit Phu Quoc Island than any other seasons. It's the only time when the weather is not cold, but actually quite warm.
4. _____ (pleasant) season in which to visit Thailand is most certainly spring, in late March and early April.
5. Winter is _____ (good) time to go skiing.
6. The spring is _____ (fun) time of year to go climbing in the mountains because it's not too hot and not too cold.
7. Flying a kite is _____ (enjoyable) thing to do in summer.
8. The height of summer is _____ (warm) season of the year to go camping.
9. Quang Tri is undoubtedly much _____ (hot) than Nha Trang in the summer months. It's almost unbearable. I would advise tourists to avoid Quang Tri at the peak of summer.

Language step 2 Prepositions of Time

Let's look again at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use prepositions of time.

Alice I think the best time of year to do outdoor activities is either *in* the summer or *in* the winter...The weather *between* June and early September provides the best conditions for...

David I think the best time *of* day to study is *in* the very early morning, just *after* dawn...

To get a good score you must use prepositions of time correctly.

At is used with festivals, the time of day, and with dawn, noon, night, midnight, dusk.

The train will arrive *at* 9 p.m.

The streets are always busy *at* Christmas.

On is used with a particular day or date.

I'm often late to work *on* Mondays.
Peter gave Helen a call *on* Friday.

In is used with years, seasons, months, and other parts of the day.

She said she would give you a call *in* the evening.
For me, Australia is far too hot *in* the summer.

By is used to show that an activity will be completed or end by a certain time or point (and no later).

I usually start to feel tired *by* 10 p.m.
All the leaves on the trees will have fallen *by* November.

During is used to talk about something that happens at a certain period of time, and can be used with parts of the day, seasons and festivals (not a point in time like noon).

The best time to do exercise is *during* the morning break.
Not many people like to visit Quang Tri *during* the summer months.

Until is used to talk about something which will continue to happen up to a certain time or particular event.

The park is a really quiet place to study *until* about 5 o'clock, when everybody finishes work.
I like swimming in the sea *until* late September, after that it gets cold.



In or **the middle of** is followed by months, years, seasons, names of country or city, whereas **on** is followed by a day (of a week) or date, the weekend or a holiday. After **at** comes Christmas, the weekend, the New Year or the beginning of. **During** stands before a period of time such as the month of January, the weeks, the summer, the Tet holiday or the holidays.

Exercise 8.2: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

on in at the beginning of during at in the middle of winter

1. The most exciting time to go skiing is _____ when the snow is really thick and fluffy.
2. The best time of year to climb mountains is certainly _____ spring when the air is fresh and cool – not too hot, not too cold.
3. When it is really hot, _____ the summer months, it is a great time to go swimming in the sea.
4. In Scotland, in March, I like to go walking in the hills. This is the best time for this kind of sport. It's not fun _____ January or February because of the rain.

5. The time when people give presents the most is certainly Christmas.
 6. However, in Vietnam, I think most people give gifts or presents people's birthdays.

Language step 3 Colloquial Expressions for Advantageous Conditions

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Alice uses colloquial expressions for advantageous conditions.

Alice ...The weather between June and early September *provides the best conditions for* rock climbing; hiking, mountain biking or playing sports...

There are many ways to explain the idea that something is the best or the most suitable. We've already looked at superlatives as one way of doing this, but now let's look at some alternative native speaker expressions for this.

good /great for

The cold weather is *good for* making ice sculptures.

Evenings at home are *great for* relaxing and listening to music.

ideal for

Spring in Beijing is *ideal for* hiking along the Great Wall.

The day before a big national holiday is *ideal for* throwing a party.

provide the perfect conditions for

The combination of mountains and lakes near my hometown *provides the perfect conditions for* camping in the summer.

The karst stones and dry weather of the summer *provide the perfect conditions for* rock climbing and mountain biking.



Exercise 8.3: Matching

Match the sentence halves below.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Summer is ideal for... | A. ...provide the perfect conditions for rock climbing. |
| 2. The snow... | B. ...swimming in the lake near my town. |
| 3. Fall is good for... | C. ...ideal for beach volleyball. |
| 4. The mountains and rocks... | D. ...hiking in the hills and looking at the red leaves. |
| 5. The summer weather is... | E. ...provides the perfect conditions for skiing and snowboarding. |

Extra language point **Depend on**

Let's take a look at how the IELTS candidate Alice uses the verb phrase **depend on**.

Alice I think the best time of year to do outdoor activities is either in the summer or in the winter because it *depends on* what activities you would like to do...

When answering What's the best time (of year) to do X? type questions, it would be easy to say things such as Winter in my country is always relaxing or The morning is the best time of day to study. However, such statements are not always true because situations change according to different circumstances and according to people's preferences. The verb phrase **depend on** helps us qualify what we say.

Depend on can be used with nouns.

The availability of train tickets during the Tet holiday *depends on* the amount of people travelling.

The best time to do exercise *depends on* people's lifestyles.

Or **depend on** can be used with gerunds (the -ing form of the verb).

Finding a good job *depends on* *having* good qualifications.

Being happy doesn't necessarily *depend on* *being* very rich.

You should practise using this verb phrase. You will sound more like a native English speaker and be able to give more accurate answers if you can use it well.

Formula 9

Why do some people like X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Why do some people like X? type questions.

- Why do some people like cooking?
- Why do some people enjoy reading?
- Why do some people like gardening?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Why do some people like X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Describe why some people enjoy X or doing X.
2. Say which types of people or personalities enjoy it.
3. Explain why it's good for them and why they might like it.

Language steps

1. Use native speaker words to talk about types of people.
Most *teenagers* enjoy listening to pop music.
2. Use native speaker personality adjectives.
Creative people tend to enjoy going to the theatre and art museums.
3. Use native speaker activity adjectives.
Volunteering at the hospital is very *rewarding*.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on page 71 more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
creative	adjective	producing or using new and effective ideas, results, etc.	Working in a bank is not very creative – you just do the same things again and again every day.
express oneself		to communicate what you think or feel	I love playing the piano. Although I play the music somebody else wrote, I can express myself through the piano – so each time I play it's different.
conservative	adjective	not liking changes or new ideas	Travelling in Asia and Africa is really not suited for conservative people – only open-minded people willing to try and learn new things should go.
from scratch		from the beginning without using things that already exist	I don't like working at this language school – because it's so new, there aren't any lesson plans or teaching materials. I have to make every lesson plan from scratch.
satisfying	adjective	making you feel pleased – usually because you have achieved something	Stephanie doesn't think her job is very satisfying as she doesn't get a chance to try anything new and she just does whatever her boss tells her to.
therapeutic	adjective	making you feel relaxed or happier	When I want to relax, I never go to a bar or club – they're always so noisy and smelly; going to a bar is not therapeutic at all.
patient	adjective	describing a person who can wait or continue doing something unpleasant without complaining	I wish my German teacher was more patient; as soon as I make one little mistake, she gets annoyed with me and she only explains things once.
energetic	adjective	describing a person who has a lot of energy, or an activity that requires a lot of energy	To lose weight, you should be more careful what you eat and start doing some kind of energetic activity like playing badminton or rugby.
unwind	verb	to relax after being very busy, tense or worried	Rachel should take the time to unwind after work; being so anxious all the time can't be good for her health.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer Why do some people like cooking?

Alice I think people of all ages enjoy cooking, especially creative people. For those who love to create new things, cooking provides a great way to express themselves as they can experiment with different dishes and ingredients. Even quite conservative people like cooking; as everything needs to be created from scratch, it can be very satisfying to successfully cook a whole meal from start to finish.

Interviewer Why do some people like gardening?

David Gardening is most popular with middle-aged and elderly people, probably because gardening is a very therapeutic and relaxing activity. Members of the older generation are generally more patient and often prefer less energetic activities – gardening is a good way to unwind whilst making their home more beautiful.

Language step 1 Types of People

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, mention different types of people.

Alice I think *people of all ages* enjoy cooking, especially creative people...

David Gardening is most popular with *middle-aged* and *elderly people*, probably because gardening is a very therapeutic and relaxing activity. *Members of the older generation* are generally more patient and often prefer less energetic activities...

Notice that Alice and David do not talk about themselves and whether they like cooking and gardening, but talk about the different types of people in society and say whether they like cooking and gardening.

Remind yourself of some useful words to talk about types of people:

married couples

single parents

teenagers

adolescents

the elderly

the older generation

retired people

rich people

poor people

Exercise 9.1: Table Completion

Complete the table below by writing the following words in the appropriate columns. Some have been done for you.

grandparents	retired people	married couples
single parents	the elderly	office workers
housewives	rich people	white-collar workers
younger people	teenagers	parents
the older generation	job seekers	the younger generation
unemployed people	people in a relationship	the working classes
the upper classes	couples	poor people
school kids	the middle classes	adolescents
property owners	single people	the homeless

Age Groups & Generations	Family / Relationship Groups	Work-related Groups	Social Classes
younger people	parents single parents	retired people unemployed people	poor people rich people

Language step 2 Personality Adjectives

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use personality adjectives.

Alice	I think people of all ages enjoy cooking, especially <i>creative</i> people...Even quite <i>conservative</i> people like cooking...
David	...Members of the older generation are generally more <i>patient</i> and often prefer less <i>energetic</i> activities...

Notice that Alice and David use different personality adjectives to help them say why different groups of people enjoy doing X – you should too.

Look at the following useful native speaker personality adjectives:

energetic
apathetic

curious
 studious
 social
 family-oriented
 patient
 creative

Exercise 9.2: Matching

Match the personality adjectives on the left with their definitions on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. creative | A. describing somebody who is not interested in or concerned about anything |
| 2. social | B. describing somebody who studies a lot, even in their free time |
| 3. energetic | C. describing somebody who is interested in new things and learning about different ideas and opinions |
| 4. family-oriented | D. describing somebody who is outgoing and enjoys talking to others a lot and meeting new people |
| 5. studious | E. describing somebody who is very active and enjoys doing physical things |
| 6. apathetic | F. describing somebody who prefers spending time with their family |
| 7. curious | G. describing somebody who enjoys making new things |

Exercise 9.3: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

family-oriented energetic curious studious apathetic social

- He is a very _____ young man – he loves all kinds of sports that involve running around or doing adventurous outdoor pursuits.
- Alice is very _____. She spends a lot of free time going to dinner with friends, hanging out in the bar near campus and meeting new people.
- _____ people tend to be quite lazy about life, and like sitting around for long hours watching soap operas on television and doing things that do not require much thought or energy.
- I am a very _____ person. I am very intrigued to learn about different cultures and different opinions. I like to read about world philosophy and religion sometimes.
- Daisy is very _____. She spends nearly every weekend visiting her family and seems to prefer that to going out with friends.

6. He is a very _____ person – he sits in the classroom till the early hours of the morning just reading and taking notes from his textbooks.

Language step 3 Activity Adjectives

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use activity adjectives.

Alice ...For those who love to create new things, cooking provides a great way to express themselves as they can experiment with different dishes and ingredients...it can be very *satisfying* to successfully cook a whole meal from start to finish.

David Gardening is most popular with middle-aged and elderly people, probably because gardening is a very *therapeutic* and *relaxing* activity. Members of the older generation are generally more patient and often prefer less *energetic* activities – gardening is a good way to unwind whilst making their home more beautiful.

Notice that Alice and David talk about the benefits people get from doing cooking and gardening – this helps them explain why people like to do these activities.

Look at the following useful native speaker activity adjectives and the types of activity they can be used to describe:

therapeutic – gardening, cooking, yoga, tai chi, meditation

relaxing – gardening, watching TV, listening to the radio, knitting, reading

healthy – going to the gym, doing physical exercise, running

good (for the mind) – crosswords, puzzles, detective stories, studying

informative – the news, blogs, reading books

inspiring – looking at art, watching live music, going to the theatre or cinema

rewarding – doing charity work, studying, raising money for a cause

fun – sports, games, card games, travelling

satisfying – painting, drawing, cooking, gardening

Exercise 9.4: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate words from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. I think gardening is a very _____ activity. Being outdoors helps people relax and feel good.
A. inspiring B. therapeutic C. healthy
2. I think cycling is a very _____ pastime. It's better for you than running.
A. healthy B. good for the mind C. rewarding

3. Reading about history from many different sources is very
A. fun B. relaxing C. informative
4. For me, going to the gym every day, feeling fitter and looking better all the time is truly
A. satisfying B. healthy C. inspiring
5. Going to see live music is a really fun and thing to do on weekends.
A. therapeutic B. informative C. inspiring
6. Doing volunteer or charity work is a way to help others.
A. healthy B. rewarding C. fun
7. For many married couples, going to expensive restaurants for a romantic dinner is really
A. healthy B. rewarding C. fun
8. Most people agree that everybody should go to university because studying is -
studying helps broaden our horizons and stretches our brains.
A. good for the mind B. therapeutic C. inspiring

Formula 10

When was the first/last time you did X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for When was the first/last time you did X? type questions.

When was the first time you used a computer?

When was the last time you went on holiday?

When was the last time visitors came to your house?

The formula

When the examiner asks you When was the first/last time you did X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say when you first/last did it.
2. Say why you did it.
3. Describe what the experience was like.

Language steps

1. Use prepositions and adverbs of time correctly.

The last time I went fishing was *about* three years *ago*.

The first time I used a computer was *in* high school *in* 1984.

2. Have great control of the past simple to talk about completed events.

I *went* on holiday last May.

My father *bought* me a computer when I *was* 10.

3. Use varied adjectives of experience to sound more like a native.

Camping in the USA was so *boring*.

I thought acting was so *intriguing*.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
intriguing	adjective	describing something or somebody that is very interesting, perhaps because it is/they are strange or odd	I found my trip to Tibet intriguing because the culture was so different to ours; sometimes I felt that the more I learnt about it, the less I understood it.
minority	noun	a group of people in society who all have the same culture/historical background	The SRVN contains 54 different minorities.
trek	verb/ noun	a long walk, usually in a natural setting such as in mountains, next to rivers, etc.	Northern Thailand is a great place for going on mountain treks.
scuba dive/ scuba diving	verb/ noun	an activity where people swim deep under the sea using special breathing equipment	The first time I went scuba diving was two years ago, it was great to see all the fish, turtles and shellfish in their natural environment.
reserve	noun	an area that is protected by the government for environmental reasons (Common collocations are nature reserve, forest reserve, wildlife reserve.)	Kenya is famous for its excellent wildlife reserves, where visitors can see elephants, zebras, lions and tigers in the wild.
come over		to come to a place to visit for a short time (often used with the meaning of come to my/our house)	Ever since my boyfriend argued with my father, he's been unwilling to come over to our house.
keep somebody from doing something		to prevent, stop somebody from doing something	Most teachers know it's almost impossible to keep students from behaving badly and talking in class.
go to plan		to happen in the way you want or expect (the same as to go according to plan)	I intended to get to the job interview really early and spend some time thinking about the questions I would be asked. But the interview didn't really go to plan; I was late and as soon as I arrived, I had to go and have the interview.
certainly	adverb	used to show that there is no doubt about something	It is certainly a huge responsibility and certainly expensive for a country to host the Olympic Games.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer When was the last time you went on holiday?

Alice The last time I went on holiday was about three years ago...in July 2008. My family and I went to Sa Pa for two weeks during the summer holiday. Sa Pa is an intriguing place to visit because of the Dao minority culture – my family and I drove out to the mountains there and trekked in the Fansipan. I really can't wait to go back there!

Interviewer When was the last time visitors came to your house?

David The last time visitors came to my house was just last week. It was my wife's birthday, and so I secretly arranged for a few close friends to come over for dinner and drinks. Although it was difficult to keep my wife from finding out, it was quite exciting in a way and certainly a bit of a challenge! In the end, everything went to plan and we all had a great time – it was definitely a really enjoyable evening.

Language step 1 Prepositions and Adverbs of Time

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use prepositions and adverbs of time.

Alice The last time I went on holiday was *about* three years *ago*...*in* July 2008...

David The last time visitors came to my house was just *last* week...

When talking about something that happened in the past, you need to use prepositions and adverbs of time to say when it happened.

Look at the following prepositions and adverbs of time, and how they are used:

around (months, occasions, festivals, special days)

...*around* Christmas...

...*around* my 10th birthday...

last (weeks, weekends, months, years, festivals)

...*last* weekend...

...*last* month...

in (months, seasons, years)

...*in* December...

...*in* 1979...

during (months, seasons, long festivals)

...*during* the Tet holiday...

...*during* the spring...

on (days, special days)

...*on* the 5th of November 2005...

...*on* my parents' 25th wedding anniversary...

You should also master using the following useful expressions:

about + time period + ago

I last played a computer game *about two years ago*.

They visited the Summer Palace *about three days ago*.

the last / first time I + past verb + was...

The last time I went swimming was a few hours ago.

The first time I ate insects was in the summer of 2007.



Exercise 10.1: Error Correction

Some of the sentences below are incorrect, some are correct. Identify the incorrect sentences and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. The last times I play basketball were when I was at school.
2. In my 25th birthday, I go to a Japanese restaurant with my friends and colleagues.
3. I think my boyfriend's parents coming to visit in Tomb Sweeping Day.
4. My grandmother give me the computer as a present the before Christmas, so it's still really new.
5. I went to Thailand on vacation about two years before.
6. My parents often go abroad during the summer.
7. I finally passed my driving test on 1997.

Language step 2 The Past Simple

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the past simple tense.

- Alice The last time I *went* on holiday *was* about three years ago...in July 2008..My family and I *went* to Sa Pa for two weeks during the summer holiday...my family and I *drove* out to the mountains there and *trekked* in the Fansipan...
- David The last time visitors *came* to my house *was* just last week. It *was* my wife's birthday, and so I secretly *arranged* for a few close friends to come over for dinner and drinks. Although it *was* difficult to keep my wife from finding out, it *was* quite exciting in a way and certainly a bit of a challenge! In the end, everything *went* to plan and we all *had* a great time – it *was* definitely a really enjoyable evening.



Do not overlook the usage of past simple tense as many students lose their marks because of basic tense errors.

A lot of students, especially when they are nervous in speaking tests, forget to get their past tenses right, especially for irregular verbs. The only way to get it right is to practise.

Look at the table below to remind yourself of the past tense forms of some commonly used irregular verbs:

Base Form	Past Tense Form	Base Form	Past Tense Form
come	came	do	did
drink	drank	eat	ate
get	got	give	gave
go	went	read	read

Test yourself by completing the exercise on the next page. You can find the correct answers in the Answer Key section – but do not look until you have completed the table!

 Exercise 10.2: Table Completion

Complete the table below with the correct forms of the verbs shown.

Base Form	Past Tense Form	Base Form	Past Tense Form
are		know	
become		lay	
begin		leave	
break		let	
bring		lose	
build		make	
buy		mean	
catch		meet	
choose		pay	
come		put	
cut		read	
do		ride	
draw		run	
drink		say	
drive		see	
eat		sell	
fall		send	
feed		sleep	
find		stand	
fly		swim	
forget		take	
get		teach	
give		tell	
go		think	
have		throw	
hear		understand	
hide		wake	
hit		wear	
is		win	
keep		write	

Language step 3 Adjectives of Experience

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adjectives of experience.

Alice ...Sa Pa is an *intriguing* place to visit because of the Dao minority culture...

David ...Although it was *difficult* to keep my wife from finding out, it was quite *exciting* in a way and certainly a bit of a challenge! In the end, everything went to plan and we all had a great time – it was definitely a really *enjoyable* evening.

After saying when you first/last did X, and using prepositions and adverbs of time and past simple verbs correctly, you should add a few details to describe what the activity was like.

Here are some useful adjectives of experience:

difficult, challenging – for things you learned to do that were not easy but you enjoyed learning

exciting, thrilling, exhilarating, stimulating, enjoyable – for things that you really enjoyed and that were a lot of fun as well as being interesting

fascinating, intriguing, surprising – for things or experiences that were new and you felt very curious about them before/while doing them

depressing, upsetting, unpleasant – for things that made you feel sad, very uncomfortable

embarrassing, humiliating – for things that made you feel very uncomfortable because other people were watching or because you felt silly

irritating, annoying, frustrating – for things that you did not enjoy because you thought they were stupid, a waste of time or far too difficult


Look at some examples of these words in context:

The party I attended was really *exciting*. I am not used to going to parties with people from lots of different countries, so it was *fascinating* to see how everyone behaved. It was *surprising* to see so many people having different conversations at the same time!

The last time I went on holiday was really *depressing*, if I am honest. It rained the whole time and my mother got sick. It was *upsetting* and *frustrating* because I don't have much time off work and rarely get holidays.

I used a computer for the first time when I was in middle school. I found it really *embarrassing* because my classmates all knew how to use one but I didn't!

Notice that Alice and David don't just say simple sentences such as I found it fun. In the above examples, the candidates use adjectives of experience to describe their experiences in a more interesting way and explain why the experiences felt like that.

 **Exercise 10.3: Gap Fill**

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

annoying	intriguing	stimulating	enjoyable
thrilling	exhilarating	frustrating	

1. The last time I went to the cinema was about three months ago. My friend and I were really excited about watching the new movie, but in the end it was really _____ because we had to queue up for a long time to buy the tickets and the film wasn't that great anyway.
2. The first time I visited an art gallery was in 2005. My family all went together, and whilst my parents were not impressed with modern art, for me it was _____ because it was all so new, and it made me consider things I had never really thought deeply about before.
3. I last had visitors to my home just a few days ago. They were my and my husband's university classmates, and it was great because their conversation is so _____ and their company is really _____. We talk about everything and anything and we always have so much fun.
4. The first time I used a computer was on my 12th birthday, when my uncle gave me a laptop as a present. It was so _____ to be able to use this brand-new technology to surf the Web, play computer games and chat to my friends!
5. The last time I went to a party was last week. There were lots of foreigners there who I didn't know. Although the atmosphere of meeting lots of new people was _____, it was really quite _____ because I felt that I couldn't express myself in English very well.

Formula 11

Did you ever learn to do X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Did you ever learn to do X? type questions.

Did you learn how to ride a bike when you were a child?

Did you learn to play a musical instrument in school?

Did you learn how to swim when you were young?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Did you ever learn to do X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say if you did learn to do X and when you learned to do it.
2. Say who taught you to do X.
3. Say what their personality was like as a teacher.

Language steps

1. Use past tenses accurately with times in life phrases.

I bought a flute when I was in university.

My parents gave me a computer on my 11th birthday.

2. Say who taught you with the preposition by.

I was taught by my grandmother.

I was introduced to the guitar by my friend Stephen.

3. Use non-defining relative clauses and adjectives of personality to describe the person who taught you.

He was a patient and kind teacher.

Miss Clark, who taught me Maths, was a strict teacher!

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
encouraging	adjective	making you feel more confident or hopeful about something	My friend Bert was really encouraging when I was worried about my exams.
strict	adjective	being quite controlling and making sure somebody does what they should do	My teacher, Mr. Hill, was a strict man, but quite fair.
determined	adjective	wanting to do something very much and not letting any difficulties stop you	Mike was determined to climb to the peak of the mountain. He never gave up trying.
supportive	adjective	helping somebody do something by giving them support and advice	I found it hard to learn Japanese at first, but my tutor was remarkably supportive, always encouraging me and praising me whenever I spoke well.
semi-professional	adjective	describing people who are paid for an activity which they take part in but which they do not do all the time	Some of the sports teachers in my school were also semi-professional athletes.
get to grips with		to learn the basics of something	I found the guitar a little hard at first, but with patience and practice, I got to grips with it.
learn by trial and error		to learn something by yourself, making mistakes and learning from them	Jimi Hendrix did not have a guitar teacher. He taught himself, and learned by trial and error.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer Did you ever learn to ride a bike as a child?

Alice Yes, I did! Hmm...Let me think. It was during the Tet holiday. My parents bought me a really wonderful new bike. I was taught to ride by my uncle, who was incredibly encouraging but quite strict because he was determined to teach me to ride before the end of the holiday.

Interviewer Did you learn to swim when you were in school?

David I did not learn to swim at school because my school did not have any swimming classes, but I learned to swim for a few months one summer when my parents took me to classes at the local swimming pool. I went every other day with a small group of friends. We were taught by a really friendly and supportive man, who was a semi-professional swimmer.

Language step 1 The Past Simple & Times in Life Phrases

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the past simple and times in life phrases.

Alice Yes, I *did!* ...It *was during the Tet holiday*. My parents *bought* me a really wonderful new bike...

David I *did not learn* to swim at school because my school *did not have* any swimming classes, but I *learned* to swim *for a few months one summer* when my parents *took* me to classes at the local swimming pool. I *went every other day* with a small group of friends...

David and Alice use past tenses accurately. The past simple can be used here in two different ways:

Using the past simple to talk about something that finished in the past:

I *learned* to swim...

I *did not learn* to swim because...

Using the past simple to talk about habitual actions in the past:

I *went every other day*...

I *practised* playing the guitar three evenings a week...

It's important to tell the examiner when you did or did not learn to do X using the following times in life phrases:

when I was + age

When I was 10 years old, my grandfather showed me how to make...

on my + birthday

On my 8th birthday, I found out how to...

during + holiday

During the Tet holiday, my father taught me to...

about + number + year(s) ago

About two years ago, I learned how to play...

one day

One cold, wet day in December, my sister taught me that...

And for habitual actions, remember these adverbs of frequency:

every day / every other day / every week / every month

I went to the swimming pool every other day until I could swim.

about twice a week / month

I had classes with my trumpet teacher about twice a week,

occasionally / from time to time / sometimes / quite often / frequently

From time to time, my aunt would teach me a little Spanish.

Exercise 11.1: Sentence Completion & Matching

Complete the sentences 1-5 below by writing the correct forms of the verbs in brackets in the spaces, then match them to the appropriate sentences A-E.

1. I first _____ (start) learning to play the piano when I was 10 years old...
2. I did not learn to drive, but my older brother did. He first _____ (drive) a car when he was about 16 years old, around my uncle's farm yard...
3. I _____ (get to grips) with using the Internet quite quickly. Nobody taught me, though...
4. On my 16th birthday, my father gave me a watercolour painting set and my grandfather, who could paint quite well, _____ (teach) me to paint small birds...
5. When I was a child, I _____ (go) to swimming lessons twice a week during the summer holidays...

- A. ...Now, I go to the local pool in my city on a regular basis.
- B. ...I learned by trial and error.
- C. ...My parents wouldn't let me try because they said I was too young. I've never had an opportunity since, which is a shame!
- D. ...I played it every day for a couple of hours, through 2nd and 3rd grade.
- E. ...He had quite a talent for artistic things. He used to practise calligraphy in the local park several times a week.

Language step 2 Saying Who Taught You

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, mention the person who taught them to do something.

Alice ...I was taught to ride by my uncle...

David ...We were taught by...a semi-professional swimmer.

Notice how Alice and David use the simple structure I was taught (to do X) by + the person to say who taught them and some information about them. This is a simple language step, but it's important you get it right.

Look at these other examples:

I was taught to knit by my auntie...

I was taught to ride a motorbike by my uncle's friend...

I was taught to cook by my grandmother...

I was taught to write by my father...

I was taught to play football by an elder boy who lived in my street...

You can also use I learned (how) to do X from + the person to say who taught you.

I learned (how) to play the violin from Mr. Chevins, my teacher.

I learned (how) to sprint from my best friend, Ben Johnson.

I can use spreadsheets well. I learned (how) to use them from my dad.

I love to make short films with a video camera. I learned (how) to use it from my friend, Yorick.

Language step 3 Non-defining Relative Clauses and Adjectives of Personality

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use non-defining relative clauses and adjectives of personality.

Alice ...I was taught to ride by my uncle, *who was incredibly encouraging but quite strict...*

David ...We were taught by a really *friendly and supportive* man, *who was a semi-professional swimmer.*

Notice how after naming the person who taught them, Alice and David go on to say what their personality was like.

Look at the following useful adjectives of personality:

caring
 supportive
 encouraging
 kind
 understanding
 talented
 firm
 patient / impatient
 strict
 aggressive

These adjectives of personality can also be combined with non-defining relative clauses. A non-defining relative clause provides extra information about the person you are talking about, and takes the form *who* + extra information (for more about relative clauses, see Part Two, Person Monologue Stage 1).

There are two ways to use non-defining relative clauses:

part of sentence, non-defining relative clause, part of sentence

My mother, *who was a fantastic cook*, taught me how to make bread.

sentence, non-defining relative clause

I was taught to make bread by my mother, *who was a fantastic cook*,

Look at these other examples of sentences combining adjectives of personality and non-defining relative clauses:

I was taught by my brother, *who was very impatient*.

I was taught by a neighbour, *who was particularly kind and understanding*.

When I was young, my friend Daniel, *who was firm but fair*, taught me how to play tennis.

I learned to play cricket from Mr. Philips, *who was quite an aggressive and quick-tempered teacher*.

Exercise 11.2: Error Correction & Matching

Each of the sentences 1-5 has one mistake. Identify and correct the mistakes, then match the sentences to their counterparts A-E.

1. I learned English by two really good teachers in middle school...
2. I learned to use spreadsheets from trial and error. I was not taught by anyone...

3. I was learned how to sing from a friend of my mother,...
 4. I first learn to write characters by my father,...
 5. I taught how to do Web design by using an online tutorial and going through each section every day on my own...
- A. ...who was a friendly, creative woman.
 - B. ...I got to grips with them pretty fast, because I'm quite good at anything related to mathematics.
 - C. ...They were both very patient and kind.
 - D. ...who was an excellent calligrapher and an understanding, encouraging teacher.
 - E. ...It took a while to get the hang of, but it was an interesting way to learn.

Extra language point Phrases to Express Freedom & Constraints

It's good to use expressions to say why you did or did not learn to do things in your life. Look at these examples and think how you could use such phrases yourself:

I was lucky because my parents gave me the chance to + activity.

I was very fortunate that I had the opportunity to + activity.

It's a shame I did not have enough time to + activity.

It's unfortunate I could not do + activity, because my parents couldn't afford it.

I wish I had had more ambition and patience when I was younger, then I might have learned to do + activity.

Formula 12

How has X changed?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for How has X changed? type questions.

How have shops changed in your city in the last five years?

How has your hometown changed in recent years?

How have restaurants in your country changed since you were young?

The formula

When the examiner asks you How has X changed? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say whether X has changed or not.
2. Compare what X was like in the past and what X is like now.

Language steps

1. Use the present perfect tense.

Since I was young, my town *has changed* in a lot of ways.

2. Control other simple tenses like past and present.

My town *was* small. Now it *is* quite big.

The streets *used to be* quiet. Now they *are* very noisy.

3. Use comparative adjectives.

The streets are *wider* and the traffic is *heavier* than before.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
low-rise	adjective	describing buildings which are low, usually just one or two stories	My town is fairly small and old. There aren't any skyscrapers or high-rise buildings; all the buildings are low-rise houses and apartments.
narrow	adjective	having a small distance from one side to the other, especially in comparison with the length	The street was so narrow that Arnold could not drive his big lorry down it.
replace	verb	to take the place of something, or to put something or somebody in the place of something or somebody else	They've taken down the old stone bridge and replaced it with a stronger iron bridge.
facilities	noun	the buildings and equipment provided at a certain place for a particular purpose	There are lots of sports, shopping and medical facilities in my neighbourhood.
eatery	noun	a small place where one can sit and eat, usually a more simple place than a restaurant	There are a lot of cheap eateries near the drum tower with excellent local food.
elegant	adjective	attractive and stylish	The restaurant they chose for the wedding was so elegant – the style and decoration was so wonderful!
impersonal	adjective	lacking in local warmth or individuality	Big expensive hotels are often quite cold impersonal compared to small family-run guest houses.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer	How has your hometown changed in recent years?
Alice	I'm from Ho Chi Minh City and it has certainly changed a lot in recent years. Not so long ago, there were lots more low-rise buildings and narrow streets; now the local government has replaced them with tall apartment buildings with better facilities and modern shopping centres. The streets are now much wider than before. They have also put a lot more parks in the city and have planted thousands of trees in the streets, so the city is more beautiful.

Interviewer How have restaurants changed in your country since you were a child?

David That's a good question. Restaurants and eateries have changed a great deal since I was young. When I was a kid, nearly all restaurants in our city were cheap and quite simple. Now, however, a wide range of Vietnamese and many international restaurants line every street. These are a lot cleaner and more elegant than the small eateries, but sadly are more impersonal and much more expensive!

Language step 1 The Present Perfect

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the present perfect tense.

Alice I'm from Ho Chi Minh City and it *has* certainly *changed* a lot in recent years. Not so long ago, there were lots more low-rise buildings and narrow streets; now the local government *has replaced* them with tall apartment buildings... They *have* also *put* a lot more parks in the city and *have planted* thousands of trees...

David ...Restaurants and eateries *have changed* a great deal since I was young...

Notice that Alice and David use the present perfect accurately to talk about changes that have happened.

Remember that the structure of the present perfect is: **have/has + past participle**

She *has invested* lots of money in a KTV bar.

The government *has spent* lots of money on public transport recently.

The traffic situation *has become* a lot worse in the last few years.

Exercise 12.1: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the present perfect forms of the verbs in brackets.

- In recent years, people _____ (cut) down a lot of trees in the Brazilian jungle.
- Cleaner streets, nicer buildings and better transport _____ (bring) a lot of tourists to this city in the past couple of years.
- This week, the authorities _____ (fight) to restore law and order to the city with great success.
- My university campus _____ (undergo) a lot of changes in the past few years.
- My parents _____ (spend) a considerable amount of money fitting a new kitchen and bathroom in our home.
- In recent years, fashion _____ (become) much more interesting and stylish.

Language step 2 The Past Simple & Present Simple

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the past simple and present simple tenses.

- Alice ...Not so long ago, there *were* lots more low-rise buildings and narrow streets
...The streets *are* now much wider than before...the city *is* more beautiful.
- David ...Restaurants and eateries have changed a great deal since I *was* young. When
I *was* a kid, nearly all restaurants in our city *were* cheap...Now, however, a wide
range of Vietnamese and many international restaurants *line* every street. These
are a lot cleaner and more elegant than the small eateries...

Alice and David use the past simple and present simple accurately to talk about changes. This may seem like a very simple language point, but many students get a low score on the test for making basic mistakes with these tenses.

Look at some example sentences that use these tenses to talk about changes:

My town *was* small; now it *is* quite big.

The streets *used to be* very quiet; now they *are* noisy.

The shops *sold* poor-quality clothes; now they *sell* the latest designer fashions.

Before many people *ate* at small eateries or night markets, but now people *choose* more expensive restaurants.

Exercise 12.2: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct forms of the verbs (the present simple or past simple) in brackets.

1. When I was a child, everyone in my area of town had to shower in communal bathrooms in the street. Now, however, most people _____ (be) wealthy enough to have their own, modern bathrooms.
2. Before, many people _____ (go) to small shops or markets to buy groceries. In recent years, big supermarkets have become very popular.
3. In the past, the suburbs _____ (not look) very attractive. Now, because the government has planted lots of trees and plants, the area _____ (look) very pleasant.
4. In the past, it _____ (cost) a lot of money to buy aeroplane tickets, but recently prices have gone down and air travel is more accessible to everyone.
5. Many years ago, music was very different compared to now. In the past, people _____ (play) traditional instruments and _____ (enjoy) singing together in parks and gardens.

Language step 3 Comparative Adjectives

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the comparative adjectives.

Alice ...now the local government has replaced them with tall apartment buildings with *better* facilities...The streets are now much *wider* than before. They have also put a lot more parks in the city and have planted thousands of trees in the streets, so the city is *more beautiful*.

David ...These are a lot *cleaner* and *more elegant* than the small eateries, but sadly are *more impersonal* and much *more expensive*!

Notice how Alice and David use a lot of comparatives to explain how their cities have changed and to express whether those changes are good or bad.

This is a very important part of your answer, so now let's review comparatives.

Comparative adjectives

We add -er at the end of the adjective, or we add more before the adjective.

To form the comparative of an adjective, you should:

add -er if the adjective is one syllable long.

add -ier if the adjective is two syllables long and ends in -y.

add more before the adjective if it is two or more syllables long.

Look at the table to refresh your memory.

Short Adjectives		Adjectives ending in -y		Long Adjectives	
Adjective	Comparative Form	Adjective	Comparative Form	Adjective	Comparative Form
cheap	cheaper	easy	easier	expensive	more expensive
large	larger	heavy	heavier	comfortable	more comfortable
fast	faster	pretty	prettier	fashionable	more fashionable
slow	slower	ugly	uglier	useful	more useful

Comparative structure

In comparing the past to the present, it is also useful to remember this structure:

X + is/are + comparative adjective + than + time in the past

My city is *prettier than* it was ten years ago.

The university library is much *better stocked now than* it was before.

The city is a lot *greener than* it was when I was a child.

Exercise 12.3: Gap Fill

Write the correct adjectives in the correct comparative forms to complete the sentences.

fashionable fast cheap expensive good wide

1. The food is so much _____ and much _____ than here in the capital – I really don't like the expensive food here.
2. Since they built the high-speed train, I can travel home to see my parents on weekends very easily. It's about five times _____ than the older train.
3. People are, in general, a lot _____ today than they were years ago. I think it's because they have more money and enjoy buying nice clothes.
4. The downside of all this development is that the gap between the rich and the poor is getting much _____.
5. As a result of all this rapid, sudden growth, food is considerably _____ than it was five years ago.

Formula 13

How would you improve X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for How would you improve X? type questions.

How would you improve your apartment?

How would you change the place where you study to make it better?

If you could, how would you improve your university/workplace?

The formula

When the examiner asks you How would you improve X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Identify problems with X.
2. Talk about what you would do to solve them/make them better.
3. Say what the positive results of these changes would be.

Language steps

1. Use changing X phrases to talk about changes you would like to make.
I would improve my apartment by buying new furniture.
I suggest that they make it better by employing more cleaners.
2. Use the "would have something done" passive to talk about things you'd get professionals/ other people to do for you to improve X.
I would have the walls painted a new colour.
3. Use comparatives of convenience to speculate about how these changes would make X better.
Having a bigger bed would be more comfortable.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on page 99 more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
crowded	adjective	having a lot of people or things	I hate travelling to work by subway in the morning – it's always far too crowded!
stuff	noun	colloquial expression for "things"	There's too much stuff in my house. I need to have a big tidy-up soon.
keep track of		to keep an eye on; to keep informed about; to not lose something	I must keep track of my things better. I nearly always lose things because I am not organised enough.
messy	adjective	untidy; badly organised; unpresentable	His bedroom is messy, his hair is messy and his clothes are scruffy. He should care more about his appearance.
cramped	adjective	describing a place where there is too little space, and too many things occupying that space; very crowded	Our dormitory has six people in such a small place. It is so cramped nobody has any personal space.
cosy	adjective	comfortable and pleasant, often warm	He has a comfortable sofa and some attractive wall paintings. His flat is very cosy.
get rid of		to throw something out, or give something away that you don't want anymore	I finally got rid of the old, ugly couch. I gave it to Caroline.
scruffy	adjective	untidy; messy; unkempt; unpresentable	I don't like people who wear scruffy clothes and have scruffy hair – people should take care of their appearance and how it affects others.
run-down	adjective	in bad condition because no one has spent money on repairs	The zoo is really run-down. It looks like nobody has looked after the buildings for years and years.
up-keep	verb	to look after; to keep in good condition; to maintain	Recently the authorities have spent quite a lot of money on up-keeping old buildings.
caretaker	noun	a person whose job is to care for and maintain a building, usually a school or a large building	The caretaker at my school didn't like me and my friends because we would always make a mess in the classrooms and draw on the walls of the toilet.
modernise	verb	to update; to make more modern	They are modernising the entire city centre – building new buildings and improving the roads.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer How would you improve your apartment?

Alice To start with, the place I'm living in now is quite small and crowded. I have too much stuff, and it makes it hard to keep track of things, and makes everything look messy and very cramped. There's also very little light in my flat. So, firstly, I would make more space by getting rid of some of my things. Then, I would have the windows made bigger and lighter curtains made and fitted. Then my flat would be much cosier.

Interviewer How would you improve your university to make it better?

David My university campus is quite scruffy and run-down. I suggest the authorities improve it by spending more money on up-keeping the grounds and modernising the classrooms. If I were in authority, I would have new classrooms built, I would have the sports facilities repaired, and I would hire more caretakers. Having a more modern campus would make life more pleasant for us, and the place more appealing to visitors.

Language step 1 Changing X Phrases

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the changing X phrases.

Alice To start with, the place I'm living in now is quite small and crowded... So, firstly, I would make more space by getting rid of some of my things...

David My university campus is quite scruffy and run-down. I suggest the authorities improve it by spending more money on up-keeping the grounds and modernising the classrooms...

Notice how both Alice and David start by identifying the problem, then go on to use the structure **improve X + by + verb-ing / would make X + comparative + by + verb-ing** to talk about changes they would make or they suggest others make.

For changes you would make

would improve X + by + verb-ing / would make X + comparative + by + verb-ing

I would improve my bedroom by putting posters on the walls.

I would make my living room cosier by buying a new sofa.

I would improve my flat by getting a new wardrobe.

For changes you suggest others make

suggest someone improve X + by + verb-ing / suggest someone make X + comparative + by + verb-ing

I suggest the government improve the air quality by restricting the amount of cars in the city.

I suggest the school authorities improve security by building a wall around the playground.

I suggest they make the city more attractive by planting more trees and flowerbeds.

Exercise 13.1: Matching

Match the sentence halves.

1. I would improve my area of my office by...
2. I suggest that they make classrooms more comfortable for students by...
3. I would make my flat cosier by...
4. I suggest they improve the public transport system by...
5. I would make our canteen better by...

- A. ...building a few more subway lines.
- B. ...suggesting they vary the menu more.
- C. ...investing in a more comfortable couch and redecorating it.
- D. ...cleaning up some of the mess and being more organised.
- E. ...fitting new modern desks and installing new heaters.

Language step 2 The “Would Have Something Done” Passive

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the structure **would have something done**.

Alice ...*I would have the windows made bigger and lighter curtains made and fitted...*

David ...*If I were in authority, I would have new classrooms built, I would have the sports facilities repaired...*

Notice how Alice and David use the structure **would have + something + past participle** to talk about what they would get others to do.

First look at the difference between the active (what you would do) and the passive (what you would get others to do):

I would make the windows bigger. = I would do it myself.

I would have the windows made bigger. = I would get someone else to come and do it for me.

Look at these further examples of the passive:

I would have a new kitchen installed.

I would have the walls painted different colours.

I would have my motorbike fixed.

I would have a brand-new bath fitted.

Exercise 13.2: Error Correction

Some of the sentences below are incorrect, some are correct. Identify the incorrect sentences and write the correct sentences following the rules above.

1. To make my daily routine a bit more interesting, I would do some kind of sporting activity in the evenings.
2. To make my living room more homely, I put a bookshelf in the corner and some plants.
3. To make the kitchen better, I would get rid of the old units and have a totally new, modern kitchen install.
4. To make my house look more cheerful, I paint the walls of my living room a brighter colour.
5. To let more light in my house and create more space, I has the balcony extended.

Language step 3 Comparatives of Convenience

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the comparatives of convenience.

Alice ...Then my flat would be much *cosier*.

David ...Having a more modern campus would make life *more pleasant* for us, and the place *more appealing* to visitors.

To say how the changes you propose would make life better, you should use the following structures:


...then X would be + comparative

...then my university campus would be warmer.

...then my dorm would be more attractive.
...then life would be more convenient.
...then my living room would be more comfortable.

doing X / having X done + would make (something / place) + comparative

Having a carpet fitted would make my room more beautiful and warmer.
Putting up a few pictures on the wall would make my dorm more attractive.
Installing a new kitchen would make life more convenient for me.
Buying a new sofa would make my living room much more comfortable.

 **Exercise 13.3: Gap Fill**

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

cosier	easier	hanging	having
installing	would make	powerful	warmer

1. _____ a new heater would make my room considerably _____.
2. _____ up some pictures and tidying up a bit would make our flat much _____.
3. Getting a larger memory for my computer _____ it more _____ and faster.
4. We should spend more money on urban planning. Then our city would be much _____
to get around.
5. _____ a car would make those picturesque countryside towns in the mountains much more accessible.

Formula 14

How important is X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for How important is X? type questions.

- How important is art in life?
- How important is music for people in your country?
- How important is physical exercise?

The formula

When the examiner asks you How important is X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say whether X is important or not.
2. Say how important X is.
3. Say why it is important or unimportant.

Language steps

1. Use words and expressions to express degrees of importance.
 Music is *especially* important in today's society, but I don't think art is *very* important.
2. Use positive expressions.
 It is *essential* for all children to learn to draw.
 It is *very beneficial* to do exercise.
3. Use adjectives of positive and negative feeling to describe feelings about art and culture.
 I find art and music really *inspiring* and *stimulating*.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
sculpture	noun	a three-dimensional work of art – usually a statue or a figure	I like modern sculptures. Though they are sometimes slightly strange and it is hard to see what they represent, I find looking at three-dimensional shapes interesting.
architecture	noun	the character or design style of a building	I love 18 th century architecture. In fact, I love most old building styles – they look so elegant.
earn	verb	to obtain money, payment for working	John earns a lot of money. He has three jobs and simply doesn't stop working.
inspire	verb	to fill somebody with excitement, and make them interested in something	I am really inspired by all types of art – art makes me think about life, philosophy and beauty in a passionate way.
reflect on		to think about something deeply or in a deeper way than usual	When I visit museums and see all the ancient collections, I start to reflect on the importance of history in life.
contemporary	adjective	coming from the present day, not the past	James Cameron is a contemporary movie director with a unique style.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer	How important is art in life?
Alice	I think art is exceedingly important in life, especially today. People spend most of their lives worrying about working, studying or earning money – and it is easy to forget the value of art – paintings, sculptures and even contemporary architecture. People need to see beauty in their lives...art is really fascinating and can inspire us to think more deeply and reflect on life.
Interviewer	How important is music for people in your country?
David	Well, it really depends on the types of people you are talking about. In general, music is especially important for young people, in particular, university students from big cities. Personally, I believe that some types of music are good for helping people calm down and relax, and other types are excellent for energising people. Going to live concerts, for example, can be a really stimulating experience.

Language step 1 Expressing Degrees of Importance

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, express degrees of importance.

Alice I think art is *exceedingly important* in life...

David Well, it really depends on the types of people you are talking about. In general, music is *especially important* for young people...

Rather than saying art is important and music is important, Alice and David use different adverbs of degree to say how important art/music is. Look at the following ways to express different degrees of importance:

Moderately important

Art is *fairly important* in life.

To some extent art is *important*.

Art is *important to a point*, but...

Very important

Mathematics is *considerably important*.

Learning to swim is *incredibly important*.

Eating fresh fruit and vegetables is *very important*.

I think that art is *very important* in life.

I don't think art is *terribly important* for young people.

Art is *especially/particularly important* in today's society.

Note: With **especially important** and **particularly important**, we can use **for** or **in** in the following ways:

for + groups/types of people

Art is *especially important for children*.

in + society/place/country

A good education is *particularly important in modern society*.

Unimportant

Following fashion is *not important at all*.

Having a camera on mobile phone is *completely unimportant*.



We cannot say completely important because in English, completely is normally used with adjectives expressing a negative feeling; for example:

It is *completely* ridiculous!

I think art is *completely* unimportant!

He is *completely* mad!

Exercise 14.1: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

fairly to some extent incredibly completely especially

1. Physical exercise is important for everyone, but it is _____ important for older people. If they don't exercise, their bodies will become more and more rigid and unhealthy.
2. I think it depends. Art is important in life _____, but I think there are many more things that are much more important – like earning money and having a stable life.
3. I don't think art is important at all. Art is quite useless and is a luxury, not a need. All forms of art, in my opinion, are _____ unimportant in life.
4. Especially for young children, I think art is _____ important. It can help them learn about the world around them, and help them learn about colours and shapes – these are vital for children's development.
5. I think there are many things in life that are more important than art, but I think art is _____ important in making the world we live in more beautiful and interesting.

Language step 2 Positive Expressions

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use positive expressions.

Alice ...art is really fascinating and *can inspire us to think more deeply and reflect on life.*
David ...I believe that some types of music are *good for helping people calm down and relax*, and other types are *excellent for energising people...*

After stating whether something is important or not, native speakers often say what X is important for, what it is good for or what it is useful for.

Look at these different positive expressions:

X + is + important for / excellent for / good for + verb-ing

Gardening is *important for helping* people relax.

Working out in a gym is *important for keeping* fit.

Having massages is *good for helping* people calm down.

Drinking hot milk is *excellent for solving* sleep problems.

X + is + a good way to + verb

Listening to music is *a good way to help* people calm down after a stressful day.

Doing physical exercise is *a good way to keep* fit and healthy and happy.

Swimming is *an excellent way to release* a lot of energy and *maintain* a good figure.

X + helps us / helps people / can help us + (to) verb

Spending weekends out in the countryside *helps us (to) wind down*.

Taking part in team quizzes *can help people sharpen* their minds.

Lifting weights *can help us develop* strong muscles.

**Exercise 14.2: Gap Fill**

Write the words and expressions below in the correct spaces.

can help us	for helping	cycling	excellent way
excellent for	a good way	helps	

1. Running regularly is _____ to stay slim and strong.
2. Playing team sports is important _____ children to learn to work together.
3. Doing individual sports like _____ in the country _____ us to relax the mind and keep the body in good shape.
4. All forms of physical exercise are _____ maintaining a healthy heart.
5. Painting is an _____ to improve our hand-eye co-ordination and creative abilities.
6. I think reading is fairly important in life. Reading _____ to increase our vocabulary and general knowledge.

Language step 3 Adjectives of Positive & Negative Feeling

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adjectives of positive and negative feeling.

Alice ...art is really *fascinating*...

David ...Going to live concerts, for example, can be a really *stimulating* experience.

It's good to complete your answer with just one or two adjectives of positive or negative feeling to explain why you think X is important or not.

Look at the following native speaker adjectives of positive and negative feeling:

inspiring
creative
beneficial
philosophical
enriching
educational
expressive

pretentious
tedious
frivolous

Here are some examples in context:

adjectives of positive feeling

Art is so *inspiring*.

Visiting art galleries is very *enriching*.

Learning to play musical instruments is *educational* and *creative*.

Painting and drawing can teach children to be more *expressive*.


adjectives of negative feeling

Most art is also very *pretentious*.

I think history is a *tedious* subject.


Learning about modern art in school is *frivolous* and *unnecessary*.

For me, drama is a *pathetic* activity that is incredibly *wasteful* of school time.

 **Exercise 14.3: Matching**

Match the adjectives of positive and negative feeling on the left with their definitions on the right.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. inspiring | A. very boring and repetitive |
| 2. creative | B. describing something or somebody that is an unnecessary waste of time or money |
| 3. beneficial | C. good at imagining new things and thinking about life in a deeper, perhaps more interesting manner |
| 4. philosophical | D. open about expressing feelings and emotions, passions and ideas in a way that inspires other people |
| 5. enriching | E. relating to philosophy; thinking on a deeper level about life |
| 6. educational | F. describing something that teaches you something interesting or useful |
| 7. expressive | G. good for somebody; giving somebody benefits and helping somebody grow and develop positively |
| 8. pretentious | H. finding interesting, fascinating or intriguing in a way which gives you a love for life and creativity |
| 9. tedious | I. when somebody is trying to look really intelligent by pretending to be very deep and “more interesting” than other people in a very false way |
| 10. frivolous | J. describing something that gives you a positive and cultural experience, or something that enables you to learn and benefit from the learning |

 **Exercise 14.4: Matching**

Match the *sentence halves*.

1. I think it's great to get involved in adventure sports...
 2. Going to art galleries and museums with one's partner can be a really...
 3. It's good to teach children how to paint and draw...
 4. I find watching films from other countries very inspiring...
 5. Some people feel that teaching things like art, drama or music in schools is frivolous...
-
- A. ...All kids should learn creative skills from an early age.
 - B. ...It's a great way to get to know different cultures and their ways of expressing themselves.
 - C. ...They feel that more serious academic subjects are more important for getting ahead in a future career.
 - D. ...They are really exciting and stimulating.
 - E. ...enriching experience, and educational as well as a little romantic!

Formula 15

What do you want /hope to do (in the future)?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for What do you want /hope to do (in the future)? type questions.

Do you hope to do the same job in the future?

What do you want to do when you finish university?

What kind of job would you like to do when you finish your studies?

The formula

When the examiner asks you What do you want /hope to do (in the future)? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say what your ambition for the future is.
2. Say why you want to achieve it.
3. Say how you hope to achieve it.

Language steps

1. Use **hope** and **would like** like a native.

This is something I really *hope* to do.

I *would like* to be a really successful businesswoman.

2. Use future ambition phrases to say what you want to achieve.

I *would like* to achieve this ambition because it would be so rewarding!

If I succeeded in doing this, I *would gain* an enormous sense of security.

3. Use the first conditional accurately.

If I work really hard and *save up* enough money, I *will go* to Europe and *get* a master's.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
NGO (non-governmental organisation)		an organisation created privately, independent of any government	The WWF, which stands for "the World Wildlife Fund", is a well-known NGO that helps to protect wild animals all over the world.
purpose	noun	an aim, an objective or a goal which gives life meaning	I want to achieve something very special in my life. I want my life to have a real purpose.
competitive	adjective	involving competition or the desire to do better than other people in the field	Acting is very competitive – you've got to really push yourself if you want to succeed because there're lots of actors but not many acting jobs.
rewarding	adjective	giving you satisfaction, pleasure, or profit	Helping the homeless people was a very rewarding experience for Janet.
challenging	adjective	describing something that is difficult in a way that tests your intelligence, your ability or your determination	Living through those hard times was challenging for us all.
volunteer	verb/ noun	to do/a person who does something, especially to help other people, willingly and without being forced or paid to do it	I want to volunteer to work in an orphanage during the summer holidays.
stable	adjective	firmly fixed, reliable or not likely to move or change	I don't like these modern relationships when people avoid commitment. I need a traditional stable marriage.
a great sense of + noun		experiencing a positive feeling	Working with children gives me a great sense of pleasure and happiness.
strive	verb	to struggle hard for something; to make a real effort to achieve something	If you want to become a top athlete, you have to strive incredibly hard to succeed.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer What do you want to do when you finish university?

Alice What I really hope to do is work for an NGO here in HCMC. I would like to find a purpose in life. I don't want to just worry about success and making money like a lot of people nowadays. I think it would be so rewarding and challenging to work as a volunteer. If I work really hard and save up enough money, then I will go to Europe and get a master's.

Interviewer Tell me about your future ambitions.

David What I'd really like to do in the future is pretty simple: I'd like to find a good job, which will hopefully lead to a stable career, get married to a lovely girl and start a family. I hope to be able to afford a nice apartment to bring up our children. I think this would give me a great sense of pleasure and security. If I strive hard, I think I can achieve this in less than 10 years.

Language step 1 Hope & Would Like

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use hope and would like.

Alice What I really *hope* to do is work for an NGO here in HCMC. I *would like* to find a purpose in life...

David What I'd really *like* to do in the future is pretty simple: I'd *like* to find a good job...I *hope* to be able to afford a nice apartment...

There are different ways we can use hope to talk about the future:

I hope to be able to + verb

I hope to be able to go abroad after my studies.

I hope to be able to work in an international hospital.

I hope I can + verb

I hope I can pass my driving test.

I hope I can convince my parents to buy me a car.

What I really hope to do is + verb

What I really hope to do is travel around the world.

What I really hope to do is learn to speak Greek.

You'll notice that Alice and David also use *I would like to*, which is used in the following way:

I would like to + verb

I would like to marry the girl I met in the cake shop.

I'd like to become the best pool player in Asia.

You can also use these two useful phrases:

I would like (to have) the opportunity to study overseas.

I would like (to have) the chance to fly an aeroplane.

I hope to have the fortune to be able to go to Australia.

I hope to have the chance to go diving in Thailand.

 **Exercise 15.1: Error Correction**

Some of the sentences below are incorrect, some are correct. Identify the incorrect sentences and write the correct sentences in the spaces provided.

1. In the future I would really like travel in the desert.
2. When I finish the university, I hope to volunteer for a year for the Red Cross.
3. What I really like to do when I am older is live in a wooden house in California.
4. I hope have the opportunity to go fishing in lake Tanzania.
5. What I'd really like to do learn another foreign language.

Language step 2 Future Ambition Phrases

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the future ambition phrases.

Alice *What I really hope to do is work for an NGO here in HCMC. I would like to find a purpose in life...*

David *What I'd really like to do in the future is pretty simple: I'd like to find a good job...I hope to be able to afford a nice apartment...*

It's always useful to learn a few phrases to talk about future ambitions and why you want to achieve them.

When talking about future ambitions, native speakers will often use common collocations (words that almost always go together when native speakers talk) such as the following:

- to achieve an ambition
- to fulfil a dream
- to succeed in doing something
- to manage to do something

Now look at these collocations in the context of the following future ambition phrases:

- I would like to achieve this ambition because it would be so rewarding.*
- I'd love to fulfil this dream because it would give me a great sense of achievement.*
- It's my dream to succeed in learning Japanese.*
- I would love to manage to get into art college.*

You can use these phrases after almost any ambition you mention to tell the examiner what you want to do.

Exercise 15.2: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

succeed ambition dream manage

1. I would love to _____ to get into the university basketball team.
2. It would be amazing to fulfil this lifelong _____.
3. I really want to _____ in doing this. It would make me so proud.
4. I am pretty confident that I can achieve my _____ by working hard.

Language step 3 The First Conditional

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the first conditional.

Alice ...*If I work* really hard and *save up* enough money, then I *will go* to Europe and *get* a master's.

David ...*If I strive* hard, I think I *can achieve* this in less than 10 years.

We use the first conditional to talk about things that will possibly come true in the future if we make sure we do certain things. Remind yourself of the structure of the first conditional:

if + present simple + will + verb

If I work hard, then I will be top of the class.

If I train every day, then I will become the best player in the team.

If I make sure I have the discipline to study more, I will pass the exam.

If I party too much, then I will certainly anger my parents.

Don't forget there are two possible orders:

if + present simple + will + verb

If I save enough money, I will travel abroad.

If I give my friend enough help, he will overcome this difficulty.

will + verb + if + present simple

I will travel abroad if I save enough money.

I will win the race if I train as hard as I can.

 **Exercise 15.3: Sentence Completion**

Think about four things you are sure you will achieve if you fulfil certain conditions. Write full first conditional sentences using the phrases below to help you.

pass the test	achieve my ambition
have a really happy life	fulfil my dream

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Formula 16

Do people do /get enough X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Do people do /get enough X? type questions.

Do people today do enough physical exercise?

Do children do enough sports in school?

Do people in your country do enough creative activities in school?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Do people do /get enough X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say whether you believe people get or do enough X.
2. Say which types of people get or do not get enough X.
3. Say why they should get or do more X.

Language steps

1. Use opinion phrases.

I believe that many people in my country are very hardworking.

In my opinion, people don't get enough holidays.

2. Use expressions for quantities and types of people.

Nowadays nearly all students have access to at least one computer.

Most bosses get paid far too much.

3. Use expressions for suggesting or advising.

It's a good idea to learn more languages in school.

Everyone should get paid more.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
the majority		the larger number or part of something	The majority of people in my office drink tea.
couch potato		somebody who sits on a sofa all day and watches television and is very lazy	John is a real couch potato. He gets no exercise at all. He sits down all day long and never leaves the TV.
cultivate	verb	to try to develop and improve something	It's important that we cultivate good manners so we know how to behave in social situations.
day off		a day without work; a day when you do not have to go into work	Everyone was given a day off to celebrate Women's Day.
vacation	noun	US: a period of one week or more when you travel to another place to have a break and enjoy yourself	I spent my summer vacation in Florida, on the beach. It was wonderful.
break	noun	a time off work, or a short time to relax, sometimes used to describe a small holiday	We had a short break from school when they were making renovations to the west wing – those two free days were marvelous.
holiday	noun	UK: a period of time, a day off, or a trip you go on for a week or more	I don't know why, but the UK doesn't have a National Day like many other countries. I think we should, and it'd be nice to have this holiday.
frame of mind		mood, attitude, approach to something	I'm not in the frame of mind to work today. I can't concentrate because I feel a bit sad.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer: Do people do enough physical exercise where you come from?

Alice: Well, in my opinion, people don't get enough exercise. The majority of people, especially middle-class people nowadays, are real couch potatoes. All they do is sit in front of the television all night, and the only exercise they get is going to get more food from the refrigerator. If children are to grow up to be healthy adults, they should learn how to take care of themselves, and they should cultivate an interest in sports like basketball, football or volleyball.

Interviewer Do students get enough holidays in your country?

David I believe that they get too many holidays. Most students have a long summer vacation, a fairly long Tet holiday, national holidays and all sorts of other days off throughout the year. Because of this, a vast amount of students forget a lot of what they've learned during the longer holidays, and take a long time to get back into the frame of mind to study well. It would be good if the holidays were a bit shorter.

Language step 1 Opinion Phrases

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the opinion phrases.

Alice Well, *in my opinion*, people don't get enough exercise...

David *I believe that* they get too many holidays...

It's very easy to learn a variety of different ways to express your opinion when asked a question. Look at these examples:

I think that a large percentage of people over 30 don't exercise enough.

I feel that people should do more to help others in society.

I strongly believe that team sports like basketball teach people to work together.

I am quite convinced that the majority of people would enjoy playing hockey if they just gave it a chance.

The way I see it, sports should be compulsory for elementary school students.

In my opinion, most children naturally enjoy physical exercise.



To express your opinions, you should state your ideas along with examples to support them.

Exercise 16.1: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

believe opinion quite convinced think that way

1. I _____ too many people nowadays don't exercise enough. In my _____, it would help most people to join a neighbourhood sports team to play football or basketball a couple of times a week.
2. Most people will complain of stress, but I'm _____ that if they just got out more and played some sports, it would help enormously.

3. The I see it, it would be beneficial for companies to organise sports teams and outings for their employees. I strongly that it would increase employee efficiency.

Language step 2 Quantities & Types of People

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the expressions for quantities and types of people.

Alice ...*The majority of people, especially middle-class people nowadays, are real couch potatoes...*

David ...*Most students have a long summer vacation...Because of this, a vast amount of students forget a lot of what they've learned...*

For native speakers, it's not very good to make absolute statements like All people like... or Everyone in Western countries thinks... This doesn't sound very clever and can sometimes be rude. Even in one country or one culture, many people have different ways of life and different opinions.

You should use expressions for quantities of people and types of people to qualify your statements so that they are not so generalised.

You can use these expressions for quantities of people:

most
 the majority of
 a large percentage of
 nearly all
 a vast amount of
 few
 hardly any
 not many
 a minority of
 only some

You can combine them with the expressions for types of people to say which people in society usually do something or believe something.

young people/the younger generation/teenagers/adolescents
 old people/the elderly/the older generation
 office workers/business people/white-collar workers
 the working classes/middle classes/very wealthy people
 unemployed people/the poor/homeless people
 young kids/schoolchildren/university students/graduate students

Look at some examples of how quantities and types of people words can be combined together:

Most young people can play at least one sport.

The majority of elderly people enjoy board games.

A large percentage of the population smokes too much.

Nearly all university students get far too much homework.

A vast amount of business people don't get enough free time.

A tremendous amount of young girls care too much about fashion.

Exercise 16.2: Matching

Match the expressions for quantities and types of people on the left with the words and phrases that have the same meanings on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. a large percentage of | A. young people |
| 2. a minority of | B. white-collar workers |
| 3. children | C. the older generation |
| 4. few | D. only some |
| 5. office workers | E. most |
| 6. teenagers | F. kids |
| 7. the elderly | G. hardly any |
| 8. the majority of | H. a vast amount of |

Exercise 16.3: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below according to your opinions or impressions about different types of people in your society.

1. A tremendous amount of young people don't get enough
2. In my country, elderly people, in general, like to
3. A large percentage of famous people don't get
4. Nearly all students are given far too much
5. The majority of parents today don't give their sons and daughters enough

Language step 3 Suggesting & Advising Expressions

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the suggesting and advising expressions.

Alice ...If children are to grow up to be healthy adults, they *should* learn how to take care of themselves...

David ...*It would be good if* the holidays were a bit shorter.

When you've given your opinion and supported it, you should suggest what you'd do to improve the situation. Alice states her disapproval of couch potatoes, then goes on to say how children should learn to take care of themselves so they don't end up like this when they are old. Similarly, David, after saying he believes the holidays to be too long, suggests that it would be good if the holidays were shortened.

Here's a summary of ways you can suggest improvements:

should / shouldn't + verb

To get really good at football, you *should practise* every day.

ought to / ought not to + verb

You really *ought to see* a doctor if you feel that ill.

it would be good if / it wouldn't be good if

It would be good if everyone learned to play baseball when they were young.

it's a good idea to / it's not a good idea to + verb

It's not a good idea to run outside in the winter. You'll catch a cold.

it would help to + verb

It would help to train a little bit every day if you want to run a marathon.

the best thing to do to + improvement phrase + would be / is to + verb

The best thing to do to improve creativity in schools would be to introduce art classes in the early years of elementary school.

Exercise 16.4: Gap Fill

Write the words and expressions below in the correct spaces.

good idea	ought	it would help if
the best thing	would be	should

- Everyone _____ to join a sports team, even if it's just for fun.
- _____ to do to make sure people get more holidays is to put pressure on companies to abide by the labour laws.
- It _____ good if students learned how to swim competitively at a young age. Kids don't get enough chances to do this nowadays.
- Many people don't pay enough attention to what the professionals say. You consider hiring a personal trainer if you want to lift weights.
- It's not a _____ to over-exercise. Some people exert themselves too much.
- _____ everyone used public transport instead of driving. Too much traffic clogs the roads and pollutes the air.

Formula 17

How can people find out about X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for How can people find out about X? type questions.

How can people find out about what's going on in the world?

How do people obtain information about local events in your city?

How can you stay up to date with the national news where you live?

The formula

When the examiner asks you How can people find out about X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say how people usually obtain information.
2. Explain what you do to stay up to date.
3. Show how reliable these sources are.

Language steps

1. Use types of media words and phrases.

You can buy *newspapers* and *magazines* at *newsstands* around my town.

2. Use finding out information expressions.

I *surf the Internet* to *stay up to date with* what's going on.

3. Use words to express trust and mistrust of information.

It is a *well-respected* source of information.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
current affairs		what are happening in the international or national news at the moment	Daily newspapers are an excellent way to stay up to date with current affairs.
mass media		newspapers, television and radio of a nation, designed to reach the entire population	Some people don't fully trust the mass media. Others feel that it is the only reliable source of information.
venue	noun	the place where a concert, play or event is going to take place	I love the Old Theatre in Kemp Town. It's a great venue for a small concert.
events listings		lists of events, their dates and venues in local magazines	It's good to check the events listings regularly. There's a lot happening in this city.
gig	noun	colloquial expression for music concert (usually a pop or rock group)	We saw this great gig in the club. It was a fantastic young band from my hometown.
well respected	adjective	describing something that a lot of people respect and appreciate	The hotel is very well respected. It's got good reviews and all my friends say the service is excellent.
biased/ unbiased	adjective	showing an unreasonable like or dislike for a person based on personal opinions	The newspapers gave a very biased report on the incident – they obviously wanted to please the president.
viewpoint	noun	perspective; point of view; way of looking at something; opinion	It's usually not a good idea to talk about politics or religion with unfamiliar people – everyone has their own opinion, and people are frequently quite sensitive about such viewpoints.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer: How can you find out about national and international news where you come from?

Alice: Nowadays it's easier than ever to stay on top of current affairs. There are many different sources for news. There are newsstands in every major city selling all kinds of magazines and newspapers, which often run interesting features on everything from fashion to international events. But generally, I surf the Internet to stay up to date with what's going on in the blogs.

Though some bloggers aren't very objective, their opinions are interesting to read, and usually offer a different viewpoint to what I read in the mass media.

Interviewer How can people find out about local events and entertainment in your city?

David There's quite a lot of ways people can find out about what's going on. There's a local *City Weekend* magazine, which is full of events listings, advertisements and reviews about the latest gigs, classical concerts, art exhibitions and theatre. There's also "dining and drinking" listings – excellent for keeping track of the latest restaurants opening in the city. The magazine is both in physical form and online. It's a great source of information, the reviews are very unbiased and it is very well respected.

Language step 1 Types of Media

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, describe different types of media.

Alice ... There are *newsstands* in every major city selling all kinds of *magazines* and *newspapers*, which often run interesting *features* on everything from fashion to international events. But generally, I surf the *Internet* to stay up to date with what's going on in the *blogs*...

David ... There's a local *City Weekend* magazine, which is full of *events listings*, *advertisements* and *reviews* about the latest gigs, classical concerts, art exhibitions and theatre. There's also "*dining and drinking*" listings... The magazine is both in *physical form* and *online*...

When we talk about media, we are really talking about means of communication in general. This can be anything from mass media – like newspapers, television and radio – to local information, events, news and advertisements.

Here's a list of examples:

- newsstands
- newspapers
- advertisements
- features (informative / interesting articles)
- magazines (in physical form / online)
- blogs (online)
- restaurant / bar listings
- reviews (of restaurants / bars / events)
- events listings (of current events)
- current affairs

Exercise 17.1: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

advertisements blogs features magazines newsstands reviews

1. Today, online _____ are a very popular way in which every day people put their news, opinions and thoughts out for other people to read.
2. A lot of free magazines fund themselves by charging businesses to display their _____.
3. The most convenient places to buy newspapers or magazines are _____ or kiosks on street corners.
4. A lot of "What's On" _____ have _____ of new restaurants and bars to help people choose the most suitable places to drink and dine.
5. I enjoy reading the _____ in magazines for young people. I like the short stories about student life, or the articles about how to deal with certain emotional or social problems young people may face.

Language step 2 Finding out Information Expressions

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the finding out information expressions.

Alice ...generally, I *surf the Internet* to *stay up to date with* what's going on in the blogs...
 David ...There's also "dining and drinking" listings – excellent for *keeping track of* the latest restaurants opening in the city...

Here are some useful native speaker expressions to say how and why you get information:

How

to surf the Internet

I usually *surf the Internet* while drinking my morning coffee.

to browse through magazines / newspapers / websites

I've seen a lot of old people in parks, *browsing through newspapers* on warm sunny mornings.

to watch the news reports

My grandfather always *watches the evening news reports*.

to listen to the radio broadcasts

Every morning on the bus to school, I *listen to the radio broadcasts*.

to find out by word of mouth

I don't read, watch or listen to the news much, but I *find out* a lot from my friends *by word of mouth*.

Why

to keep track of

I believe it's good to *keep track of* what's going on in other countries.

to keep one's finger on the pulse

I don't like to be ignorant about world news. I *keep my finger on the pulse*.

to stay informed about

Online news is a good way to *stay informed about* what's happening in the world.

to stay abreast of

I am too lazy. I don't really care about *staying abreast of* current affairs.

to stay up to date with

I am not interested in current affairs. I like to *stay up to date with* the sports news though.

to stay on top of what's going on

Taxi drivers often listen to the radio to *stay on top of what's going on*.

 **Exercise 17.2: Gap Fill & Matching**

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces, then match the sentence halves 1-5 (how you get information) with the sentence halves A-E (why you get information).

broadcasts	browse through	news reports
blogs	find out about	

1. I listen to radio _____ on World Service...
2. I occasionally _____ the local newspapers to keep...
3. I watch _____ on a small TV in my dorm because I like to keep...
4. I love to surf the Internet, reading sports _____ by fans and experts. It's a great way to...
5. I am pretty lazy. I don't pay much attention to the news. I _____ major news stories through...

- A. ...abreast of current affairs in my province.
- B. ...to keep up to date with what's going on in the international news.
- C. ...stay informed about which teams are in the lead.
- D. ...word of mouth.
- E. ...my finger on the pulse. I hate not knowing what's going on around me!

Language step 3 Words for Trust and Mistrust

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the words for trust and mistrust.

Alice ...Though some bloggers aren't very *objective*, their opinions are interesting to read, and usually offer a different viewpoint to what I read in the mass media.

David ...It's a great source of information, the reviews are very *unbiased* and it is very *well respected*.

Usually, when native speakers talk about the ways in which they find information, they will tell each other how much they trust or mistrust that information.

Here's a list of useful words:

to express trust

It's a very *objective* source of information.

It's quite *unbiased*, so I generally believe what I see on that news channel.

I believe that the information presented there is *impartial*.

I trust that newspaper because it is very *well respected*.

to express doubt or slight mistrust

I don't like Internet news, I think it can be very *biased*.

It's considerably *one-sided* in its approach to discussing international affairs.

It's an *untrustworthy* publication.

I find the news channel a little *unreliable* to be honest.

Exercise 17.3: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

objective/impartial unreliable well respected untrustworthy biased/one-sided

- This blog is so _____ ; the blogger only likes The Lakers, so he always says good things about the team – even when they do badly!
- In the Internet age, _____ news is hard to find because everyone has their own opinion and writes what they think, not what they can prove.
- The newspaper my father reads is very _____. Nearly everyone agrees that it's a good, impartial, trustworthy read.
- If I think a news channel or radio station has a reputation for being _____, then I won't pay any attention to it.
- If we can't really rely on a source of information, we usually say it's _____.

Formula 18

Should people be given X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Should people be given X? type questions.

Should people be given more holidays?

Should people be paid more if they work overtime?

Should children be required to wear a uniform to school?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Should people be given X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Show that you are aware the question is asking about people in general and not about you.
2. Say whether you think X should or should not be given to people.
3. Give reasons to support your opinion.

Language steps

1. Use common native speaker agreement and disagreement phrases:
As I see it, people in my country often work way too much.
2. Use common native speaker rights, fairness and permission expressions with the passive.
*All workers deserve to be *provided with a fair salary*.*
3. Express reasons like a native with the zero conditional.
If workers are treated fairly, they are usually more loyal to their company.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
salary	noun	an amount of money an employee earns each year, paid to their bank account every month	I hope to get an increase in salary next year. I've worked very hard for this company.
benefits	noun	things you are given by your company for working for them, not including salary, e.g. paid lunches, paid holidays, pension, health insurance, etc.	My salary is not so high, but I get lots of other benefits from my company, like transport costs and free lunches.
frequently	adverb	often; happening a lot	He is so bad tempered! He frequently gets angry about such small things.
overtime	noun	working over the normal working hours; doing extra work for the company	I don't do much overtime in my job. I am quite lucky, I get to leave the office at 5 p.m.
loyal	adjective	firm and not changing in friendship or support	Ali is a very loyal dog. He always stays by my side, both in times of danger and times of hope.
long term		a long time in the future	Most scientists believe that climate change affects our environment in the long term.
rebellious	adjective	opposing or going against the ideas or rules of authority	This student is so rebellious. He never obeys the school rules! If the teacher tells him to wear his school uniform, he turns up in dirty jeans!

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer Should people be given longer holidays?

Alice Yes, they certainly should! As I see it, people often work very long hours but don't get a high salary or very many benefits in return. In fact, many workers frequently do unpaid overtime for their companies. I strongly believe that workers deserve to be given longer paid holidays so that they can relax more. In my opinion, if people are given more paid holidays, they are more loyal to their companies in the long term and probably work harder because they are more contented with their jobs.

Interviewer Do you think that students should be required to wear a school uniform?

David Absolutely not! I strongly believe that students should have the freedom to wear what they like in school. I think it's unfair to make children all look the same. School is a place for hard work and study, but also a place for children to learn to become individuals with their own styles, ideas and opinions. Young people ought to be given more choice in what they wear. If children are controlled too much when they are young, they can become very rebellious in later years.

Language step 1 Agreement & Disagreement Phrases

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the agreement and disagreement phrases.

Alice *Yes, they certainly should! As I see it, people often work very long hours but don't get a high salary or very many benefits in return...*

David *Absolutely not! I strongly believe that students should have the freedom to wear what they like in school...*

Look at these ways of expressing agreement and disagreement with an exclamation or a proposition.

Agreement

Yes, they certainly should!

Absolutely!

Definitely!

I couldn't agree more!

Disagreement

Absolutely not!

Of course not!

I don't think so.

Certainly not!

Introducing your opinion


I think/believe/feel that...

The way I see it...

In my opinion...

I am convinced that...

For me...

 **Exercise 18.1: Gap Fill**

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

believe course not do of the opinion not opinion

John: Do you think that people should be allowed to keep wild animals at home?

Mary: Certainly _____! I am _____ that wild animals should be kept in zoos, or in their natural habitat.

John: Do you believe that people get enough holidays?

Mary: Yes, I certainly _____! This is a developing country and in my _____, everyone must work hard to make the country better and better.

John: Do you think that parks should be free for everyone to enter?

Mary: Of _____! I strongly _____ that parks need to be maintained, plants and flowers need to be watered and the places kept clean. That costs money.

Language step 2 Rights, Fairness & Permission Expressions

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the rights, fairness and permission expressions.

Alice ...I strongly believe that workers *deserve to be given* longer paid holidays...

David ...Young people *ought to be given* more choice in what they wear...

When talking about permission and rights, you should use the passive voice. Using the passive voice means that you can say who receives the action without needing to say who does the action.

The passive structure

Remind yourself of the passive structure: **subject + be + past participle**

The workers *are given* three weeks' holiday every year.

The children *were allowed to wear* casual clothes last week.

People today *are not provided with* enough benefits.

In each case above, we know that the people giving the workers three weeks' holiday, allowing the children to wear casual clothes and who ought to be giving people more benefits are bosses, teachers and authorities.

Using the passive to suggest

To make suggestions, native speakers normally combine verbs such as *should* and *ought* to with the passive. Note in the following examples how these are used and that (to) be is added before the past participle:

should (not) be + past participle

ought (not) to be + past participle

(don't) deserve to be + past participle

should (not) be allowed to + verb

should (not) be permitted to + verb

Look at these in the context of the following examples:

People who work longer hours *deserve to be paid* more money.

Workers *ought to be treated* more fairly.

Women *ought not to be discriminated against* at work.

Children *should not be allowed to work* until they are 18 years old.

Employees *should be permitted to wear* casual clothes to work.

Fathers *should be given* extra holidays to spend time with their family.

All workers *deserve to be provided with* a safe working environment.

Exercise 18.2: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate verb forms from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- At the moment workers _____ a bonus if they work hard.
A. are given B. be given C. to be given
- I firmly believe that workers who have to commute a long distance to work ought _____ with a transport bonus.
A. provide B. be provided C. to be provided
- I think that a person who is lazy at work and makes too many mistakes _____ some form of punishment.
A. should B. ought C. should be
- On the last day of every school year, I think children ought _____ to wear casual clothes and have relaxing, fun classes.
A. to be permitted B. to permitted C. be permitted
- The doctor informed me that I _____ get more exercise and eat more fruits.
A. should be B. should C. ought to be
- For me, workers who are sacked for misbehaviour or poor work don't deserve money when they leave.
A. be given B. to be given C. given

Language step 3 The Zero Conditional

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the zero conditional.

- Alice ...if people *are given* more paid holidays, they *are* more loyal to their companies in the long term and probably *work* harder because they are more contented with their jobs.
- David ...If children *are controlled* too much when they are young, they *can become* very rebellious in later years.

Alice and David use the zero conditional to talk about what generally happens if certain conditions are fulfilled. It's often used for things that are almost always true.

The structure for the zero conditional is as follows:

if + present verb + present verb

- If we travel to work by subway, we usually get there quicker.*
- If I go to music concerts, I always dance.*
- If workers are late, they get into trouble.*

Look at how the zero conditional is used with the passive:

if + passive + present verb

- If people are given more paid holidays, they are more loyal to their company.*
- If children are allowed to play computer games too much, they get really lazy.*
- If young people are made to wear uniforms in school, they are generally better behaved.*



In conditional sentences, the *if*-clause may stand at the beginning or at the end of the sentence, so the structure of the zero conditional sentence can be either *if + present verb + present verb* or *present verb + if + present verb*.

When discussing a general situation in reality, you can also use *when* in place of *if*.

- It's not always true that when people are paid more money they work harder.*
- When employees are treated with respect, they are more loyal to the boss.*

Exercise 18.3: Gap Fill & Matching

Write the words below in the correct spaces in the sentence halves 1-5, then match them to the sentence halves A-E.

have punish drive are made are given

1. If children to wear warm clothes in winter then...

2. If we students who are rude or behave badly,...
 3. When people the chance to learn languages at an early age,...
 4. If older people access to computer training programmes,...
 5. As a general rule, people more carefully...
-
- A. ...they usually understand the younger generation a bit more.
 - B. ...if there is a strong police presence on motorways.
 - C. ...they are more obedient and attentive in class.
 - D. ...they are less likely to catch colds.
 - E. ...they often learn very quickly.

Formula 19

Is it difficult to do X?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Is it difficult to do X? type questions.

Is it difficult to learn to play a musical instrument?

Is it difficult to learn another language?

Is it hard to meet new people when you first go to university?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Is it difficult to do X? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say how difficult you think it is to do X.
2. Talk a little about the learning process.

Language steps

1. Use adverbs of degree with adjectives to talk about degrees of difficulty.
Learning to play a musical instrument is *incredibly hard* for some people.
2. Use a few time marking phrases like a native.
In the beginning speaking English might seem hard, but *after a while* it gets easier.
3. Use a few native speaker expressions about learning things.
Once you *get used to* a new language, you *pick it up* quickly.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
unfamiliar	adjective	not familiar; unknown to you	When I got my first job, I was unfamiliar with how to use a computer, but I've since learnt how to use one.
a bit		a little; a small amount; slightly	In the restaurant, I was a bit embarrassed to admit that I had forgotten my wallet and couldn't pay for dinner.
awkward	adjective	uncomfortable; difficult to manage or handle	It was very awkward to carry all my shopping and try to use the subway to get home.
get used to		to talk about an action that was difficult or unpleasant to do in the beginning, but becomes acceptable or enjoyable	When I lived in France, it was difficult to get used to speaking French all the time and getting up so early for my job.
get to grips with		to master; to succeed in doing something difficult	If you don't get to grips with grammar, you'll never be able to learn that language.
get the hang of		to get used to something; to begin to be able to do something relatively well	I was not good at cooking, but after a few lessons from James, I'm getting the hang of it now.
pick up		to learn, obtain, or develop new skills or abilities	I found learning to play the guitar quite easy – I picked it up quickly.
proficient	adjective	very good at something; having mastered something well	He is very proficient at English. He speaks almost like a native.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer: Is it difficult to learn another language?

Alice: I think that learning a language is extremely difficult – probably one of the hardest things someone can do. When you first begin learning, it can be very confusing to remember lots of unfamiliar words and grammar. It often feels a bit awkward and you have to get used to making mistakes. But after a while, everything feels much more comfortable and you can really start getting to grips with the new language.

Interviewer: Do you think it's difficult for young people to learn to play musical instruments?

David I believe that learning to play musical instruments is pretty difficult for most people. However, I think that young people usually pick up new things relatively quickly. At first, it's quite hard to get into learning an instrument, but when you get the hang of it, it's not too hard to learn some simple tunes. If you are dedicated in the beginning, I think after a while you will become quite proficient.

Language step 1 Adverbs of Degree

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adverbs of degree.

Alice I think that learning a language is *extremely difficult* – probably one of the hardest things someone can do...

David I believe that learning to play music instruments is *pretty difficult* for most people...

When asked a question about how difficult/hard something is to do, you must first bear in mind that some things are easier or more difficult to do than others.

Look at this list of adverbs of degree ordered from 1-7 from the smallest to largest degree:

1. quite/fairly
2. relatively/comparatively
3. pretty
4. really
5. considerably/very/remarkably
6. extremely
7. incredibly

To talk about how difficult it is to learn things, you can use the above adverbs of degree before a number of different adjectives, including:

easy/simple/straightforward
 hard
 difficult
 challenging
 awkward
 frustrating

Here are some examples of these adverbs of degree and adjectives combined:

I think it's *incredibly hard* to learn to play the trumpet.

I am under the impression that it's *remarkably easy* to play card games.

I believe it's *exceedingly frustrating* to learn to play the violin.
A lot of people say that learning Russian is *unbelievably challenging*.

Exercise 19.1: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

fairly frustrating remarkably easy incredibly
awkward unbelievably challenging

1. It's _____ hard to learn to play the drums well. It took me 10 years!
2. I believe that to master a language to the point when you can speak it fluently is _____.
It's one of the hardest things in the world.
3. Learning to drive a car is _____ at first, but pretty easy to pick up if you keep trying.
4. It's _____ to learn to ride a bike – I learnt in 20 minutes when I was seven years old.
5. Czech pronunciation is very _____ to learn. I find it hard to be understood clearly when I speak.

Language step 2 Time Marking Phrases

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the time marking phrases.

Alice ...*When you first begin learning*, it can be very confusing...But *after a while*, everything feels much more...

David ...*At first*, it's quite hard to get into learning an instrument...If you are dedicated *in the beginning*, I think *after a while* you will become quite proficient.

There are different stages of every learning process. Every activity changes in difficulty according to what stage of the process you are at. For example, learning English is now probably easier for you than it was when you started learning many years ago.

To talk about and compare the difficulty of different stages of learning an activity, you should use the following time marking phrases:

at the outset
at first
in the beginning
When you start doing something...
When you get into something / doing something...
for the first few weeks / months / times
after a while
after a certain point

Examples:

At the outset, learning to drive a car can be quite frightening, but *after a while* it becomes pretty easy.

When you start playing the violin, it seems incredibly difficult and doesn't really get any easier until *after the first few months*.

Language step 3 Expressions about Learning Things

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the expressions about learning things.

Alice ...you have to *get used to* making mistakes. But after a while, everything feels much more comfortable and you can really start *getting to grips with* the new language.

David ...At first, it's quite hard to get into learning an instrument, but when you *get the hang of* it, it's not too hard to learn some simple tunes...

The following native speaker expressions are extremely useful, especially when answering questions about learning a new skill or language:

to get used to (somebody/ doing something)

To describe the process where an action that was difficult or unpleasant to do in the beginning becomes acceptable or enjoyable

I don't think Susan is going to *get used to* working in such a small office.

to get to grips with (something/ doing something)

To try to master, to succeed in doing something difficult

Ask the sales manager to talk to his team please; we really need to *get to grips with* our after-sales service as it isn't good enough.

to pick up (something) or to pick (something) up

To learn, obtain or develop (new skills, abilities)

While I lived in Barcelona, I *picked up* a little Spanish.

to get the hang of (something/ doing something)

To become skilful, learn how to do something

It doesn't take long to *get the hang of* driving a car; after a few weeks it will be pretty familiar.

Exercise 19.2: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate phrases from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. When you start off it's quite difficult, but _____ you find you start to get better and more confident.
A. from the outset B. in the beginning C. after a while
2. Computers are relatively easy to _____ of; you don't need a lot of skill or practice to master the basics.
A. get to grips B. get the hang C. pick up
3. Learning to bake cakes is not difficult. At first you make a few mistakes, then after a short time, you start _____ with the basic techniques.
A. getting the hang B. picking up C. getting to grips
4. Experts say that in the beginning it's incredibly difficult to fly a helicopter, but when you've _____ (it), it's fairly simple.
A. got used to B. got to grips C. picked it up
5. _____ to learn to swim, it's really scary and difficult, but after a few weeks of lessons it's not that difficult to get to grips with it.
A. At first B. When you first begin C. After a certain point

Formula 20

Is X suitable for (types of people)?

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Is X suitable for (types of people)? type questions.

- Is riding a bike suitable for elderly people?
- Are all sports suitable for people of all ages?
- Are computers suitable for young children?

The formula

When the examiner asks you Is X suitable for (types of people)? type questions, you must:

Answer order

1. Say whether X is suitable or not.
2. Give reasons and examples.

Language steps

1. Use appropriateness expressions.

Violent movies are *inappropriate* for children.

2. Use safety and risk expressions.

Eating fast food can be *detrimental* to one's health.

3. Use nouns and expressions of condition and causality.

Video games are *addictive* and *harmful*.

Video games *relax* and *entertain*.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
inappropriate	adjective	not suitable for a particular purpose or situation	His behaviour at the wedding was rude and his clothes were dirty. How inappropriate he was!
advisable	adjective	if something is advisable, it means you will avoid problems if you do it; you should do it	It's advisable to book tickets in advance because the seats for that play will sell out quickly.
detrimental	adjective	bad for; damaging; having a negative effect on	So much air pollution is detrimental to our health.
impact	noun	the effect or influence that an event, situation, etc. has on somebody or something	Playing too many contact sports can have a negative impact on a child's physical development.
abseil	verb	to go down a very steep cliff or an object by holding on to a rope which is tied to the top of it	The special agent abseiled down the tall building to get to the 20 th floor secretly.
exhilarating	adjective	making you feel extremely happy and excited	Going to the theme park was an exhilarating experience for the kids.
invigorating	adjective	making you feel full of spirit and energy as well as being excited and thrilled	Going on the speed boat was an invigorating experience – I can't wait to do it again!
lateral thinking		logical thinking; clear reasoning; coming to correct conclusions based on clues	Doing puzzles and number games can improve our lateral thinking skills.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David.

Interviewer	Do you think that computer games are suitable for young children?
Alice	I believe that computer games are inappropriate for very young children. For older children, I think it is reasonable for them to play computer games, but it would be advisable for their parents to restrict the amount of time they play games. As most people know, staring at a computer screen for too long can be detrimental to your eyesight; if children play for too long they might harm their eyes. Also, games that are really violent or scary are not suitable as they might have a negative impact upon the child's mental health. In moderation, however, I believe computer games can be ideal for developing children's lateral thinking skills.

Interviewer Are outdoor sports suitable for people of all ages?

David I think that most outdoor sports are suitable for everyone. Though people who do adventurous sports like rock climbing, abseiling, or white-water rafting, should be careful because these sports can be dangerous if you don't know what you are doing. In fact, now I think about it, for kids and elderly people, I think these sports are unsuitable. However, for fit and healthy people, these sports can be exhilarating and invigorating.

Language step 1 Appropriateness Expressions

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the appropriateness expressions.

Alice I believe that computer games are *inappropriate* for very young children...

David I think that most outdoor sports are *suitable* for everyone...for kids and elderly people, I think these sports are *unsuitable*...

Native speakers will often use the following adjectives when talking about the appropriateness of an activity:

suitable for / unsuitable for
 suited to / unsuited to
 appropriate for / inappropriate for
 advisable to[for] / inadvisable to[for]

You should talk about the appropriateness of the activity in question by combining the above adjectives with the following appropriateness expressions:

activity + is/are + suitable / unsuitable for + groups of people

Vigorous sports *are* usually *unsuitable* for elderly people.

it is + suitable / unsuitable for + groups of people + to verb

It is *suitable* for young people *to marry* before the age of 25.

activity + is/are + suited / unsuited to + groups of people

Tai chi *is* particularly *suited* to retired and elderly citizens.

activity + is/are + appropriate / inappropriate for + groups of people

Riding motorbikes *is* *inappropriate* for very young children.

it is + appropriate / inappropriate for + groups of people + to verb

It is *inappropriate* for very young children *to ride* motorbikes.

activity + is / are + advisable / inadvisable for + groups of people

Doing yoga *is advisable for* people with back problems.

it is + advisable / inadvisable that + groups of people + verb

It's advisable that people with back problems *do* yoga.

Exercise 20.1: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct appropriateness expressions from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. Wearing heavy make-up is _____ young schoolgirls.
A. inadvisable that B. unsuitable for C. appropriate for
2. I think _____ teenagers to go to nightclubs.
A. it is inadvisable that B. it is unsuited to C. it is inappropriate for
3. Yoga is _____ people who are stressed.
A. suited to B. suitable to C. appropriate
4. Working outdoors is especially _____ for people who like nature.
A. advisable B. appropriate C. inappropriate
5. I believe _____ young children to work in factories.
A. it is totally advisable for B. it is totally appropriate C. it is totally inappropriate for
6. In my opinion, _____ children to drink alcohol at a young age.
A. it is inadvisable for B. it is unsuited to C. is unsuitable for

Language step 2 Safety and Risk Expressions

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use the safety and risk expressions.

Alice ...staring at a computer screen for too long *can be detrimental to your eyesight*; if children play for too long they *might harm* their eyes...they *might have a negative impact upon* the child's mental health...

David ...people...*should be careful* because these sports *can be dangerous*...

Using some simple safety and risk expressions you will be able to explain like a native why you think certain activities are suitable or unsuitable.

Examples:

People *should be very careful* when swimming in the sea.

Inner-city traffic *can be dangerous*.

Elderly people who are not used to playing sports *may injure* themselves.


Certain drugs *might be detrimental* to people's mental health.

Smoking *can cause* cancer.

Sitting too close to the television *is likely to lead* to eye problems.

Working too many hours *can have a negative impact* on one's family life.

Note: When using safety and risk expressions, you must try to use different modal verbs to qualify your statements and avoid making absolute statements, as in the examples above. Modal verbs include **can, may, might, be likely to, etc.**

 **Exercise 20.2: Matching**

Match the activities / actions with their potential risks.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Being too direct and honest can... | A. ...lead to heavy pollution in summer months. |
| 2. Trusting people too much... | B. ...be detrimental to your health if you do it in excess. |
| 3. Doing vigorous sports can... | C. ...can lead to being tricked. |
| 4. Drinking too much beer might... | D. ...cause you muscle injuries if you are not careful. |
| 5. Increasing traffic on inner-city roads is likely to... | E. ...sometimes hurt people's feelings. |

Language step 3 Adjectives & Expressions of Conditions and Benefits

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Alice and David, use adjectives and expressions of conditions and benefits.

Alice ...*In moderation*, however, I believe computer games *can be ideal* for developing children's lateral thinking skills.

David ...*However, for fit and healthy people*, these sports *can be exhilarating* and *invigorating*.

In your answer to this type of question, you should express the advantages of doing a particularly activity for certain people, or under certain conditions, as a concluding point.

Look at the adjectives and expressions of conditions and benefits on the next page that you should try to use in your answer:

Conditions

- In moderation
- If not abused
- If not done to excess
- If (type of people) + verb
- If done under supervision
- If we make sure we + verb

Benefits

- can be beneficial
- can be good/ excellent/ great for
- can be useful (for)
- can be safe
- can be a good/ excellent/ great/ fantastic way to + verb

Now look at the following examples of the above conditions and benefits combined:

In moderation, playing computer games can be constructive.

If not abused, alcohol can be enjoyable and good for the health.

If we don't do it in excess, then weightlifting can be great for building strength.

If older people get a personal trainer, regular exercise can be excellent for their health.

If done under supervision, vigorous exercise/adventure sports can be safe.

If we make sure we do it carefully, riding motorbikes can be a fantastic way to travel in the mountains.

Exercise 20.3: Matching

Match the conditions with their benefits.

1. If done in moderation, drinking alcohol can be...
 2. If a person is responsible and careful,...
 3. If done under supervision, contact sports...
 4. Skiing can be a fun and safe sport...
 5. If we don't do it in excess, then eating lots of cakes and chocolates...
-
- A. ...if we make sure we don't take unnecessary risks in the beginning.
 - B. ...a good way to lower inhibitions and get to know people in social settings.
 - C. ...can be good for us and give us boosts of energy during the day.
 - D. ...then living alone away from home at an early age can be a constructive experience.
 - E. ...can be very good at building teamwork skills in young people.

Part Two

Introduction to Part Two Formulas

Introduction to Part II of the IELTS Speaking Test:

Part II of the IELTS Speaking test tests 3-4 minutes.

You will be asked to give an oral response to prompts given on a card. You have 1 minute for preparation. Paper and pen are given for candidates to note down the main points.

General Introduction to Part II Formulas:

Through research and analysis of Part II of the IELTS Speaking test, we come to the conclusion that the tasks are of 4 types:

1. Describing a person
2. Describing a place
3. Describing an object
4. Describing a past event

Formula 21

Person Monologue

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for giving a monologue about a person. Typical IELTS Part Two questions about a person include:

- Talk about a good cook.
- Talk about a famous person you'd like to meet.
- Talk about an animal you find interesting.
- Talk about a person who looked after you as a child.
- Talk about a teacher you know.
- Talk about a neighbour you have or have had.
- Talk about a person you enjoy spending time with.
- Talk about one of your friends.
- Talk about an old person you know who lives near you.

Answer order

To give a good monologue about a person, you should use the following native speaker answer order.

- Stage 1: Say who they are and how you know them.
- Stage 2: Say what they are like and what they do.
- Stage 3: Say what they have achieved and how they have influenced you.
- Stage 4: Say why they are special and how you feel about them.

Model answer

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer	Tell me about a person who looked after you as a child.
Stage 1	Say who they are and how you know them.
Sophia	I would like to talk about my grandmother. When I was a child, my parents were very busy and so my grandmother, who is my father's mother, had to look after me.
Stage 2	Say what they are like and what they do.

Sophia My grandmother is a very gentle and kind woman. Her hair – as far back as I can remember – has always been brilliant white but she is quite self-conscious about this and wears a shoulder-length wig to hide it. Gran is really short, probably about four feet something, but she seems even shorter because she has a permanent stoop. When I think of my grandmother's appearance, the thing which stands out most is her constantly smiling face – she has a very kind face, which is covered in wrinkles.

Although she was a bit elderly, and had to take care of the house as well as me, she tried to keep me entertained and find interesting things for us to do together. I remember once when we were playing hide-and-seek at home, I ran into the garden and hid so well that she couldn't find me. It was quite a few hours before I decided to come out and my grandmother was so relieved – she had almost called the police!

Stage 3 Say what they have achieved and how they have influenced you.

Sophia My grandmother has always taught me to be more patient and understanding towards other people. She had been a nurse for many years and I think if it hadn't been for her, I would never have studied nursing – which I love.

Stage 4 Say why they are special and how you feel about them.

Sophia Gran was a great role model for me when I was growing up, and now I'm an adult I still admire her. I hope that one day I'll have children and grandchildren too, and I hope that I'm as good a grandmother as mine was.

The formula

For STAGE 1 of a person monologue, you must: Say who they are and how you know them.

Language steps

1. Use words or phrases for relatives, occupations and social positions correctly.

My grandfather was a good man because...

A family friend once told me...

2. Use relative clauses with "who" correctly.

David, who was my best friend at school, often played football in the local park.

3. Use the past continuous and past simple to say how you met somebody.

When I was studying at university, my teacher told me...

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
look after		to care for, protect, raise	Nowadays, many children are looked after by their grandparents because their parents have to work during the day.
Roman history		the history of the city of Rome and its ancient empire, usually referring to the period 753 BC to 476 AD	He is interested in Roman history, so he chose it as his major at university.
college	noun	In the UK, "college" refers to an educational institution that is between school and university. College students are aged 16-18. In the US, "college" means university. College students are aged 17-21.	Sarah didn't enjoy her time at college because it was too much like school; she was much happier when she went to university as it gave her more freedom.
course	noun	a group of classes about a certain topic, often with an exam at the end	I would really like to learn how to paint properly – if I had enough time, I would love to take a painting course.
next door		in the house, room, flat that is immediately next to your own	The postman must be quite stupid; he always gives us letters which should go next door.
father/mother/son/daughter-in-law	noun	people who are related to you through marriage, especially your husband's/wife's parents or the husband/wife of your child	I get along really well with my mother-in-law. She's a great woman.
elderly	adjective	(of people) old	Although my grandmother is now quite elderly, she's still able to look after herself and keep her house clean and tidy.
family home		the house where your family lives, or lived for a long time in the past	I will always remember our family home – it was old, a bit dirty but really comfortable. I haven't got used to living in our new home yet.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Interviewer Talk about a person who looked after you as a child.

Sophia I would like to talk about my grandmother. When I was a child, my parents were very busy and so my grandmother, who is my father's mother, had to look after me...

Interviewer Talk about a teacher you know.

Mike I will always remember Dr. Shotter. He was one of my history teachers at university. I had always loved history at school and college and so I chose history as my major at university. When I was choosing my courses, I decided to try Roman History and so met Dr. Shotter...

Interviewer Talk about a neighbour you once had.

Jean I want to talk about my next-door neighbour Win. We moved to our family home when I was only six months old, so Win is the earliest neighbour that I can remember. Win, who lived with her daughter and son-in-law, was always a very elderly woman...

Language step 1 Relatives, Occupations and Social Positions

Let's see how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, talk about the relatives together with their occupations and social positions.

Sophia I would like to talk about my *grandmother*. When I was a child, my *parents* were very busy and so my *grandmother*, who is my *father's mother*, had to look after me...

Mike I will always remember Dr. Shotter. He was one of my *history teachers* at university...

Jean I want to talk about my *next-door neighbour* Win. We moved to our family home when I was only six months old, so Win is the earliest *neighbour* that I can remember. Win, who lived with her *daughter* and *son-in-law*, was always a very elderly woman...

When giving a monologue about a person, it's always a great idea to say something about the person's relationship to you, their occupation or social position.

Here are some more examples:


Relatives	Occupations	Relationship/Social Positions
great-grandfather	surgeon	celebrity
grandparents	accountant	star
aunt	architect	politician
uncle	civil servant	TV presenter
cousin	plumber	sports personality
brother-in-law	electrician	friend of the family
mother-in-law	butcher	childhood friend
stepfather	self-employed	(ex-)boyfriend/(ex-)girlfriend
nephew	waiter/waitress	distant relation

Examples:

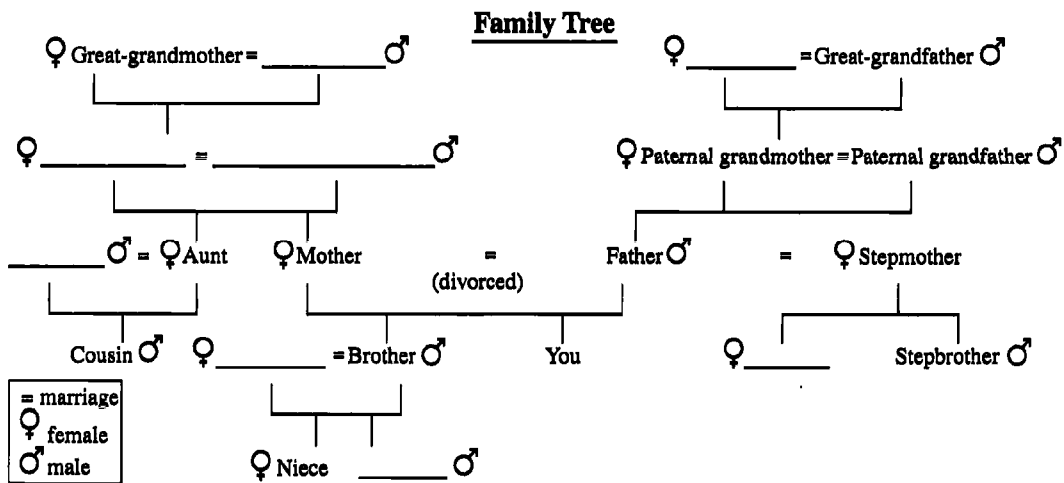
I would like to talk about my *nephew*, who is a *plumber* like me.

I really admire Daniel Craig, who is an excellent *actor* and has recently become a huge *movie star*.

My grandparents were both *surgeons* during the war.

 **Exercise 21.1: Gap Fill**

Write the names of the relatives in the appropriate spaces in the family tree below.



Exercise 21.2: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

celebrity	childhood friend	ex-boyfriend
friend of the family	sports personality	TV presenter

1. Yao Ming is probably the most popular _____ in China.
2. I never speak to my _____ ; he hurt me too much when our relationship ended.
3. It's great shame that Chris Bailey, who was a _____ of mine, passed away a few years ago.
4. My family all trust and like Richard Haward. We've known him so long and he always comes to our family events – he's a true _____ .
5. I don't like to watch the show "I Love Movies" because I can't stand the _____ who hosts the programme.
6. My schoolmate Saskia Clarke has become something of a _____ after competing in the 2008 Olympics.

Language step 2 Relative Clauses with "Who"

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use relative clauses with who.

Sophia I would like to talk about my grandmother. When I was a child, my parents were very busy and so my grandmother, *who is my father's mother*, had to look after me...

Jean I want to talk about my next-door neighbour Win. We moved to our family home when I was only six months old, so Win is the earliest neighbour that I can remember. Win, *who lived with her daughter and son-in-law*, was always a very elderly woman...

Notice that Sophia and Jean use parts of sentences (clauses) beginning with who to provide the examiner with information about the person they are talking about. These are called relative clauses.

There are two main types of relative clause, defining and non-defining. Look at the examples below.

Non-defining relative clause

My mother, *who worked as a waitress for many years*, thoroughly dislikes politics.

Her good friend Daniel, *who became a very successful businessman*, had suggested to her once that she study computer programming.

In these examples, the relative clause gives extra information about the person being spoken about. The information is not necessary because if we were to remove the relative

clause, the sentence would still make sense: *My mother thoroughly dislikes politics./Her good friend Daniel had suggested to her once that she study computer programming.*

When speaking, you should have a slight pause at the beginning and end of your non-defining relative clauses.

Defining relative clause

The woman *who lived next door to us when I was a child* was extremely ugly.

The movie star *who starred in the film Titanic* has become hugely successful.

These relative clauses are necessary to the meaning of the sentence and are not giving extra information. If we removed the relative clause, the sentence would not make good sense as we would not know which woman or which movie star was being talked about: *The woman was extremely ugly./The movie star has become hugely successful.*

When using a defining relative clause, you should not pause but speak continuously.

Note: whom is very rarely used in spoken relative clauses – just use who.

Exercise 21.3: Gap Fill

Write the relative clauses below in the correct spaces.

who lived in Los Angeles	who lived near our family home
who was a civil servant	who now studies at Beijing University
who taught us mathematics at school	who was the President of America

1. Bill Clinton, _____, has made a deep impression on me.
2. The teacher _____ was particularly strict.
3. A policeman _____ once caught me stealing fruit and vegetables.
4. My friend, _____, told me once that she hated studying and exams.
5. Her uncle, _____, used to come and pick us up in his enormous black car.
6. The relative _____ sponsored her visa application to the United States.

Language step 3 The Past Continuous & Past Simple to Say How You Met Somebody

Mike describes how he met Dr. Shotter:

Mike I will always remember Dr. Shotter. He was one of my history teachers at university. I had always loved history at school and college and so I chose history as my major at university. When I *was choosing* my courses, I *decided* to try Roman History and so *met* Dr. Shotter...

When introducing somebody, it's often useful to say how, or under what circumstances, you met. Using the past continuous and past simple is a good way to do this.

The past continuous is used together with the past simple to talk about a longer action that was happening when a single or shorter action happened.

The structure of the past continuous is: **be + verb-ing**

I was walking...

They were talking on the phone.

When or while is often used to link the past continuous and past simple, as in the following examples:

When I was studying at university, my teacher told me to spend more time researching my subject.

While my brother was visiting Vietnam, he lost his passport, wallet, and credit cards.

We met when we were working together at the same company.

I first talked to my girlfriend when I asked her the time while we were waiting for the bus.



Verbs of senses and stative verbs are not usually used in the continuous tenses. These verbs include **hear, see, smell, have, want, like, love, prefer, know, believe, understand, etc.**

Exercise 21.4: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct words to complete the sentences.

1. My husband was visiting the city which I lived in we met.
A. when B. while C. then
2. She gave my brother some help when he looking for a job.
A. were B. was C. is
3. We were at university when we joined the same band and started socialising.
A. study B. studied C. studying
4. My roommate was his friend and so after a few weeks, we were introduced to each other.
A. dating B. date C. dated
5. My mother met my father while they were around the country.
A. travel B. travelling C. travelled

The formula

For STAGE 2 of a person monologue, you must: Say what they are like and what they do.

Language steps	
1. Use adjectives of personality accurately.	My mother is a very <i>conservative</i> woman. He is quite <i>humorous</i> and <i>open-minded</i> .
2. Use adverbs of frequency to talk about past/present behaviour.	My grandfather was <i>always</i> busy when I was young. My nephew <i>often</i> likes me to read him a story before he goes to bed.
3. Use the past continuous, past simple and past perfect to tell anecdotes.	<i>We were taking</i> the bus to another city when there <i>was</i> a big crash. He <i>had lived</i> in India for many years, so when he <i>returned</i> he <i>looked</i> very different.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
brilliant white		very white; extremely white	I love going to the countryside in winter after it has snowed. Everything is so brilliant white – it's beautiful.
self-conscious	adjective	extremely aware of one's own actions and feeling very uncomfortable as a result	Jan really dislikes dancing in public. Because he's so self-conscious, he thinks everybody's watching him and laughing.
wig	noun	hair that is worn on the head by people who do not have their own hair	Men who go bald usually put on a wig – this looks so obvious and stupid!
stoop	noun	when somebody's back is constantly bent and their head and shoulders are forward	Many extremely tall people have a slight stoop. I think it's because they are very self-conscious of their height.
hide-and-seek	noun	a children's game in which everyone hides and one child tries to find them	I remember playing hide-and-seek in the fields near my home; it was such great fun!

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
beer belly		a fat stomach caused by drinking a lot of beer for a long time	Most middle-aged men in England have a large beer belly because they drink far too much beer and do too little exercise.
know something (off) by heart		to know something so well that you can recite it, say it from memory	Most schoolchildren are made to learn the multiplication table so well that they all know it off by heart for the rest of their lives.
scowl	verb/noun	(to have) a very angry or annoyed expression	I don't like that waitress; whenever you ask her to do something or you ask her a question, she always scowls.
hoarse	adjective	sounding rough or unpleasant, often caused by a cold, sore throat or smoking	Loads of people love Rod Stewart's songs because of his hoarse voice, but I think he just sounds like he has a cold.
on purpose		doing something intentionally, not by accident	He said he spilled the drink on her lap by accident, but I know he spilled it on purpose because he was angry at her.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ... My grandmother is a very gentle and kind woman. Her hair – as far back as I can remember – has always been brilliant white but she is quite self-conscious about this and wears a shoulder-length wig to hide it. Gran is really short, probably about four feet something, but she seems even shorter because she has a permanent stoop. When I think of my grandmother's appearance, the thing which stands out most is her constantly smiling face – she has a very kind face, which is covered in wrinkles.

Although she was a bit elderly, and had to take care of the house as well as me, she tried to keep me entertained and find interesting things for us to do together. I remember once when we were playing hide-and-seek at home, I ran into the garden and hid so well that she couldn't find me. It was quite a few hours before I decided to come out and my grandmother was so relieved – she had almost called the police!...

Mike ... Dr. Shotter was about 60 years old and had a huge beer belly. His hair was grey, but quite thick. He always used to have glasses with him but he hardly ever wore them – they usually just dangled around his neck from the glasses strap. I can pic-

ture him now, sitting at his desk piled high with manuscripts and reference books, leaning back in his chair and looking out of the window while a cigarette burned between his fingers.

Dr. Shotter was a very experienced history lecturer. I remember that he always brought a lot of teaching notes to class but would then put them down and never look at the notes again the whole time he was teaching – he knew the information off by heart. He was able to bring the history lessons to life, and every student – even the laziest ones – all became interested in the subject when he was speaking. I remember once when he organised a university trip to a historical site. I had brought my girlfriend along, even though my girlfriend always said that history was boring. In the end, Dr. Shotter told my girlfriend about the history of the place and she was amazed...

Jean ...She was a large woman, about 5 feet 8 inches and quite fat. When people saw her, they would be struck immediately by the expression on her face, which often appeared to be a scowl. Actually, she was a very friendly and gentle woman.

Win was originally from London and had a very strong London accent and was never without a cigarette. Because she smoked, whenever she heard something funny she would have this raspy, hoarse laugh. When I visited her she would also be very kind to me, offering to make me a cup of tea, but would usually have some bad words to say about her son-in-law, as he often annoyed her on purpose. I remember that Win did all the cleaning in the house while her son-in-law, Fred, and her daughter were out at work. To annoy her, Fred would often stub his cigarette out not in the ashtray but on the kitchen floor – making her go crazy!...

Language step 1 Adjectives of Personality

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use adjectives of personality.

Sophia ...My grandmother is a very *gentle* and *kind* woman. Her hair – as far back as I can remember – has always been brilliant white but she is quite *self-conscious* about this and wears a shoulder-length wig to hide it...

Mike ...Dr. Shotter was a very *experienced* history lecturer...

Jean ...When people saw her, they would be struck immediately by the expression on her face, which often appeared to be a scowl. Actually, she was a very *friendly* and *gentle* woman...

When giving a monologue about a person, it's very important to accurately use adjectives of personality to describe what the person is/was like.

Look at some more examples of useful adjectives of personality:

Funny	Shy	Confident	Angry	Happy
humorous	reserved	ambitious	aggressive	charming
witty	introverted	self-confident	bad-tempered	cheerful
funny	quiet	self-assured	moody	vivacious
hilarious	sensitive	extroverted	irritable	lively
amusing	conservative	adventurous	short-fused	
hysterical	timid	arrogant	abrupt	


Helpful	Honest	Kind	Intelligent	Stupid
considerate	straightforward	gentle	clever	immature
supportive	frank	calm	bright	silly
sympathetic	reliable	generous	mature	dumb
helpful	genuine	loving	talented	dim
	sincere	thoughtful	open-minded	daft
		altruistic	wise	foolish

Examples:

He is a very *extroverted* person, and really likes to be the centre of attention.

She seems like a very *vivacious* and *self-assured* woman, though she's perhaps quite *abrupt* if you make her angry.

My girlfriend really has two sides to her personality; when she's *happy* she can be *open-minded*, *thoughtful* and really *supportive*, but when she's in a bad mood she can be really *irritable* and *selfish*.

 **Exercise 21.5: Gap Fill**

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

ambitious	moody	bright	charming
supportive	immature	frank	
reserved	humorous	generous	

1. My colleague is really _____, she is often irritable and angry – sometimes I'm too scared to speak to her!
2. I always have lots of ideas at work, but whenever I tell my manager he never listens and nothing changes – I wish my boss was more _____.

3. My nephew is almost 25, but he still plays computer games and doesn't think about the future. He's far too _____.
4. Politicians are rarely _____ with the public; usually they hide the truth or just tell people a part of the truth.
5. Many women really like Brad Pitt not only because he is handsome but because he seems really _____.
6. Bill Gates is obviously an extremely _____ man; otherwise he wouldn't have been so successful.
7. One thing I really appreciated about my grandparents was that they were so _____ – they gave me whatever I needed and didn't really care about money.
8. I think my uncle is still not married because he is extremely _____. He doesn't like to say much when other people are present and his views are quite traditional.
9. My doctor is fantastic – even though her patients are really nervous about seeing the doctor or going to the hospital, she is so _____ that she can make them laugh and relax straight away.
10. Although David Beckham is a great football player, he isn't very _____ – don't ask him any complicated maths questions!

Language step 2 Adverbs of Frequency for Habits and Behaviour

Let's have a look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use adverbs of frequency for habits and behaviour.

Sophia ...When I think of my grandmother's appearance, the thing which stands out most is her *constantly* smiling face...

Mike ...Dr. Shotter was about 60 years old and had a huge beer belly. His hair was grey, but quite thick. He *always* used to have glasses with him but he *hardly ever* wore them – they *usually* just dangled around his neck from the glasses strap...I remember that he *always* brought a lot of teaching notes to class but would then put them down and *never* look at the notes again the whole time he was teaching – he knew the information off by heart...

Jean ...When people saw her, they would be struck immediately by the expression on her face, which *often* appeared to be a scowl...Win was originally from London and had a very strong London accent and was *never* without a cigarette...When I visited her she would also be very kind to me, offering to make me a cup of tea, but would *usually* have some bad words to say about her son-in-law, as he *often* annoyed her on purpose...

Adverbs of frequency are great for describing people's habits and behaviour.

Refresh your memory of useful adverbs of frequency by looking at the table below.

constantly	frequently	regularly
typically	commonly	often
sometimes	occasionally	rarely
seldom	hardly ever	almost never
always	usually	generally
never	every now and again	from time to time

You can also talk about how often people do or did things by using the structure:

Times + time period

once a day
twice a week
three times a month
five times a year

Every + time


every morning
every evening
every day at 6 p.m.
every week
every month
every birthday
every summer vacation

Examples:

My friend Omar has to wash *five times a day, every day*.

My grandmother would *regularly* go to the temple to pray and offer gifts.

Every summer vacation, my father would think of a special trip for us to go on.

 **Exercise 21.6: Gap Fill**

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

constantly	every now and again	seldom	typically
frequently	twice a year	every night	

- My sister _____ did any housework when she was a teenager – she was too lazy and didn't want to help mum.
- One of my best friends, Adam, is a fantastic cook at a really expensive restaurant. Lots of famous celebrities _____ go to his restaurant.
- A teenager that lives near me meets his friends and starts drinking _____ at 7 p.m.
- When Tracy was young, she went to many different places as her family would _____ go on vacation
- Although my mother loves Chinese food, she only eats at a Chinese restaurant because they are too expensive.

6. Bob's grandmother had lots of problems with her memory. She couldn't remember new information and _____ forgot where she lived – she had to have a piece of paper with her address written on it at all times.

Language step 3 The Past Continuous, Past Simple & Past Perfect Tenses to Tell Anecdotes

Let's see how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, tell anecdotes about their lives.

Sophia ...I remember once when we *were playing* hide-and-seek at home, I *ran* into the garden and *hid* so well that she *couldn't find* me. It *was* quite a few hours before I *decided* to come out and my grandmother *was* so relieved – she *had almost called* the police!

Mike ...I remember once when he *organised* a university trip to a historical site. I *had brought* my girlfriend along, even though my girlfriend always *said* that history *was* boring. In the end, Dr. Shotter *told* my girlfriend about the history of the place and she *was* amazed...

Jean ...I remember that Win *did* all the cleaning in the house while her son-in-law, Fred, and her daughter *were* out at work. To annoy her, Fred *would* often *stub* his cigarette out not in the ashtray but on the kitchen floor – making her go crazy!...

Notice that Sophia, Mike and Jean all tell anecdotes (interesting or amusing short stories) about the people they are describing. This makes their monologue much more interesting and is a great way to show what someone's personality and behaviour are like.

You should remember how to use the past continuous and past simple from the last lesson, where you learnt to talk about how you met somebody. This is very useful for telling anecdotes.

Examples:

The teacher *was getting* really angry, but David *didn't realise* and *continued* making stupid jokes.

I *was travelling* on a bus in Laos when there *was* a loud crash and the bus *started* shaking all over the road.

You can also use the past perfect and past simple to tell anecdotes.

The structure of the past perfect is: had + past participle

I *had eaten* a huge dinner.

They *had decided* that they would...

The past perfect action happened before the past simple action, as in the following examples:

Last Christmas, I *had eaten* a huge dinner at my mother's house and then my girlfriend's mother *made* me eat another enormous meal.

They *had decided* that they would visit some historical sites, but on the bus on the way they *were robbed*.

Exercise 21.7: Matching

Match the sentence halves on the left with those on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. My mother had had many accidents... | A. ...but the government protected them and now they are increasing in number every year. |
| 2. Before he became really famous as a kung fu master and a film star,... | B. ...I lied and said a burglar must have done it. |
| 3. My grandparents returned home after I had accidentally knocked over the TV. Instead of telling the truth,... | C. ...before she finally stopped driving. |
| 4. Forty years ago, American bald eagles had almost all died... | D. ...my parents had gone away on holiday. |
| 5. Our new neighbours tried to steal some of our vegetables from the garden after... | E. ...Bruce Lee had been a dancer. |

The formula

For STAGE 3 of a person monologue, you must: Say what they have achieved and how they have influenced you.

Language steps

1. Use the third conditional accurately to express the importance of somebody to you.

If I hadn't met her, I would never have...

I would have made a huge mistake if she hadn't...

2. Use the present perfect to talk about changes and achievements.

He has taught me to always put others first.

My grandfather has had a great influence on my life.

3. Use phrases of achievements to talk about the person's accomplishments.

She fought for everything she achieved.

He had a lucky break at the age of 30, then rose to fame quickly.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
patient	adjective	describing somebody who can wait or endure something without getting angry or frustrated	Most successful chefs are not in the least patient – they shout at their staff about the tiniest mistake and always demand that things are done quicker.
understanding	adjective	describing somebody who understands what other people are thinking or feeling, and doesn't blame other people for their behaviour or mistakes	At school my mathematics teacher was not understanding at all; she would get really angry if you made mistakes in your homework and couldn't understand why some things weren't clear to the students.
Master's degree		the degree studied at university after the first or "Bachelor's degree"	Nowadays more and more students are deciding to study for a Master's degree in order to improve their chances of finding a good job after leaving university.
over the years		over time; as the years pass	I never thought I would learn how to speak Spanish despite going to Spain every year on holiday. But over the years I have managed to learn quite a lot of the language.
appreciate (somebody or something)	verb	to value, to recognise somebody or understand that something is valuable or important	My mother really appreciated the time she spent in Brazil during that time she learnt a lot about the country, the people, herself and life in general.
have an influence upon (somebody or something)		to affect or change somebody or something	Nicole Kidman's divorce from Tom Cruise seems to have had a big influence upon her acting career – she's not as big a movie star as she was before.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...My grandmother has always taught me to be more patient and understanding towards other people. She had been a nurse for many years and I think if it hadn't been for her, I would never have studied nursing - which I love...

Mike ...He had a great influence upon me, and made me want to become a history lecturer myself. I'm sure I wouldn't have studied a Master's degree in Roman History if I hadn't met Dr. Shotter...

Jean ...It was a very sad day when they left, as we had known each other for so long. Although Win was just a normal woman, she had helped our family many times over the years and done small things like looking after our cat, which we really appreciated...

Language step 1 The Third Conditional

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the third conditional sentences.

Sophia ...My grandmother has always taught me to be more patient and understanding towards other people. She had been a nurse for many years and I think *if it hadn't been* for her, I *would never have studied* nursing - which I love...

Mike ...He had a great influence upon me, and made me want to become a history lecturer myself. I'm sure I *wouldn't have studied* a Master's degree in Roman History *if I hadn't met* Dr. Shotter...

Let's look at how the third conditional is constructed:

if + had(n't) + past participle + would(n't) have + past participle

If it hadn't been for her, I *would never have studied* nursing.

would(n't) have + past participle + if + had(n't) + past participle

I *wouldn't have studied* a Master's degree in Roman History *if I hadn't met* Dr. Shotter.

Both constructions are possible for each third conditional sentence and mean exactly the same thing.

The third conditional is used to talk about:

Things that did not happen in the past

If my teacher hadn't been so relaxed, I'm sure I *would have studied* harder. (My teacher was too relaxed, so I didn't study hard enough.)

If he *had won* the gold medal at the 2008 Olympics, he *would've been* even more famous.
(He didn't win the gold medal, so he didn't become more famous.)

If my grandmother *hadn't looked after* me as a child, a babysitter *would have*. (My grandmother did look after me, so a babysitter didn't.)

Things that might not have happened – this explains why the opposite things happened

If Bill Gates *hadn't been* so ambitious, he *wouldn't have been* so successful. (Bill Gates was very ambitious, and this is why he has been so successful.)

If my niece *hadn't been* so lazy at school, she *wouldn't have failed* all her exams. (My niece was lazy, and this is why she failed all her exams.)

Pandas probably *wouldn't have survived* if they *hadn't been* officially protected. (Pandas did survive because they were officially protected.)



Exercise 21.8: Matching

Match the sentence halves on the left with those on the right.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. I would've studied law... | A. ...wolves would've survived for longer in Europe. |
| 2. If we hadn't gone to the same school,... | B. ...I probably wouldn't have met my best friend. |
| 3. I would never have learned to cook... | C. ...if she had had more money. |
| 4. If people hadn't hunted them,... | D. ...I wouldn't have met my boyfriend. |
| 5. My mother would've retired earlier... | E. ...if I had done what my father told me to do. |
| 6. If I hadn't travelled abroad,... | F. ...if my mother hadn't shown me. |

Language step 2 The Present Perfect for Talking about Changes and Achievements

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses the present perfect tense.

Sophia ...My grandmother *has always taught* me to be more patient and understanding towards other people...

When giving a monologue about a person, it's a good idea to talk about the changes or achievements that person has made. For this, you need to use the present perfect.

Remember the structure of the present perfect is: **have/has + past participle**

My grandfather *has had* a great influence on my life.

She *has become* one of the most famous actresses in the world.

My nephew *has helped* me to see that family is the most important thing.

Exercise 21.9: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate verb forms from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. Jackie Chan _____ over 70 movies in his career.
A. has made B. have made C. has been made
2. My parents _____ me to believe in myself to do the best that I can.
A. has always told B. have always told C. have always been told
3. Gordon Ramsey, who is a celebrity chef, _____ for being really rude to his staff and customers.
A. has become famous B. has became famous C. has been famous
4. My uncle _____ always _____ there to support and comfort me when I couldn't or didn't want to talk to my parents.
A. has; was B. have; was C. has; been
5. My grandmother _____ many experiences in her life; because of her intelligence she has been able to become very wise.
A. has had B. has have C. had has
6. Although my cousin _____ a lot of things that made my family angry and disappointed with her, I still respect her for making her own decisions.
A. has did B. has done C. had done

Language step 3 Phrases of Achievements

When talking about people that are important to you, or who you admire, you can use phrases of achievements to make you sound more like a native speaker.

Look at the following phrases of achievements:

Working hard

through sheer hard work
to struggle for/ to do something
to strive for something
to fight for something
to have the determination to do something
to stand up for something/ somebody
to show perseverance

Examples:

She *struggled to* get where she is now – she deserves to be so famous!
 He *fought for* everything he has achieved – I admire him greatly!

Success

to have the will to succeed
 to have a desire for success
 to climb the ladder of success
 to have a long and brilliant career
 to earn the respect of somebody
 to get a lucky break

Examples:

Slowly but surely, she *climbed the ladder of success* and finally reached the top position.
 He suffered many hardships but nevertheless *had a long and brilliant career*.

Talent

to have a gift for doing something
 to have an outstanding talent for doing something
 to develop his / her talent for doing something / as a(n)...

For example:

My brother-in-law has really *developed his talent as an actor*; in recent years he has often appeared in professional plays.

**Exercise 21.10: Gap Fill**

Write the phrases below in the correct spaces.

through sheer hard work	earn the respect	has a gift for
to fight for	have the will to succeed	

- The problem with Ben is that he doesn't _____ – he just gives up as soon as he meets a problem.
- I admire Dr. Atkinson, who was my Science professor, because she was from an extremely poor family and it was _____ that she became an expert in her field.
- My brother truly _____ cooking; everything he tries tastes fantastic!
- Most people are impressed with Nelson Mandela's achievements. He showed the determination _____ freedom, equality and human rights.
- In the future, I hope to find a well-paid job in an international company so that I can _____ of my parents.

The formula

For STAGE 4 of a person monologue, you must: Say why they are special and how you feel about them.

Language steps

1. Use expressions of admiration correctly.

I love her because...

I will always admire him because...

2. Use expressions of imitation accurately.

I want to be like him when I am a grandfather.

I hope I am as successful as he has been.

3. Use role model expressions correctly.

She has always been my hero.

He was a great role model for the younger generation.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
gran	noun	an informal abbreviation for grandmother	To avoid confusion, when I was young I had to call my maternal grandmother "Gran" and my paternal grandmother "Nan".
role model		somebody who people admire, look up to and try to copy in their behaviour, attitudes, etc.	Most hip-hop singers are not good role models for children because they try to make buying guns, shooting people and taking drugs look cool.
academic	noun	a person who teaches at university or undertakes scholarly research	I admire most academics because they have had to devote their lives to studying and research in order to become experts in their field.
one day		used to talk about an indefinite time in the future	It has been the dream of many different people that one day there will be no war, violence or poverty in the world.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
have a positive impact on something		to have a beneficial influence on something; to change something for the better	When my father lost his job, it actually had a positive impact on his marriage with my mother because they had to work together as a team to get through the tough time.
terrible	adjective	very bad; low-quality; unpleasant	David is a terrible worker because he's always late, never does his work on time and is a bit rude to his boss.
proud	adjective	feeling happy or satisfied about something you have done or because somebody you are connected to has done something good	Her parents are very proud of her achievements.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...Gran was a great role model for me when I was growing up, and now I'm an adult I still admire her. I hope that one day I'll have children and grandchildren too, and I hope that I'm as good a grandmother as mine was.

Mike ...Although I didn't become an academic myself, I feel that Dr. Shotter had a very positive impact on my development. For me, Dr. Shotter was the best teacher I've ever had.

Jean ...Also, the new neighbours who moved in were terrible, so my family really missed Win and her family. We all agree Win was a great neighbour and feel proud to have known her for so many years.

Language step 1 Expressions of Admiration

Let's take a look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use expressions of admiration.

Sophia ...Gran was a *great role model* for me when I was growing up, and now I'm an adult I still *admire* her...

Mike ...For me, Dr. Shotter was *the best teacher* I've ever had.

Jean ...We all agree Win was a great neighbour and *feel proud to have known* her for so many years.

When giving a monologue about a person, you should use expressions of admiration to say why the person is special, or why you admire them.

Here are some more expressions:

I *love* her because...

Everyone *respects* wise and peaceful leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi.

My niece really *appreciates* what my parents did for her.

I *look up to* her because...

I will always *admire* him for...

His colleagues all *think highly of* my stepbrother and his work.

I *feel proud of* my mother's achievements.

She is *special to me* because...

I truly *hold in high regard* people such as President Obama who...

Many movie enthusiasts *consider him to be the best actor of his generation*.

Exercise 21.11: Gap Fill

Write the words and expressions below in the correct spaces.

in high regard	special to me	look up to
greatly admire	felt proud	hold

1. My brother and I always _____ our grandfather because he fought during the war and suffered a lot.
2. When I graduated from university with top grades, I felt so happy because I knew both my parents _____ of me.
3. Because of his practical measures and bravery, I will always _____ the war hero.
4. Due to the dedication and determination they need to have, I _____ sports stars such as David Beckham.
5. My kindergarten teacher was really _____ because she was my first teacher and was so kind and patient.

Language step 2 Expressions of Imitation

Let's see how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses expressions of imitation.

Sophia ...Gran was a great role model for me when I was growing up, and now I'm an adult I still admire her. *I hope that one day I'll have children and grandchildren too, and I hope that I'm as good a grandmother as mine was.*

When we talk about people who are special or important to us, we often express the feeling that we want to be the same as them in some way.

Let's look at how to say I hope...:

I hope I am as + adjective + as + person

I hope I will be as + adjective + as + person

Examples:

I hope I am as successful as Bill Gates.

I hope I will be as successful as Bill Gates.

I hope I am as happy as my next-door neighbour when I am old.

I hope I will be as kind a teacher as Mrs. Capp.

Here are some more expressions of imitation:

I would love to be like my mother.

I would like to be as well respected as my grandfather.

I want to be like my neighbour Doris when I'm older.

Exercise 21.12: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate expressions from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- I would _____ Julia Roberts when I am older; she's beautiful, famous, and seems very popular.
A. like to be as B. like to be like C. love to be like
- My stepfather is always calm and happy. Now he's stopped working, he has a really relaxed life just fishing, painting and going on trips. I hope my life is _____ when I retire.
A. as enjoyable as his is B. as enjoyable as C. enjoyable
- My babysitter, Margaret, usually had lots and lots of children in her house, so it was really lively and great fun. When I buy a house and have children, I want my house _____ Margaret's.
A. to like B. to be like C. to be as
- My mother is a great cook. Everything she cooks for us is so delicious, the dishes even look mouth-watering too! I hope _____ well as her.
A. I will be able to cook as B. I am cook as C. I will be cook as

5. A friend of mine is really confident and outgoing; she's always really good at meeting new people, so she's popular at parties and things like that and she's successful at work too. I'm quite shy, but I'm trying to believe in myself more – I hope that one day I _____ she is.
A. will be as confident as B. am confident as C. as confident as

Language step 3 Role Model Expressions

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses the role model expressions.

Sophia ...Gran was a *great role model* for me when I was growing up...

Let's look at some more expressions for describing role models:

mentor

Ringo was his *mentor* for the first year he lived away from home.

fine example

Rita sets a *fine example* for the rest of the team – she works so well.

hero

Paul McCartney was my *hero* for many years. I really admire him.

pop icon

John Lennon became a big *pop icon*. He was all over the media.

idol

George Harrison, who became quite religious for a while, was my *idol* when I was a child – I really looked up to him.

sex symbol

Yoko Ono was a *sex symbol* to some young, alternative people in the 1970s – every young fan wanted to look like her.

charismatic leader

Charles Manson, who was imprisoned for the murder of Sharon Tate, was a crazy *charismatic leader* during the 1960s.

visionary

Some say that the Beatles were not only a talented rock band, but that they were *visionaries* for their generation.

Exercise 21.13: Matching

Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. fine example | A. somebody who is widely recognised as being beautiful and sexy |
| 2. idol | B. somebody who is extremely admired/respected |
| 3. hero | C. somebody who knows how to move the hearts and minds of the people, and can make enormous changes to the world with this power |
| 4. mentor | D. somebody who gives another person help or advice for a long time, like a teacher |
| 5. pop icon | E. somebody who has the ability to think in a unique and different manner and who can come up with new ideas to promote positive change |
| 6. visionary | F. somebody whose behaviour or achievements are a very good thing for others to copy or follow |
| 7. charismatic leader | G. somebody who is extremely admired/respected for their achievement(s) |
| 8. sex symbol | H. somebody who becomes extremely famous and respected for singing or performing music |

Answer order

Remind yourself of the answer order you should use when giving a monologue about a person.

Stage 1: Say who they are and how you know them.

Stage 2: Say what they are like and what they do.

Stage 3: Say what they have achieved and how they have influenced you.

Stage 4: Say why they are special and how you feel about them.

Exercise 21.14: Ordering

Using the answer order above, put the following extracts from a model answer into the correct order.

- It's probably because of these skills that he has become such a successful actor...
- As you probably know, he's an incredibly famous Hollywood actor...
- Brad Pitt has great acting skills – his body language and facial expressions are so believable that you immediately accept his new character whatever role he plays...

- D. I'd like to talk about Brad Pitt, whom I'd love to meet.
- E. I hope that I'll really be able to meet him one day!
- F. Interviewer: Tell me about a famous person you'd like to meet.
- G. I've really enjoyed watching the movies Brad Pitt has made so far, and I'm sure I'll continue to cry, laugh and be amazed because of his acting in future films...

Formula 22

Place Monologue

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for giving a monologue about a place. Typical IELTS Part Two questions about a place include:

- Talk about a flat or house you would like to own one day.
- Talk about your ideal home.
- Talk about a shopping centre or mall you have visited.
- Talk about a place where people can do sports.
- Talk about a place you know where people go to listen to music.
- Talk about a friend or family member's house you know and like.
- Talk about a museum you have visited.
- Talk about a historic place in your country.
- Talk about a lake or river you know about or have seen.

Answer order

To give a good monologue about a place, you should use the following native speaker answer order.

- Stage 1: Say what it is and where it is.
- Stage 2: Say what it looks like.
- Stage 3: Say what its purpose is.
- Stage 4: Say why it is special and how you feel about it.

Model answer

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Jean.

Interviewer	Talk to me about a house or flat you'd like to own one day.
Stage 1	Say what it is and where it is.
Jean	Maybe it's a bit unrealistic, but I would love to own a luxury flat. It's located in District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City, right in the centre of downtown, close to all the best restaurants and shops.
Stage 2	Say what it looks like.

Jean The flat would be on a high floor – perhaps the top floor – of a brand-new high-rise apartment block with the most modern architectural style. The apartment would have at least two huge bedrooms, one lounge, a massive kitchen and one or two bathrooms – it'd be great if one of the bathrooms was en suite! The style would be modern, with varnished wooden floorboards, leather sofas and colourful rugs on the floor. The flat would be very airy and light, with lots of windows that have great views over the surrounding streets and buildings.

Stage 3 Say what its purpose is.

Jean A flat like this would be perfect for my husband and I to live in and then bring up our child. A new, gleaming kitchen would be great for preparing delicious dishes for our friends when they come to dinner, and the guests could be entertained in the comfortable and relaxing sitting room.

Stage 4 Say why it is special and how you feel about it.

Jean I know that this kind of flat will be difficult to buy, especially as my family is not very rich. However, if I am very successful in my career and make loads of money one day, this is the kind of flat I'll buy. I think almost everybody would be happy to live in a flat like this – I just hope that one day I can!

The formula

For STAGE 1 of a place monologue, you must: Say what it is and where it is.

Language steps

1. Use words for types of places correctly.

The *San Siro* is one of the best *stadiums* in the world.

The *mosque* is an extremely interesting *religious building* because...

2. Use prepositions of location correctly.

It's *above* a Chinese restaurant.

There are many trees *along* the river bank.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on page 180 thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
historic site		a place where something important in history happened, or where an old building is	The Great Wall is one of the world's most famous historic sites.
suburb	noun	an area at the edge of a city or large town where most people of that city or town live	A good thing about living in the suburbs is that the houses are much cheaper than in the centre of town, though commuting to work can be a pain.
be located in/near/on/at		used to describe where something is	My house is located at the end of the street, whereas hers is located in the middle.
near (to)	preposition	close; not far away (Note: a common mistake by students of English is to say: "...near from..." This is incorrect.)	When I go on trips, I usually buy my drinks at the shops near the station.
unrealistic	adjective	not realistic, not likely to be true or not likely to happen	It's unrealistic to expect the world to be peaceful and harmonious in the next few years.
luxury	noun	something which gives comfort, usually very expensive and/or beautiful	Every now and again my mother likes to buy herself luxuries like expensive jewellery and clothes.
downtown	noun	the centre or main business area of a town or city	I would love to live in the heart of downtown, but I can't afford the rent there.
high-rise/ high rise	adjective/ noun	(of) a tall building with many floors/storeys	Most modern cities have lots and lots of high-rise buildings for business or accommodation.
block of flats/ apartment building		a building containing many apartments (Note: British English "block of flats" has the same meaning as American English "apartment building".)	The last block of flats where I lived was really dirty and noisy – my neighbours were so selfish.
flat/apartment	noun	a place for people to live that consists of a set of rooms that are part of a large building (Note: British English "flat" has the same meaning as American English "apartment".)	I can't wait to have my own flat one day; I'm sick of living with my parents.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

- Interviewer: Talk about a historic site you have visited.
- Sophia: I want to talk about the Summer Palace. The Summer Palace is a very famous historic site in the northwest of Beijing, in the suburbs...
- Interviewer: Tell me about a place where people go to listen to music.
- Mike: I would like to talk about a bar called D22. D22 is a bar located in Ho Chi Minh City, quite near to Marie Curie High School...
- Interviewer: Talk to me about a house or flat you'd like to own one day.
- Jean: Maybe it's a bit unrealistic, but I would love to own a luxury flat. It's located in District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City, right in the centre of downtown, close to all the best restaurants and shops...

Language step 1 Words for Types of Places

Let's take a look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, describe different types of places.

- Sophia: I want to talk about the Summer Palace. The Summer Palace is *a very famous historic site* in the northwest of Beijing, in the suburbs...
- Mike: I would like to talk about *a bar* called D22...
- Jean: Maybe it's a bit unrealistic, but I would love to own *a luxury flat*...

The first thing you need to do when giving a monologue about a place is to say what kind of place it is.

Here are some more really useful words for different types of places:

Religious	Tourism	Shopping	Accommodation
mosque	tourist attraction	shopping mall	house
temple	historic site	shopping centre	flat/apartment
church	historic building	plaza	mansion
cathedral	palace	market	campsite
religious building	museum	discount store	youth hostel


Natural	Leisure	Entertainment
scenic spot	gym	bar
park	leisure centre	nightclub
garden	sports ground	theatre
botanical garden	stadium	cinema
nature reserve	football pitch	concert hall
countryside	sports field	music hall

Examples:

Let me tell you about a *theatre* I once saw when I was travelling...

I would like to talk about the Lavender Fields in Norfolk, which is a very popular *tourist attraction*.

I'm going to talk about a lovely little *park* in the *countryside* outside London.

 **Exercise 22.1: Matching**

Match the types of places on the left with the activities people do there on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. temple | A. where people go shopping and try to haggle to get a good price |
| 2. market | B. where people can get fit and play sports |
| 3. museum | C. where people can go to listen to music and dance |
| 4. nature reserve | D. where people can enjoy trees, mountains and rivers |
| 5. leisure centre | E. where people go to pray/worship gods |
| 6. mansion | F. where people can see very old and interesting objects |
| 7. nightclub | G. a very large house where rich people live |

Language step 2 Prepositions of Location

Let's take a look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use prepositions of location.

Sophia I want to talk about the Summer Palace. The Summer Palace is a very famous historic site *in the northwest* of Beijing, *in* the suburbs...

Mike I would like to talk about a bar called D22. D22 is a bar located *in* Ho Chi Minh City, quite *near to* Marie Curie High School...

Jean Maybe it's a bit unrealistic, but I would love to own a luxury flat. It's located *in* District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City, *right in the centre of* downtown, *close to* all the best restaurants and shops...

Notice that Sophia, Mike and Jean all say where their place is located immediately after they have said what the place is – this helps to introduce the place you are describing.

Remind yourself of these essential prepositions of location:

in + an enclosed or larger place

...*in* Ho Chi Minh City...
...*in* the countryside...
...*in* the middle of nowhere...

at + a certain place or location

...*at* the top of the mountain...
...*at* the end of the street...

on + a surface or road

...*on* the fifth floor...
...*on* a main road...
...*on* the outskirts of the city...

over / above + a certain place or location

...*above* a Japanese restaurant...
Every day the Vietnamese flag flies *over* Ba Dinh Square.

next to / beside / by + a certain place or location

...*by* the seaside...
...*next to* the Bell Tower...
...*beside* Hoan Kiem Lake...

opposite / across from + a certain place or location

I work *opposite* my favourite restaurant.
Ben Thanh Market is just *across from* Quach Thi Trang Square.

between + two places or locations

Hue, which is *between* Saigon and Ha Noi,...
My house is *between* the mountains and the sea.

in front of + a certain place or location

The Bund in Shanghai is just *in front of* the main historic buildings.
The Virgin Mary Statue stands *in front of* Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica.

outside of (a town / city)

Ben Duoc Temple is just *outside of* Ho Chi Minh City.
There's a fascinating market *outside of* the city centre.

near (to)

Nghe An, which is very *near to* Laos,...
New York City is *near* the sea.

far from

It would be *far from* the city centre.

The UK is extremely *far from* Vietnam.

 **Exercise 22.2: Multiple Choice**

Choose the appropriate prepositions of location from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. My gym is located _____ my office. When I work, I can see all the people exercising and weight lifting; it makes me feel really guilty if I haven't gone for a while.
A. outside of B. opposite C. near
2. Ben Hai River is _____ northern and southern Vietnam.
A. between B. next to C. in
3. The Great Wall is _____ where most Chinese people live, so many don't have the chance to visit this fantastic historic site.
A. outside of B. far from C. beside
4. Many different bands and musicians have played _____ that concert hall.
A. of B. on C. at
5. The Bell Tower is in an awkward position to visit because it's right _____ a busy road junction.
A. next to B. on C. opposite
6. I like to go to Vincom Centre because it's _____ my school; I can go shopping there on my way home from class.
A. on B. between C. near
7. The most amazing house I've ever seen was _____ a forest; it was made of wood and was built high in the trees.
A. in B. on C. at
8. There is a famous tourist site just _____ the city centre.
A. between B. in front of C. outside of
9. I would love to own a small house _____ the coast so I could fall asleep to the sound of the sea.
A. in B. at C. on

The formula

For STAGE 2 of a place monologue, you must: Say what it looks like.

Language steps

1. Use expressions of size and shape accurately.

Ba Dinh Square is a *vast* open space in Ha Noi.

Bai Dinh is the *largest* pagoda in Vietnam.

2. Use expressions of character and appearance correctly.

St. Paul's Cathedral in London is a great example of *Gothic* architecture.

Vincom Centre is an *enormous, shiny* shopping mall.

3. Use linking phrases correctly.

In addition to having hosted the Olympic swimming contests, the Water Cube is *also* a fascinating piece of architecture.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
open area		a space that is not enclosed	I'm claustrophobic, which means that I'm scared of small spaces. I always have to be in large rooms or preferably open areas like fields and parks.
represent	verb	to be an example of something; to demonstrate what something is like	The Bird's Nest Stadium represents the way China is changing and becoming more international.
architecture	noun	the style and/or appearance of a building	I'm not that keen on modern architecture; I think the Bird's Nest and the new CCTV building in Beijing are really ugly.
stage	noun	a raised platform where actors or musicians perform	I'm singing with a band this weekend and I'm so excited – I can't wait to get on stage!
dingy	adjective	dark, probably dirty (to describe buildings and rooms)	I found this museum fascinating, although it was a bit hard to see all of the exhibits because the building is so dingy.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
permanent/ permanently	adjective/ adverb	lasting forever or for a very long time	People should undertake the development of cities much more cautiously – any old buildings that are destroyed cannot be rebuilt; such changes are permanent.
en suite	adjective	(of a bathroom) joined onto a bedroom	One sign of an expensive hotel is when the rooms all have en suite bathrooms.
varnished	adjective	describing wood that has been painted with a special liquid to protect it and make it shiny	Although varnished furniture is safe to use and more convenient because your furniture doesn't get dirty, I still don't think it looks as nice as simple, natural wood.
airy	adjective	describing a room with lots of light and space	Studies have shown that employees work better in airy offices with lots of natural light rather than small, dark places.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...For me, the Summer Palace is a beautiful, open area which represents the best of Chinese culture and history. Most of the Summer Palace is actually Kunming Lake, a large open area of water. The lake is surrounded by a large number of hills on which are various examples of traditional Chinese architecture...

Mike ...I would like to talk about a bar called D22...It's really a small place, although it's quite long when you get inside. The bar runs along one side, and at the end of the bar is the stage, where the bands play. To be honest, D22 is not an attractive place: not only does it always seem dark and dingy – no matter how many lights are on – but there is also a permanent smell of cigarette smoke in the air...

Jean ...The flat would be on a high floor – perhaps the top floor – of a brand-new high-rise apartment block with the most modern architectural style. The apartment would have at least two huge bedrooms, one lounge, a massive kitchen and one or two bathrooms – it'd be great if one of the bathrooms was en suite! The style would be modern, with varnished wooden floorboards, leather sofas and colourful rugs on the floor. The flat would be very airy and light, with lots of windows that have great views over the surrounding streets and buildings...

Language step 1 Expressions of Size and Shape

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use expressions of size and shape.

Sophia ...Most of the Summer Palace is actually Kunming Lake, a *large* open area of water. The lake is surrounded by a large number of hills on which are various examples of traditional Chinese architecture...

Mike ...I would like to talk about a bar called D22...It's really a *small* place, although it's *quite long* when you get inside...

Jean ...The apartment would have at least two *huge* bedrooms, one lounge, a *massive* kitchen and one or two bathrooms – it'd be great if one of the bathrooms was en suite!...

To describe the place of your monologue well, you should say something about its size. Have a look at the following really useful size and shape words:

Big	Small	Width	Height	Length
huge/large	little	narrow	towering	long
massive	tiny	wide	high	short
vast	minute	broad	fall	winding
enormous	minuscule	thin	short	endless
gigantic	cramped	thick	low	far-reaching
immense			squat	

However, you should be a little careful about how native speakers use these words to describe different things. It's important to remember these adjective + noun collocations:

a *vast* mountain range/landscape/lake/desert
 a *massive* / *gigantic* / *huge* / *enormous* / *immense* building/ house/ shopping complex/ room
 a *cramped* room/ house/ dormitory
 a *broad* avenue/ street
 a *squat* house/building
 a *tall* / *high* building/ mountain
 a *winding* path/ country road/ mountain pass
 a *tiny* / *minuscule* / *incredibly small* object/ doorway/window

You can also use the following phrases to talk about the dimensions of the place:

(number) metres / kilometres by (number) metres / kilometres

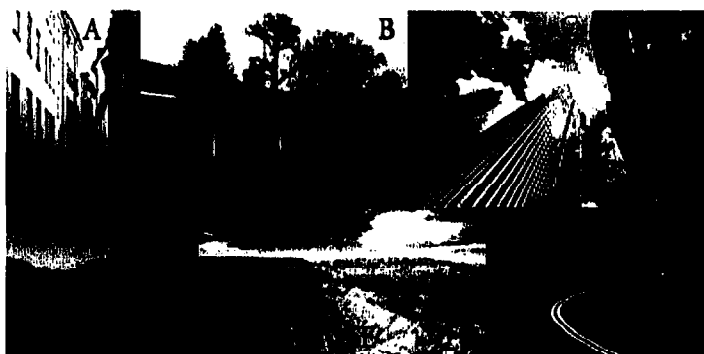
Ba Dinh Square is 320 metres by 100 metres.

(number) metres / kilometres square

The size of Ba Be Lake in Bac Kan is about 6.5 kilometres square.

Exercise 22.3: Matching

Match the pictures with the adjectives that describe them best.



1. vast
2. towering
3. narrow
4. squat
5. broad
6. winding

Language step 2 Expressions of Character and Appearance

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, describe an architectural construction.

Sophia ...For me, the Summer Palace is a *beautiful, open area* which represents the best of Chinese culture and history. Most of the Summer Palace is actually Kunming Lake, a large *open area of water*. The lake is surrounded by a large number of hills on which are various examples of *traditional Chinese architecture*...

Mike ...To be honest, D22 is not an *attractive* place: not only does it always seem *dark and dingy* – no matter how many lights are on – but there is also a permanent smell of cigarette smoke in the air...

Jean ...The flat would be on a high floor – perhaps the top floor – of a *brand-new high-rise* apartment block with the *most modern architectural style*...The style would be *modern*, with *varnished wooden floorboards, leather sofas and colourful rugs* on the floor. The flat would be very *airy and light*, with lots of windows...

As you can see, all of these model answers include words and expressions to accurately describe the appearance and character of a place. You should use them in your monologue to sound much more like a native.

Here are some more great native speaker words:

Light	Dark	Ugly	Beautiful	Impressive
airy	dingy	horrible	appealing	awe-inspiring
bright	gloomy	disgusting	attractive	majestic
well-lit	dim	awful	lovely	thrilling
clear	murky	unappealing	comfortable	significant

Here are a few common adjective + noun collocations:

- a(n) *airy/well-lit/light/dingy/horrible* room/house/flat/dormitory
- a *dark/gloomy/dank* cave/woodland
- a *murky* river/lake/pool/stream
- an *awe-inspiring* work of art/scene/panorama/building
- a *majestic* building/statue
- a *thrilling* scene
- a *significant* area of town/spot/historic site/symbol of our city

Untidy	Age	Untidy
crumbling	old	expensive
tatty	ancient	upmarket
run-down	new	posh
dusty	modern	luxurious
shabby	brand-new	sumptuous
messy	antiquated	opulent

Here are a few common adjective + noun collocations:

- a *crumbling old* building/wall
- a *tatty* curtain/clothes/fabric/wooden structure
- a *run-down/shabby old* building
- a *dusty* room/building/yard
- a(n) *luxurious/opulent/sumptuous/upmarket/expensive* palace/mansion/five-star hotel/restaurant

If the place you are giving a monologue about is a building, you can also describe its appearance by saying what material the building is made of.

be made of + material

- The Great Wall is *made of thousands and thousands of bricks*.
- The 'Gherkin' building in London is *made completely of glass*.

material + building

- The Great Wall is an enormous *brick wall*.
The Pantheon in Rome is actually a *concrete temple*.

be covered in / with + objects / designs

- A city in southern China is completely covered in *graffiti*.
The roofs of the Forbidden City are covered with *yellow tiles*.

be decorated with + objects / designs

- The mosque is decorated with *dragons and flowers*.
Lots of ancient tombs in Egypt are decorated with *paintings* of ancient Egyptian life.

be painted + colour

- My dream house would be *Painted pink*.
The building is painted *white*, just like the White House in Washington.



Exercise 22.4: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate words from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- At night, lots of people like to go to Bach Dang Wharf in Ho Chi Minh City to see all the boats that are _____ in bright lights.
A. decorated B. covered C. made of
- The Diamond Bay in Nha Trang has become a tourist site because of its architecture.
A. ancient B. modern C. sumptuous
- One place where lots of people go to see a film is the Lotte Cinema in Ho Chi Minh City. It's an extremely _____ cinema; all the furniture and decorations are of the highest quality.
A. lovely B. thrilling C. sophisticated
- The Cairo Museum, despite having some of the most important historical artefacts in the world, is an extremely _____ place. It looks like no one has ever cleaned it. Then again, that actually helps make the museum more _____ because you can easily imagine the European explorers of the 18th century discovering and researching the objects there.
A. dirty; significant B. dusty; atmospheric C. dark; majestic
- My friend's house is so warm and welcoming because it _____ bright colours like orange and yellow in every room. It also helps that the house has really big windows, so it's extremely _____ - not _____ at all!
A. is painted; well-lit; gloomy B. was painted; bright; dark C. painted; airy; dingy

6. The gym I usually go to in my hometown is really quite . The showers are dirty, the toilets are awfully filthy, and the exercise machines always have lots of sweat all over them.
A. ugly B. messy C. disgusting
7. My hometown is really an place; it has tons of history, beautiful gardens and romantic rivers. The gardens are especially famous, and thousands of tourists admire them every year. They are rock pools, pavilions and carefully planted flowers.
A. appealing; decorated with B. attractive; covered with C. awe-inspiring; covered in

Language step 3 Linking Phrases

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Mike uses linking phrases.

Mike ...To be honest, D22 is not an attractive place: *not only* does it always seem dark and dingy – no matter how many lights are on – *but* there is *also* a permanent smell of cigarette smoke in the air...

When talking about a place, you should say what things can be found there, or talk about the qualities the place has. To do this you should use linking phrases such as the following:

as well as...also... / as well as + verb-ing...also...

As well as being a place of great natural beauty, it is *also* a place of great historical significance.

besides...also... / besides + verb-ing...also...

Besides being one of the most popular music venues in the city, the bar *also* has great food.

in addition to...also... / in addition to + verb-ing...also...

In addition to having hosted the Olympic swimming contests, the Water Cube is *also* a fascinating piece of architecture.

along with...also...


Along with great shops and designer outlets, Parkson Paragon *also* has a number of handy restaurants.

not only...but also...

Tuyen Lam Lake in Da Lat is *not only* beautiful and tranquil, *but it's also* a great place to do activities such as fishing and hiking.

both...and...

This gym is *both* conveniently located *and* reasonably priced.

 **Exercise 22.5: Gap Fill**

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

besides	and	in addition to	both
as well as	not only	but also	along with

1. My secondary school has a large sports centre that the local community can use holding evening classes for adults.
2. The kind of flat I dream of owning in the future is one which is _____ modern _____ comfortable.
3. _____ being one of the longest rivers in Vietnam, Da River is also a major source of electricity for the country.
4. _____ being a religious building, the Huong Pagoda in Ha Noi is now also a major tourist site.
5. _____ having many theatrical performances, Ho Chi Minh Municipal Theatre also puts on many musical productions, both of which are extremely popular.
6. The British Museum is truly superb; _____ does it have one of the biggest collections of artefacts in the world, _____ it's free!

The formula

For STAGE 3 of a place monologue, you must: Say what its purpose is.

Language steps

1. Use the passive voice to express purpose/significance of a place accurately.
Ba Den Mountain *was revered* by the ancestors as a sacred mountain.
2. Use expressions to talk about past habits correctly.
I used to spend many hours painting by the river.
If I felt tired, I *would go* to the bar to relax.
3. Use popularity and fame expressions to say why a place is popular or famous.
My town *is famous for* the peony flowers that bloom in spring.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
the public		all ordinary people, as individuals – not the government or companies and other organisations	When completed, the museum will be open to the public next year.
take something in		to enjoy something by watching; to absorb the image you see, suggesting that you want to remember the sight afterwards	After I spent a lot of money travelling to Sapa and two days climbing Fansipan Mountain, of course I wanted to sit down and spend some time taking in the surrounding landscape.
hire	verb	to rent; to pay to use something for a relatively short period	Truc Bach Lake in Ha Noi has lots of pedal boats which the public can hire for a few hours.
mess around/about		to act in a carefree, maybe stupid way	Nowadays the shopping mall near my house has arranged people to stop children messing around there – not like when I was a child, when we would always play lots of games there.
pretty	adverb	quite; very	The bands that play at the bar in the centre of town are pretty good, but I don't think they'll ever become famous.
used to		to say that actions were regularly done in the past or that something was different in the past	I used to go to that gym to play sports every week, but then they raised their prices and it was too expensive to go.
hang out (with)		to spend time (with somebody) in a certain place	On weekends I generally hang out at the shopping mall with my friends.
bring up		to raise a child; to care for a child from childhood to adulthood	My friend Rachel's house would be a great place to bring up children; there's lots of space, good-sized bedrooms, and it's near a good school.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...Originally, the palace was built by the emperor as his private palace and used to be closed to the public. However, now it is open for everybody to enjoy and serves as both a park and a tourist site. I visited the historic halls and grounds of the palace when I was young, but now when I go I like to just walk around the lake and take in the views. Sometimes my friends and I will hire a boat and mess around on the water, which is always great fun!...

Mike ...Despite D22 being a bar, it's more of a music venue than a place to go for a drink. In fact, it's pretty famous in Ho Chi Minh City because so many bands play there every week, and on Friday and Saturday nights the atmosphere is fantastic! When I was a student, I would go there all the time and hang out with my friends – it was great!...

Jean ...A flat like this would be perfect for my husband and I to live in and then bring up our child. A new, gleaming kitchen would be great for preparing delicious dishes for our friends when they come to dinner, and the guests could be entertained in the comfortable and relaxing sitting room...

Language step 1 The Passive Voice to Express Purpose/Significance of a Place

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use the passive voice in their monologues.

Sophia ...Originally, the palace *was built* by the emperor as his private palace and used to be closed to the public...

Jean ...A flat like this would be perfect for my husband and I to live in and then bring up our child. A new, gleaming kitchen would be great for preparing delicious dishes for our friends when they come to dinner, and the guests could *be entertained* in the comfortable and relaxing sitting room...

Notice that both Sophia and Jean use the passive to talk about the purpose or significance of the place they are describing.

This is a very useful and native speaker way to talk about a place, so let's remind ourselves of the passive structure: **be + past participle (+ by + agent)**

The Pyramids of Egypt *were constructed* by unpaid workers.

Classical music *is performed* there every week.

This famous site *is respected* and *admired* by locals and tourists alike.

Exercise 22.6: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate verb forms from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. Thousands and thousands of fascinating historical relics _____ in the National Museum.
A. is kept B. are kept C. are keep

2. The Great Wall _____ by Chinese emperors to protect the empire.
A. was build B. was builded C. was built

3. The house I would really love to own _____ during the reign of Queen Elizabeth – about 400 years ago!
A. was constructed B. was be constructed C. was be built

4. Unfortunately, the lake near my hometown _____ for many years by the local people, so now it's dangerous to swim in the water.
A. is polluted B. was polluted C. has being polluted

5. The house I lived in as a child _____ a few years ago, which obviously made me feel very sad.
A. has been demolished B. is demolished C. was demolished

Language step 2 Expressions to Talk about Past Habits

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use certain expressions to talk about past habits.

Sophia ...Originally, the palace was built by the emperor as his private palace and *used to* be closed to the public. However, now it is open for everybody to enjoy and serves as both a park and a tourist site. I *visited* the historic halls and grounds of the palace *when* I *was* young, but now when I go I like to just walk around the lake and take in the views.

Mike ...*When* I *was* a student, I *would* go there all the time and *hang out* with my friends – it was great!

The place that you give a monologue about will often be somewhere you have a personal history with, or somewhere you have been many times. To describe this, the past simple, “used to” and other habit phrases are extremely useful.

the past simple

I *visited* the river at weekends and *went* swimming.

My girlfriend and I *exercised* at the gym.

Note: You can use adverbs of frequency with the past simple.
 I *always visited* the river at weekends and *went* swimming.
 My girlfriend and I *regularly exercised* at the gym.

used to

I *used to* spend many hours painting by the river.
 My family *used to* spend every summer camping at Giang Dien Waterfall.

habit phrases

If I *felt stressed*, I *would go* to the bar to relax.
 When I *needed* some more designer clothes, my mother *would go* to the shopping mall near my home.

Exercise 22.7: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

sometimes	went	had	whenever
took	would	often	always
was	lived	used to	

- I really don't like the Cutty Sark Museum in London; I've been there too many times. Every year at secondary school we _____ go there.
- My friend's house was beautiful. It was by the seaside, was absolutely enormous and loads of musical instruments. _____ I could, I _____ go and stay there with my friend.
- A few years ago I played in a band. We _____ to various bars and clubs around the city. But my favourite bar was The Playhouse because it _____ so large and lively.
- When I _____ in Ho Chi Minh City, I _____ went to Saigon Square Shopping Centre, but it _____ quite a while to get there and I found shopping pretty boring to be honest.

Language step 3 Popularity and Fame Expressions

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Mike and Jean, use the popularity and fame expressions.

Mike ...Despite D22 being a bar, it's more of a music venue than a place to go for a drink. In fact, it's *pretty famous* in Ho Chi Minh City *because* so many bands play there every week, and on Friday and Saturday nights the atmosphere is fantastic!...

Jean ...A new, gleaming kitchen would *be great for* preparing delicious dishes for our friends when they come to dinner and the guests could be entertained in the comfortable and relaxing sitting room...

When giving your monologue, popularity and fame expressions will help you explain why the place you are describing is famous or popular. Let's look at some more great ways of saying this:

be famous for + noun / verb-ing

be famous because + clause

be renowned for + noun / verb-ing

be noted for + noun / verb-ing

be popular with + types of people

be great for / excellent for / particularly good for + noun / verb-ing

Examples:

Hue *is famous for* the local cuisine.

Grand Canyon *is famous because* it is so beautiful.

The Victory Hotel *is renowned for* the live music it has on the weekend.

The Cu Chi Tunnels *is noted for* its size and historical importance.

The new shopping mall *is only really popular with* wealthy people because the prices are so high.

The new sports centre *is great for* meeting like-minded sports enthusiasts.

Exercise 22.8: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate expressions from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- Bac Ninh _____ Dong Ho paintings that you can buy there.
A. is famous because B. is renowned for C. is popular
- Phu Quoc _____ its beautiful, clear blue water.
A. is famous because B. is famous for having C. is noted for
- Cat Tien National Park is _____ people who don't live in Dong Nai; most locals have never been there.
A. popular with B. renowned for C. noted for being
- Cao Bang is _____ it was the Communist Party base during the war.
A. famous for B. famous because C. renowned for being
- Thai Nguyen _____ producing tea which is drunk all over Vietnam.
A. is famous because B. is noted because C. is famous for

The formula

For STAGE 4 of a place monologue, you must: Say why it is special and how you feel about it.

Language steps	
1. Use the zero and first conditionals to talk about habits and preferences accurately.	<i>If I want to have a good time, I just need to go to Acoustic on the weekend. I've never been there myself, but if I have the chance, I will certainly take a trip to Malaysia.</i>
2. Use expressions for how you feel correctly.	<i>It's important to me because... I always like(d) to...there.</i>
3. Use adjectives to describe the qualities of a place accurately.	<i>The waterfall is a relaxing yet energising place of natural beauty.</i>

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
tranquil	adjective	describing a place that is peaceful and quiet, with nothing to worry about or to disturb you	I get really stressed working in a big city, always rushing around getting stuck in traffic. I'd love to move to a small village where it's really tranquil.
unwind	verb	to relax after doing an activity that has made you tense or worried	After work I like to go to the gym and have a great workout followed by a long hot shower. It really helps me unwind.
all to oneself		for one's use only	I especially love my flat when my parents have gone on a trip – that way I get to have the apartment all to myself.
stressful	adjective	having a lot of stress, causing a lot of worry and anxiety	Visiting the Taj Mahal in India was incredibly stressful for me – there were so many tourists and people trying to sell me things, it was really hot and I was very tired.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
haven	noun	a safe and peaceful place, often used to talk about a place where one can escape the noise and stress of one's ordinary environment	I love my house because it's the only place where I can relax and get away from the noise and stress of the city – it's definitely a haven for me.
bring back memories		to think of something that happened before because of something that happens now	Every time I see my teddy bear, it brings back lots of memories of when I was a child.
nostalgic	adjective	feeling happy – or maybe slightly sad – when thinking of things that happened in the past	I met my friends from university last week and had dinner with them. It was great talking about old times and the funny things that happened; I felt nostalgic about my university life the rest of the day.
mosh	verb	to dance in a very energetic and possibly violent way	Some people think it's cool to mosh, but I just can't be bothered – I don't understand why people think it's so much fun.
loads	noun	a large number or amount of somebody or something	I hate going shopping on Saturday – there're always loads of people and it feels so cramped.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ... The Summer Palace is really important to me because it is so tranquil. If I need a place to relax and unwind, I immediately think of the Summer Palace. Although there are usually lots of tourists walking around, it's still quite easy to find a quiet place all to myself. My work is quite stressful and so it's good to escape the city for a while – the Summer Palace is my haven!

Mike ... I really value D22 because whenever I go there, it brings back loads of memories from when I was at university, having fun with my friends. It makes me feel really nostalgic! Besides, D22 is still a cool place to go – if I want to have a good time, I just need to go to D22, drink some beer and get ready to mosh!

Jean ... I know that this kind of flat will be difficult to buy, especially as my family is not very rich. However, if I am very successful in my career and make loads of money one day, this is the kind of flat I'll buy. I think almost everybody would be happy to live in a flat like this – I just hope that one day I can!

Language step 1 The Zero & First Conditionals to Talk about Habits & Preferences

Let's have a look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use the zero and first conditionals to talk about habits and preferences.

- Sophia ...The Summer Palace is really important to me because it is so tranquil. *If I need* a place to relax and unwind, I immediately *think* of the Summer Palace...
- Mike ...Besides, D22 is still a cool place to go – *if I want* to have a good time, I just *need* to go to D22, drink some beer and get ready to mosh!
- Jean ...I know that this kind of flat will be difficult to buy, especially as my family is not very rich. However, *if I am* very successful in my career and *make* loads of money one day, *this is* the kind of flat I'll buy...

Notice that all of the above model answer extracts use the zero and first conditionals to talk about what they like to do at the places they are talking about. You will sound more like a native speaker if you can use these to talk about your habits and preferences.

Zero conditional

This is used to talk about things that are always true.

if / when + present verb, present verb

If I am hungry, I *go* to a restaurant.

When I am hungry, I *go* to a restaurant.

present verb + if / when + present verb

I *go* to a restaurant *if I am* hungry.

I *go* to a restaurant *when I am* hungry.

First conditional

This is used to talk about things that might happen in the future if something else happens.

if + present verb, will + verb

If I have enough time, I *will go* shopping.

will + verb + if + present verb

I *will go* shopping *if I have* enough time.

Exercise 22.9: Matching

Match the sentence halves below.

1. I'll definitely go to England to see Stonehenge...
 2. When I go home to Cai Be,...
 3. If I eat too much during my holiday,...
 4. I will let my parents live with me...
 5. If I go to the Hau River,...
 6. When I want to see Western operas or classical music,...
-
- A. ...I'll go to the gym and exercise thoroughly.
 - B. ...if I get the chance – it seems so fascinating!
 - C. ...I will look at all the ships on the water and think about how fast Can Tho is changing.
 - D. ...I go to the National Centre for the Performing Arts; it never disappoints!
 - E. ...I always go to the market there because it's so lively.
 - F. ...if I can afford to buy a house large enough for the whole family.

Language step 2 Expressions for How You Feel

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, express their feeling.

Sophia ...The Summer Palace *is really important to me because* it is so tranquil...

Mike ...I *really value* D22 *because* whenever I go there, it brings back loads of memories from when I was at university, having fun with my friends. It *makes me feel really nostalgic!*...


Usually the place you decide to talk about will be one that is special to you. So you should use some expressions to explain how you feel about the place and why it is special to you. Look at the following useful expressions:

- I like/love (the place) because...
- I value (the place) because...
- (The place) is important to me because...
- (The place) makes me feel...
- (The place) reminds me of...
- (The place) provides me with...
- (The place) gives me...
- (The place) lets me...

Examples:

I love the Greasy Spoon café near my house *because* the food is so great and such good value!
The British Museum always *makes me feel* inspired to learn more about other countries and cultures.

The Legion Field *provides me and my friends with* a pleasant, green space in which to play sports or just hang around.

 **Exercise 22.10: Gap Fill**

Write the words and expressions below in the correct spaces.

because	gives me	important to me	I value	lets me
love	makes me feel	provided me with	reminds me	

1. My old family home always _____ safe and secure; it's a place where I never need to worry about anything.
2. Owning a new, clean and modern apartment in the future is _____ because I want to bring up children in a safe and healthy living environment.
3. I really enjoyed going to the Ho Chi Minh Museum in Ha Noi because it _____ loads of information about Ho Chi Minh – his life, his achievements and why he is so famous all over the world.
4. I _____ going to Nowzone Fashion Mall _____ every time I go, I always bump into my fellow students and find excellent bargains.
5. _____ Lush Bar because it has “open mic night” on Sundays when anyone can come and play music. This _____ a chance to practise my guitar skills and gain confidence playing in front of other people.
6. My Son Holy Land is special to me because it _____ that Vietnam has a unique and ancient culture that is known and respected all over the world.
7. Going to the People's Park _____ escape city life for a while – I can get some fresh air, enjoy looking at flowers and trees and, if I want to, get some exercise.

Language step 3 Adjectives to Describe the Qualities of a Place

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use certain adjectives to describe the qualities of a place.

Sophia ...The Summer Palace is really important to me because it is so *tranquil*...

Mike ...Besides, D22 is still a *cool* place to go – if I want to have a good time, I just need to go to D22, drink some beer and get ready to mosh!

You should try to use a varied range of adjectives to help you describe the place in your monologue; this will make the monologue much more interesting and make you sound more like a native speaker.

Look at the following really useful adjectives to describe a place:


Relaxing	Interesting	Exciting	Beautiful	Busy
cosy	enchanting	exciting	delightful	hectic
comfortable	educational	energising	charming	stressful
quiet	inspiring	breathtaking	magnificent	chaotic
peaceful	fascinating	exhilarating	pretty	bustling
tranquil	engrossing	thrilling	attractive	frantic

Examples:

I usually love the *bustling* atmosphere of the market, though sometimes I can be a bit too *hectic*.

Friday Woods is an *enchanting* little forest where you can get a taste of nature.

I love Helen's Coffee Shop because it provides me with a *cosy* and *comfortable* place to study or relax.

 **Exercise 22.11: Matching**

Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. enchanting | A. very busy and fast, somewhere with lots of activity |
| 2. stimulating | B. encouraging new thoughts and ideas, making you feel interested and excited |
| 3. cosy | C. making you feel very happy and excited |
| 4. exhilarating | D. extremely pleasant, attractive and enjoyable |
| 5. charming | E. very comfortable and pleasing, often a place that is small and warm |
| 6. hectic | F. attractive, often a place with a special character |

Extra language point Avoid Saying "My country has a long history!"

When taking the IELTS oral test, many students say the following types of sentence:

My country has a very long history.

My hometown is a city with a long history.

While factually and grammatically correct, you need to remember that IELTS examiners become very bored with almost every candidate saying My country has a long history. Also, if you say this kind of thing in an exam, it can sound a bit arrogant because other countries also have incredibly long histories of many thousands of years.

It will certainly make you sound more intelligent and original if you do not talk about the long history of your country and its cities – try to think of other things that are interesting about your country that will inspire the examiner! Surely there are many more unique things that make your country special.

Answer order

Remind yourself of the answer order you should use when giving a monologue about a place.

Stage 1: Say what it is and where it is.

Stage 2: Say what it looks like.

Stage 3: Say what its purpose is.

Stage 4: Say why it is special and how you feel about it.



Exercise 22.12: Ordering

Using the answer order above, put the following extracts from a model answer into the correct order.

- A. The Labour Culture Palace is not an attractive place...
- B. Though I am a bit older now, and don't really play sports there anymore, the Labour Culture Palace is still special to me...
- C. I want to talk about the Labour Culture Palace, a large public open space in my city.
- D. The Labour Culture Palace is a very useful place for the community because not only does it have tennis and basketball courts but also gyms and swimming pools...
- E. Interviewer: Tell me about a place where people can do sports.
- F. The Labour Culture Palace is located...

Formula 23

Object Monologue

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for giving a monologue about an object. Typical IELTS Part Two questions about an object include:

- Talk about something you'd like to buy.
- Talk about something you made yourself.
- Talk about an invention you know and like.
- Talk about a form of transport you use.
- Talk about something you enjoyed wearing.
- Talk about a piece of furniture in your house.
- Talk about a statue or work of art that you've seen.
- Talk about a photograph you have or have seen.
- Talk about a gift you were given.

Answer order

To give a good monologue about an object, you should use the following native speaker answer order.

- Stage 1: Say what it is and why you have it.
- Stage 2: Say what its purpose is.
- Stage 3: Evaluate it.
- Stage 4: Say why it is important and how you feel about it.

Model answer

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer: Talk about an invention you know and like.
Stage 1: Say what it is and why you have it.
Sophia: I'd like to talk about mobile phones. As you know, mobile phones nowadays are very light, compact and sleek telephones made of plastic, which can be carried everywhere very conveniently. My parents bought me my first mobile phone one Tet holiday when I was a teenager and I've had one ever since.

Stage 2 Say what its purpose is.

Sophia I think mobile phones are an extremely practical piece of equipment to have. Not only are mobile phones used for talking to people and sending text messages but also for surfing the Web, keeping a diary and even as an alarm clock! Some of the most expensive mobile phones are bought by people who want to show off and display their wealth – they're often a status symbol.

Stage 3 Evaluate it.

Sophia Today, a mobile phone is an essential piece of technology for everyone, which is used every day. I last used my mobile phone just before this speaking test – my mum sent me a message to wish me luck! Despite being slightly more expensive than a landline, mobile phones are so useful and convenient that many people simply couldn't do without one.

Stage 4 Say why it is important and how you feel about it.

Sophia If I had to organise trips out with my friends a few days in advance or contact friends who live far away by letter, life just wouldn't be as much fun. I think that everyone has got used to simply picking up their mobile phone and communicating immediately. As for me, I couldn't bear to part with my mobile phone – it gives me so much independence and freedom, and the games are great too!

The formula

For STAGE 1 of an object monologue, you must: Say what it is and why you have it.

Language steps

1. Use adjectives of appearance correctly.

An ipod is a *square, compact, electronic* device.

It was a *large, colourful, light triangular* kite!

2. Use indirect object to explain possession accurately.

My parents bought *me* a bike.

I made *her* a paper airplane.

3. Use the past simple and past continuous to say how you know about the object correctly.

I *saw* one in a museum when I *was* a child.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
mobile phone		(British English) a small telephone that can be taken anywhere (American English: cell phone)	I don't even have a phone in my house because using my mobile phone is so convenient and cheap.
compact	adjective	describing things that are very close together so that they use very little space	My mother said my new apartment is very small, but I prefer to say it's compact – it's got everything I need, but it doesn't take up much room.
sleek	adjective	smooth, shiny and (usually) a little sexy	If I win the lottery, I'll buy one of those sleek red sports cars.
all by oneself		alone; without anybody else's help	Can you come to my house tomorrow a few hours before the party and help me with the cooking and cleaning? I'll never be able to get everything ready all by myself.
life-size	adjective	describing a work of art or representation of something that is the same size as what it represents	At Madame Tussauds Museum in London, you can find hundreds of life-size models of famous people made from wax.
statue	noun	an object that represents a person or animal, usually made of stone or metal	You must have done something truly special for a city to erect a statue of you in a public place.
depict	verb	to represent or show something in a story, picture, work of art	Lots of people are concerned about modern movies and television shows because so many of them frequently depict drugs, alcohol and violence.
scene	noun	a part of a story, play or movie, usually referring to a certain place or a certain situation in which a certain action happens	I love that scene in the movie <i>Dumb and Dumber</i> when they go to the evening party wearing stupid suits and fighting.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
the real thing		the original; the best	In the theme park "Window of the World", there are lots of models of famous buildings such as the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids and the Tower of London. Although they're not life-size, they're amazing because they look just like the real thing.
figure	noun	a drawing, painting or model of a person	<i>The Last Supper</i> by Leonardo da Vinci has 13 figures in it: Jesus and his 12 followers.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Interviewer: Talk about an invention you know and like.

Sophia: I'd like to talk about mobile phones. As you know, mobile phones nowadays are very light, compact and sleek telephones made of plastic, which can be carried everywhere very conveniently. My parents bought me my first mobile phone one Tet holiday when I was a teenager and I've had one ever since...

Interviewer: Talk about a gift you were given.

Mike: I would like to talk about a kite I was given. My father gave me it for my ninth birthday. It was a fairly simple kite: about a metre long, diamond-shaped and it had four colours – red, blue, yellow and orange I think. It was made of plastic and light wood, so it was very light – I remember I was able to carry it to the park all by myself...

Interviewer: Talk about a work of art you have seen.

Jean: The work of art that I'd like to talk about is *The Laocoon Group*. It is a beautiful, almost life-size marble statue that depicts a scene from the Trojan War. The statue includes three figures that are being attacked by snakes. I saw this statue many times in books when I was at school, as my major was art history, but I finally got to see the real thing when I went to Italy for my job about a year ago...

Language step 1 Adjectives of Appearance

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use adjectives of appearance.

Sophia	...As you know, mobile phones nowadays are very <i>light</i> , <i>compact</i> and <i>sleek</i> tele-phones made of plastic, which can be carried everywhere very conveniently...
Mike	...It was a fairly simple kite: about <i>a metre long</i> , <i>diamond-shaped</i> and it had four colours – <i>red</i> , <i>blue</i> , <i>yellow</i> and <i>orange</i> I think. It was made of plastic and light wood, so it was very <i>light</i> ...
Jean	...It is a <i>beautiful</i> , almost <i>life-size marble</i> statue that depicts a scene from the Trojan War...

When giving a monologue about an object, as soon as you have said what the object is, you should then describe its appearance.

To describe an object well, it's important that you use the correct adjective order as below. (Generally, we don't use more than three adjectives together at the same time.)

Adjective Order:	opinion	size	age	shape	colour	origin	material
Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Material	
beautiful	life-size a metre long		diamond- shaped				marble
		old	round	green			
lovely				red	Chinese		

Examples:

...a *beautiful*, almost *life-size marble* statue.

The kite was about *a metre long*, *diamond-shaped*.

...an *old round green* ball.

...a *lovely red Chinese* lantern.

Now look at the following useful native speaker adjectives of appearance:

Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Material
handy	compact	ancient	round	blue	Chinese	cardboard
useful	life-size	old- fashioned	square	multi- coloured	American	cotton
useless	tiny	antique	rectangular	rainbow- coloured	Western	golden

Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Material
silly	little	worn	diamond-shaped	black and white	European	leather
cute	miniature	aged	oval	grey	African	plastic
terrible	enormous	brand-new	spherical	silver	mass-produced	silk
attractive	huge	modern	curved	gold	factory-produced	stone
ugly	gigantic	state-of-the-art	triangular	white with blue stripes	home-made	wooden
elegant	average-sized	new	cylindrical	black with grey dots	hand-made	woollen

Exercise 23.1: Word Order

Rewrite the sentences below in the correct order.

1. statue/golden/life-size/a
2. lighter/a/silver/antique/handy
3. dress/silk/black/an/elegant
4. a/dictionary/mass-produced/boring/grey
5. sculpture/spherical/modern/a/glass

Extra language point “Made of” Expressions

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the phrase *made of* in their monologues.

Sophia ...As you know, mobile phones nowadays are very light, compact and sleek tele-
phones *made of plastic*, which can be carried everywhere very conveniently...

Mike ...It was a fairly simple kite: about a metre long, diamond-shaped and it had four
colours – red, blue, yellow and orange I think. It was *made of plastic and light
wood*, so it was very light – I remember I was able to carry it to the park all by
myself...

When talking about an object and its appearance, you might want to talk about what the object is made of. Look at the following expressions:

made of

Use **made of** when you can still recognise the material/ things used to make the object.

The dress *is made of* silk.

A light bulb *is made of* glass and metal.

made from

Use **made from** when you cannot recognise the material/ things used to make the object.

My model airplane *was made from* paper and glue.

The sculpture *is made from* old tin cans and bicycle parts.

Language step 2 Indirect Object to Explain Possession

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use indirect objects to explain possession.

Sophia ...My parents bought *me* my first mobile phone one Tet holiday when I was a teenager and I've had one ever since...

Mike I would like to talk about a kite I was given. My father gave *me* it for my ninth birthday...

If you are talking about an object that you have or had before, you should tell the examiner how you came to possess the object. Using the indirect object sentence structure is a very useful way to do this.

There are two indirect object sentence structures:

subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

She gave *me* a letter.

I bought *her* a car.

subject + verb + direct object + to /for + indirect object

She gave a letter to *me*.

I bought a car for *her*.

The indirect object is the recipient of the direct object (e.g. *I* am the recipient of the letter. *She* is the recipient of the car.).

There are quite a few verbs that can be used in these types of sentence, including:

ask	bring	build	buy	get	give
lend	make	offer	paint	read	sell
send	show	take	teach	tell	write

Exercise 23.2: Error Correction

Identify the mistakes in the following sentences.

1. I made he a toy car.
2. I bought a painting to my mother.
3. My friend wrote to I a story.
4. My father bought I a book.
5. It I gave to a classmate.
6. Them I asked to buy for me it.

Language step 3 The Past Simple & Past Continuous to Say How You Know about the Object

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use the past simple and past continuous in their monologues.

Sophia ...My parents *bought* me my first mobile phone one Tet holiday when I *was* a teenager and I've had one ever since...

Jean ...I *saw* this statue many times in books when I *was* at school, as my major *was* art history, but I finally *got* to see the real thing when I *went* to Italy for my job about a year ago...

When you are giving a monologue about an object, you should use the past simple or the past simple with the past continuous to explain why you have the object or how you know about the object.

Look at the following native speaker examples:

Past simple

I *bought* myself a laptop many years ago.

My parents *took* the photograph when I *was* very young.

I *saw* the work of art when my family *went* to the art gallery.

Past continuous and past simple

As you may remember, the past continuous is used together with the past simple to talk about a longer action that was happening when a shorter action happened. So, in the sentence I was washing the dishes when I broke a plate, the breaking of the plate was a short action that happened during the longer action of washing the dishes.

The structures are as follows:

past simple + when / while + past continuous

I *saw* the Statue of Liberty *when* I *was studying* in America.

My parents *bought* the furniture *while* they *were living* in Binh Duong.

when / while + past continuous + past simple

While I was visiting my uncle for Christmas, I got a great toy.

When my sister was travelling in Europe, she took a fantastic photograph.

Exercise 23.3: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

1. I (buy) my first mobile phone when I (study) at university.
2. I (see) the painting in an art gallery when I (be) a child.
3. My friend (tell) me about it after he came back from abroad.
4. My grandfather (make) the desk for me when I (be) at high school.
5. Thomas Edison (invent) the first usable light bulb in 1879.
6. When I (date) my ex-boyfriend, I enjoyed wearing a baseball cap because he
 (buy) it for me.
7. Auntie (give) me the necklace when I (stay) at the house for the
 winter.
8. While I (work) part-time at college, I (be) able to save up enough
 money to buy myself a present.

The formula

For STAGE 2 of an object monologue, you must: Say what its purpose is.

Language steps

1. Use the passive voice for application and creation correctly.

The plane was invented by the Wright brothers and it is used by people to...

2. Use expressions for uses accurately.

Radio provides millions of people with information, entertainment and advice.

3. Use phrases for the first/last time correctly.

The last time I used my computer was yesterday.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on page 214 more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
practical	adjective	suitable for use in everyday life	The clothes models wear in fashion shows may look beautiful, but they're not very practical – they'd be ruined very quickly if you wore them in real life.
text (message)	noun	a message written and sent using a mobile phone (Short message is incorrect.)	Please let me know as soon as you finish this report – but don't phone me as I will be in a meeting; just send me a text.
surf the Internet/ Net/Web		to use a computer to visit many Internet sites	When I get home after work, I like to surf the Web to find out what's happened in the world.
show off		to intentionally behave in a way to attract other people's attention	It's embarrassing when Ben drives that really expensive car with such loud music and the roof down; it's so obvious he's trying to show off.
status symbol		something that people want to buy because it shows that they are rich, well educated, etc., and others will admire them	The main reason for buying a Ferrari sports car is because it's a status symbol – you have to be incredibly rich to afford one.
essential	adjective	necessary; needed; required	To study abroad, a good level of spoken English is essential.
mind	verb	to care about, be annoyed or worried by something	Do you mind if I open the window?/My manager is really kind; she doesn't mind if I take three weeks' holiday all at the same time.
thrilling	adjective	very exciting	I'm currently reading a book by Michael Crichton – it's so thrilling because the story is full of surprises and you never know what's going to happen next!
sculpt	verb	(usually by an artist) to create an object out of stone, wood, clay, etc.	My grandfather was very talented with his hands; once he sculpted a beautifully detailed rose out of a piece of wood he found in the forest.
appreciate	verb	to recognise or understand that something is important or valuable	My last girlfriend broke up with me because she said I didn't appreciate her. I guess I should have paid her more attention, said more nice things and sometimes bought things for her.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...I think mobile phones are an extremely practical piece of equipment to have. Not only are mobile phones used for talking to people and sending text messages but also for surfing the Web, keeping a diary and even as an alarm clock! Some of the most expensive mobile phones are bought by people who want to show off and display their wealth – they're often a status symbol. Today, a mobile phone is an essential piece of technology for everyone, which is used every day. I last used my mobile phone just before this speaking test – my mum sent me a message to wish me luck!...

Mike ...The kite was made by my father, probably because he couldn't afford to buy one from a shop. Although it wasn't such a valuable gift, I didn't mind because I was just pleased to receive such a cool present! I remember feeling really excited when my father gave me the present and we went to the park to try flying it. It seemed so thrilling to have a brand-new kite to fly, and my dad to help me fly it. That first day we flew the kite for hours and hours, my dad showing me how to get the kite into the air, then how to fly it...

Jean ...Nobody really knows who *The Laocoon Group* was sculpted by, but it was probably made in the first century BC. As a work of art, it is obviously appreciated for its beauty – despite the unpleasant nature of the subject – and many tourists see it every day when they visit the Vatican in Rome...

Language step 1 The Passive Voice for Creation & Application

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use the passive voice in their monologues.

Sophia ...Not only *are* mobile phones *used* for talking to people and sending text messages but also for surfing the Web, keeping a diary and even as an alarm clock! Some of the most expensive mobile phones *are bought* by people who want to show off and display their wealth – they're often a status symbol. Today, a mobile phone is an essential piece of technology for everyone, which *is used* every day...

Mike ...The kite *was made* by my father, probably because he couldn't afford to buy one from a shop...

Jean ...Nobody really knows who *The Laocoon Group* *was sculpted* by, but it *was* probably *made* in the first century BC. As a work of art, it *is* obviously *appreciated* for its beauty...

Notice that all of the above model answers use the passive voice to explain whom the objects were made by and what they are made or used for.

You probably remember the structure of the passive voice from previous lessons, but here's a quick reminder:

be + past participle (+ by + agent)

The plane *was invented* by the Wright brothers.

The wheel is an invention that *has been used* for hundreds of years in millions of different tools and machines all over the world.

The photograph *was taken* before I was born.

Exercise 23.4: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate forms of the passive from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- The Mona Lisa* _____ by Leonardo da Vinci.
A. is painted B. was painted C. has been painted
- Online language lessons _____ more and more frequently in the future.
A. are going to be used B. is going to be use C. are going to use
- Apparently email _____ first _____ by the army for military purposes.
A. was; invent B. had been; invented C. was; developed
- That gold ring _____ by my great-grandmother all her life, so it's very important to my family.
A. were weared B. was weared C. was worn
- My first radio-controlled car _____ for me by my parents one Christmas.
A. was bought B. was brought C. is brought
- An electric blender can _____ to make soups, drinks, milkshakes and sauces.
A. is used B. be used C. to be used

Language step 2 Expressions for Uses

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use the expressions for uses to talk about the objects of their choice.

Sophia ...Not only *are mobile phones used for talking to people and sending text messages but also for surfing the Web, keeping a diary and even as an alarm clock!*...

Jean ...As a work of art, *it is obviously appreciated for its beauty – despite the unpleasant nature of the subject!*...

As in the above model answers, you should use expressions for uses in your monologue to explain how your object is used and/or why it is useful.

Look at the following useful expressions:

X + can help (people) + (to) verb

The Internet *can help people to communicate* across the world cheaply and quickly.

X + is/are used + to verb/for verb-ing

Microwave ovens *are used for cooking, heating and defrosting* food and drinks.

X + is/are useful + for verb-ing

The Internet blog I write *is useful for developing* my research and writing skills.

X + is/are great + for verb-ing

A pocket digital camera *is great for taking* quick photos while on holiday.

X + provide(s)...

Online English classes *provide* an environment for students to speak to real, live native English speakers.

X + provide(s) people with...

Cars *provide ordinary people with* the freedom to travel independently anywhere, at any time.

X + is/are valued for...

Egyptian mummies *are valued for* their historical significance.

X + is/are appreciated because /for...

The movie *Lilies of the Field* *is appreciated because* one of the actors, Sidney Poitier, was the first black actor to win an Oscar.

X + is/are important for...

When I become a father, I want to buy a baby carry bag as *it's important for* carrying the baby around outside safely.

Exercise 23.5: Gap Fill

Write the words and expressions below in the correct spaces.

provides people with	are great for	can help	is important for
are used for	useful for	are valued for	
it's appreciated because	provide		

1. My favourite pair of shoes is my Reebok running shoes; they running, exercis-
are just as casual shoes when I'm relaxing.

2. Internet chat rooms discussing all kinds of things, ranging from personal matters, hobbies and interests, relationship problems and even politics.
3. The electric light bulb safe, reliable and cheap lighting.
4. Mobile phones a way for people to communicate and stay in touch with business partners, family and friends wherever they are.
5. The Internet has become such a part of everyday life that now it every company to be on the Internet and to have email access.
6. There is an old, yellowing photograph that hangs on the wall in my house. Though it's really old, in my family it's the only photo we have of our great-grandfather.
7. Ao dai quite ordinary looking women look more elegant.
8. My watch has so many functions – it's amazing. Not only is it telling the time and date, but it can also tell me where I am in the world, how deep under water I am and even surf the Internet.
9. Solar panels their potential to help save the environment and reverse global warming.

Language step 3 Phrases for the First/Last Time

Let's take a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the phrases for the first or last time they do something.

Sophia ...I *last used my mobile phone just before this speaking test* – my mum sent me a message to wish me luck!...

Mike ...I remember feeling really excited when my father gave me the present and we went to the park to try flying it. It seemed so thrilling to have a brand-new kite to fly, and my dad to help me fly it. *That first day we flew the kite for hours and hours*, my dad showing me how to get the kite into the air, then how to fly it...

If you are talking about an object that you used or still use, you should talk about the first or last time that you used it, just like Sophia and Mike do in their model answers.

To do this, you can use the phrases for the first/last time:

the first/last time + past verb + was + time in the past

The first time I used a computer was about 10 years ago.

The last time I saw the painting was in 1997.

I + first/last + past verb + time in the past

I first used a computer about 10 years ago.

I last saw the painting in 1997.

Of course, you can also use some of the grammar that you studied in the last lesson – the past simple or the past simple with the past continuous.

past simple

My aunt *gave* me the karaoke machine for my birthday and we all – my family and I – immediately *started* singing and dancing.

My elder sister *took* me to the cinema and we *watched* the movie together.

past simple with past continuous

I *saw* the pyramids of Egypt for the first time when I *was travelling* in the Middle East.

Exercise 23.6: Word Order

Rewrite the sentences below in the correct order.

1. ago/years/two/watch/the/wore/last/I
2. took/time/the/the/was/in/I/1989/first/subway
3. the/yesterday/the/watched/time/last/I/was/film
4. very/first/long/a/I/dictionary/time/used/a/ago
5. painting/looked/month/at/I/the/was/last/the/time/last
6. I/2003/a/cell/bought/in/first/phone

The formula

For STAGE 3 of an object monologue, you must: Evaluate it.

Language steps

1. Use adjectives for evaluation correctly.

Electronic dictionaries are so *convenient* because they are *compact*, *cheap* and *highly practical*.

2. Use linking phrases for uses and evaluation accurately.

Although Van Gogh's painting Sunflowers is much more famous, I still prefer Crows over Cornfields because...

3. Use comparatives and comparative structures accurately.

A cell phone is certainly *much more convenient than* a conventional phone.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
slightly	adverb	a little; with a very small amount	You would never know my sister is pregnant; apart from being slightly bigger than before, she looks exactly the same.
landline	noun	the traditional kind of telephone that is fixed and not mobile	Sorry, I can't hear you on my cell phone. Can you phone my landline instead?
do without		to manage without something, often in the negative "can't do without"	If you want to start your own company, you must remember that successful businesses can't do without good staff, a strong market and a great location.
cool	adjective	good, fashionable or attractive	For some reason, lots of people think that hip-hop singers who sing about having lots of girlfriends, money and guns are cool – I don't. I think they're stupid.
portray	verb	to represent or describe something/somebody in a film, play, or piece of art, etc.	The movie <i>Titanic</i> portrays how the ship sank and how all the passengers reacted.
vivid	adjective	describing descriptions, pictures, etc. that make it very easy to imagine what happened clearly and in detail	Although Van Gogh's painting <i>Wheatfield with Crows</i> is not exactly realistic, it is very vivid – you can imagine being in the field yourself, feeling the wind blow and hearing the birds crow.
sympathise (with)	verb	to understand and care about somebody's problems	Though I can sympathise with Clare and the way she feels after breaking up with Richard, there's nothing we can do about it because Richard loves someone else.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
suffering	noun	physical or mental pain and difficulty, or an experience of this	Whenever you watch news on TV and see people all over the earth dying, starving and fighting, you're reminded how much suffering there is in the world.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

- Sophia ...I think mobile phones are an extremely practical piece of equipment to have. Not only are mobile phones used for talking to people and sending text messages but also for surfing the Web, keeping a diary and even as an alarm clock!... Today, a mobile phone is an essential piece of technology for everyone, which is used every day... Despite being slightly more expensive than a landline, mobile phones are so useful and convenient that many people simply couldn't do without one...
- Mike ...Although it wasn't such a valuable gift, I didn't mind because I was just pleased to receive such a cool present!...
- Jean ...I think the statue is such a fantastic work of art because although it portrays men suffering, it's a wonderfully vivid sculpture. Whenever I see it, I immediately sympathise with the pain and suffering of the figures whilst at the same time, I can appreciate the extremely high-quality work...

Language step 1 Adjectives for Evaluation

Let's see how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use the adjectives for evaluation.

- Sophia ...I think mobile phones are an extremely *practical* piece of equipment to have... Today, a mobile phone is an *essential* piece of technology for everyone, which is used every day... Despite being slightly more *expensive* than a landline, mobile phones are so *useful* and *convenient* that many people simply couldn't do without one...
- Mike ...Although it wasn't such a *valuable* gift, I didn't mind because I was just pleased to receive such a *cool* present!...
- Jean ...I think the statue is such a *fantastic* work of art because although it portrays men suffering, it's a wonderfully *vivid* sculpture. Whenever I see it, I immediately sympathise with the pain and suffering of the figures whilst at the same time, I can appreciate the extremely *high-quality* work...

Notice that Sophia, Mike and Jean all use adjectives for evaluation in their monologues to describe the objects in more detail. This makes the monologue more interesting, more accurate and more like a native speaker's.

Let's look at some more really useful adjectives for evaluation:

Age	Appearance	Value	Quality
state-of-the-art	vivid	overpriced	high-quality
innovative	striking	expensive	reliable
fashionable	colourful	costly	well made
advanced	eye-catching	dear	dependable
brand-new	attractive	reasonable	poorly made
cutting-edge	lifelike	good value (for money)	unreliable
modern	realistic	economical	low-quality
outdated	charming	reasonably priced	poor-quality
old-fashioned	ugly	low-cost	
dated	unattractive	cheap	
unfashionable	unappealing	a waste of money	
antique	unrealistic		

Use	Importance	Size / Weight	Fun	Speed
practical	essential	compact	enjoyable	sluggish
convenient	vital	bulky	fantastic	slow
useful	indispensable	heavy	beneficial	fast
useless	crucial	light	delightful	speedy
impractical	needless	thick	pleasant	quick
informative	dispensable	thin		
enlightening	superfluous	soft		
educative	unnecessary	hard		
helpful				

Examples:

My laptop is quite *old* now, so although it seemed an absolutely *cutting-edge* piece of technology when I bought it, it's relatively *sluggish* compared to other computers now.

My mother's necklace, which is an item of jewellery, is *antique*, *high-quality* and *charming*.

Despite being extremely *costly*, aeroplanes provide passengers with a *convenient*, *safe* and *economical* way to travel.

Exercise 23.7: Matching

Match the adjectives for evaluation on the left with their synonyms / meanings on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. outdated | A. new; using new ideas and/or technology |
| 2. economical | B. old; old-fashioned |
| 3. unreliable | C. attractive; easily noticed |
| 4. state-of-the-art/innovative/cutting-edge | D. bad-quality; easily breaking |
| 5. vital/indispensable | E. good-quality |
| 6. striking | F. cheap |
| 7. reasonably priced | G. good value |
| 8. well made | H. expensive |
| 9. practical | I. useful; helping solve problems |
| 10. informative | J. not needed; unnecessary |
| 11. superfluous | K. essential; extremely important |
| 12. sluggish | L. providing a lot of information |
| 13. dear | M. slow |

Language step 2 Linking Phrases for Uses & Evaluation

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use the linking phrases for uses and evaluation.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Sophia | ... <i>Not only</i> are mobile phones used for talking to people and sending text messages <i>but also</i> for surfing the Web, keeping a diary and even as an alarm clock!... <i>Despite</i> being slightly more expensive than a landline, mobile phones are so useful and convenient that many people simply couldn't do without one... |
| Mike | ... <i>Although</i> it wasn't such a valuable gift, I didn't mind because I was just pleased to receive such a cool present!... |
| Jean | ...I think the statue is such a fantastic work of art because <i>although</i> it portrays men suffering, it's a wonderfully vivid sculpture... |

Notice that in the above model answers, the candidates use linking phrases to talk about the uses of an object or to evaluate an object. This is a very native speaker way to talk about an object. Look at the following linking phrases.

Linking phrases for uses

in addition to...also...

In addition to being a worker's tool, a computer *also* provides people with the ability to communicate worldwide.

besides...also...

The subway is a great means of transport because *besides* being more environmentally friendly, it *also* helps reduce traffic.

as well as...also...

I really valued the scarf my mother knitted me because *as well as* keeping me warm, it *also* reminded me of her love for me.

not only...but also...

The electronic dictionary I have *not only* has millions and millions of definitions, *but also* has recordings of native speakers saying the words.

Linking phrases for evaluation**although...(still)...**

Although Van Gogh's painting *Sunflowers* is much more famous, I *still* prefer *Crows over Cornfields* because...

I prefer Van Gogh's *Crows over Cornfields* *although* *Sunflowers* is much more famous.

despite...(still)...

Despite buses always being crowded, they're *still* the cheapest and most convenient way to travel.

even though...

Even though it has caused many problems, the invention of gunpowder is extremely important historically.

apart from...

Apart from the very low battery power, my new mobile phone is excellent.



The verbs that follow *in addition to*, *besides* and *as well as* must take the -ing form.

In English, *although* and *but* do not appear together to express concession. Therefore, you should avoid sentences such as *Although the phone is good, but it is too expensive.*

Exercise 23.8: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate linking phrases to complete the sentences.

1. My family's photographs of me as a child are really embarrassing. _____ do I have a weird hairstyle in many of them, _____ I'm often naked!
- A. As well as; also B. Not only; but also C. Apart from; also

2. *Titanic* was a big movie in Hollywood, I thought it was pretty terrible.
 A. Despite B. Apart from C. Even though
3. I really think nuclear power plants are a bad invention – being extremely dangerous, they pollute the environment.
 A. besides; also B. despite; still C. although; still
4. the prints of *Marilyn Monroe* are some of the most famous pictures in the world, a lot of people don't know the artist who created them – Andy Warhol.
 A. Despite B. Apart from C. Although
5. a few small scratches and marks, our dining table still looks brand-new.
 A. In addition to B. Apart from C. Although
6. having lots of useful vocabulary and grammar, a good English textbook should also have interesting exercises and fun games.
 A. As well as B. Not only C. Even though
7. their high cost, the last pair of shoes I bought were not good-quality; they broke within the first two months.
 A. Although B. Even though C. Despite
8. Netball is a fantastic sport. being a great way to exercise, it's a good way to learn how to be part of a team.
 A. Not only; also B. In addition to; also C. Despite; also

Language step 3 Comparatives & Comparative Structures

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses comparatives and comparative structures.

Sophia ...Despite being slightly *more expensive than* a landline, mobile phones are so useful and convenient that many people simply couldn't do without one...

When evaluating an object, you should use comparatives and comparative structures to compare the object to others.

Comparatives

As you may remember from previous lessons, when we want to make a comparative, we add -er or -ier to the end of the adjective, or we add more before the adjective.

We add -er to adjectives that are one syllable long.

With adjectives that finish in -y and have two syllables, we add -ier.

We put the word more before adjectives that have two or more syllables.

Look at the table to refresh your memory:

Short Adjectives		Adjectives ending in -y		Long Adjectives	
cheap	cheaper	easy	easier	expensive	more expensive
large	larger	heavy	heavier	comfortable	more comfortable
fast	faster	pretty	prettier	fashionable	more fashionable
slow	slower	ugly	uglier	environmentally friendly	more environmentally friendly



Some adjectives have irregular comparative forms.

Adjective	Comparative
good	better
bad	worse
fun	more fun

Comparative structures

X + is/are + comparative adjective + than + Y

Buses are *slower than* taxis.

X + is/are + comparative adjective + than + time in the past

Mobile phones are *smaller and more advanced than* 10 years ago.



To emphasise the intensity of comparatives, you add **much** or **far** as in the examples below:

Buses are *much* slower than taxis.

Buses are *far* slower than taxis.

Mobile phones are *much* smaller and more advanced than 10 years ago.

Mobile phones are *far* smaller and more advanced than 10 years ago.

X + be + as adjective as + Y

Watching TV is *as enjoyable as* going to a party.

X + be + not as adjective as + Y

My hometown's traffic is *not as crowded as* Ho Chi Minh City's.

X + be + not as adjective as + time in the past

Movies are *not as interesting to watch as they were when* I was a child.

Exercise 23.9: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct comparative forms of the words in brackets.

1. The toy my father gave me was _____ (important) to me than the other presents I received because he chose it himself.
2. Though Chinese goods are _____ (not reliable) as Japanese goods, I think it's important for Chinese people to buy Chinese goods.
3. I like my old cell phone although it's _____ (not advanced) more modern phones.
4. I think Vietnamese art is much _____ (striking and innovative) than 10 years ago.
5. Although Jackie Chan's movies are _____ (not enlightening) many other movies, I think they are much more enjoyable.
6. Buying my own apartment one day is _____ (equally important) to me having my own child.
7. For me, going to look at Turner's paintings is _____ (pleasant) than spending time with family and friends.
8. My last coat was _____ (warm) and _____ (colourful) _____ the one I wear now.

The formula

For STAGE 4 of an object monologue, you must: Say why it is important and how you feel about it.

Language steps

1. Use words and expressions for attachment to objects accurately.
The kite *makes me feel nostalgic about* the fun I had with grandpa.
2. Use the second and third conditionals for expressing the importance of objects correctly.
If I didn't have my laptop, I *wouldn't be* able to do all of my writing so easily.
3. Use the present perfect for expressing the importance of objects accurately.
Computers *have become* essential to every business everywhere in the world.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on page 228 more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
trip	noun	a short journey, where you travel for a short time and then return (Note: avoid the common mistake "to trip" – you should say "to have/take a trip")	When I was at school, we had a trip to France for the day. But it wasn't that exciting because we spent much more time on the motorways and ferry travelling there than we did in France.
in advance		before a certain time; before you do something else	On Friday nights you have to book in advance, otherwise there's no way you can get a table – there're just too many people.
contact	verb	to communicate with somebody using something, e.g. a phone, letter, etc. (Note: avoid the common mistake "to contact with somebody")	When I went to America to study, my parents got worried if I didn't contact them once a week to let them know how I was.
bear	verb	to accept, endure or tolerate something unpleasant	David and I broke up because I found out he was seeing another girl when he was supposed to be my boyfriend. After I found out, I couldn't bear to see him anymore.
part with something		to give something to somebody else or to lose something, especially when you don't want to	My mother still has all my old baby clothes because she says it will make her too upset to part with them.
breeze	noun	a light and pleasant wind	I love walking in the park when the weather's sunny and there's a gentle breeze.
nostalgic	adjective	feeling pleasure – or maybe slightly sad – when thinking about something that happened in the past	I went back to my old kindergarten a few days ago. I felt so nostalgic looking at our old classrooms, thinking about all the fun we had together and wondering what has happened to all my classmates.
combination	noun	a mixture of two or more things	Though you might not expect it, the combination of orange and duck in one dish is really delicious.
inspire	verb	to make somebody want to do something and believe that they can succeed at doing it	My school trip to France inspired me to start learning French.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...If I had to organise trips out with my friends a few days in advance or contact friends who live far away by letter, life just wouldn't be as much fun. I think that everyone has got used to simply picking up their mobile phone and communicating immediately. As for me, I couldn't bear to part with my mobile phone – it gives me so much independence and freedom, and the games are great too!

Mike ...After that birthday, I used to go to the park with my dad every chance I got – when there was even a gentle breeze, I would start asking him to take me there. Some years later the kite got broken, I don't remember how. But I remember seeing the broken kite and feeling really upset, like I'd lost a part of my childhood. Now, whenever I see children flying kites at my local park, I always start feeling nostalgic, and think about when I was young.

Jean ...For me, the combination of making viewers feel emotions with excellent workmanship is a sign of a truly great work of art. In fact, this statue has been famous throughout history and has inspired many other artists and their works of art.

Language step 1 Words and Expressions for Attachment to Objects

Pay attention to the expressions in italics by Sophia and Mike in their monologues.

Sophia ...As for me, *I couldn't bear to part with* my mobile phone – it gives me so much independence and freedom, and the games are great too!

Mike ...Some years later the kite got broken, I don't remember how. But I remember seeing the broken kite and *feeling really upset*, like I'd lost a part of my childhood. Now, *whenever I see* children flying kites at my local park, *I always start feeling nostalgic, and think about* when I was young.

Notice that both Sophia and Mike use the above expressions to indicate why the object they are describing is special or important to them. Let's look at some more useful words and expressions for attachment to objects:

Adjectives for how an object makes you feel

nostalgic
sentimental (about)
homesick
inspired
intrigued

fascinated
 enthusiastic (about)
 delighted
 thrilled
 exhilarated
 relieved
 relaxed

Expressions for how an object makes you feel

(it) makes me feel...
 (it) makes me think of/ about...
 Whenever I (do something), I feel...
 (it) reminds me of...
 I couldn't bear to part with...
 (it)'s important to me because...
 (it)'s indispensable to me because...

Look at the following examples of some of the above words and expressions for attachment to objects:

My new mobile phone, with all its gadgets, *makes me feel delighted* that my life is getting better and better.

My car is *important to me because* without it I wouldn't be able to do my job.

I'm quite *sentimental* about my teddy bear because it *reminds me of* my happy childhood in England.

Whenever I read a novel by Stephen King, I feel enthusiastic about writing something myself.

Exercise 23.10: Gap Fill

Write the words below in the correct spaces.

inspired intrigued by nostalgic relaxed sentimental thrilled

- I like to sit in front of my TV and watch my favourite programmes while eating my dinner or drinking tea; it makes me _____.
- I'm quite _____ about my father's bike, which is why I've kept for so many years even though it's really old and actually not very nice to ride.
- I am _____ Cai Guo-Qiang's works of art using stuffed wolves. Although they are a bit strange, and I'm not sure if I understand them, these sculptures make me think about many different things when I look at them.
- Going home makes me feel _____ because I always think of all the things that my brother and I did together when we were growing up.

5. They say Christmas is all about giving, not receiving, and I couldn't agree more. When I gave my daughter a doll last Christmas, it was great to see how _____ she was to have her own little "person" to play with.
6. After I watched the movie *Schindler's List*, I was _____ to try to make the world a better place.

Language step 2 The Second & Third Conditionals for Expressing the Importance of Objects

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses the second conditional in her monologue below.

Sophia ...*If I had* to organise trips out with my friends a few days in advance or contact friends who live far away by letter, life just *wouldn't be* as much fun...

Notice that Sophia uses the second conditional to emphasise the importance of the object she is describing.

The structures of the second conditional are as follows:

If + past verb, would(n't) + verb

If I didn't have my laptop, I *wouldn't be* able to study English online.

If my family had a dishwasher, we *wouldn't need* to spend so much time washing up.

If I won the lottery, I *would buy* an enormous truck.

would(n't) + verb + if + past verb

I *wouldn't be* able to study English online *if I didn't have* my laptop.

My family *wouldn't need* to spend so much time washing up *if we had* a dishwasher.

I *would buy* an enormous truck *if I won* the lottery.

As you can see from these examples, the second conditional is used to talk about present or future situations that are very unlikely or impossible to happen. So, you can use the second conditional to talk about what your life would be like if you had or didn't have the object you are talking about.



Strictly speaking, *were* should be used for the verb *be* in the *if*-clause of second conditionals. However, native English speakers also use *was* for first and third person singular.

You can also use the third conditional to explain why a certain object is important. Let's look at how the third conditional is constructed:

If + had(n't) + past participle, would(n't) have + past participle

If computers hadn't been invented, the world economy wouldn't have developed so quickly in the last 30 years.

If I had seen the movie on my own, I would've been really scared.

would(n't) have + past participle + if + had(n't) + past participle

The world economy wouldn't have developed so quickly in the last 30 years if computers hadn't been invented.

I would've been really scared if I had seen the movie on my own.

Notice from the above examples that the third conditional is used to talk about:

- 1) Things that did not happen in the past
- 2) Things that might not have happened – this explains why the opposite things happened

Exercise 23.11: Sentence Completion

Second conditional

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct second conditional forms of the words in brackets.

1. If the movie *Dirty Harry* (be made) now, it (not be) as good as the original with Clint Eastwood.
2. I (play) basketball every single day of the week if I (have) enough time.
3. I (be) extremely upset if all my old family photographs (be lost).

Third conditional

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct third conditional forms of the words in brackets.

4. If my parents (not buy) me that penknife for Christmas, I (be) really disappointed.
5. Damien Hurst (not become) a famous artist if he (not make) a controversial work of art using a dead cow.
6. If the *Harry Potter* movies (be made) using American actors, they (not be) so enjoyable to watch.

Language step 3 The Present Perfect for Expressing the Importance of Objects

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use the present perfect tense to express the importance of objects.

Sophia ...I think that everyone *has got* used to simply picking up their mobile phone and communicating immediately...

Jean ...In fact, this statue *has been* famous throughout history and *has inspired* many other artists and their works of art.

As you can see from the above extracts, Sophia and Jean use the present perfect to explain why their objects are important or special.

As you probably remember from previous lessons, the present perfect is constructed like this: **have / has + past participle**

We use the present perfect to talk about recent changes (Computers *have become* essential to business.), for things that happened in the past that are connected with the present (The government *has greatly developed* the subway system.), or for experiences (I *have watched* every movie by James Cameron.).



The present perfect tense cannot be used with fixed points of time in the past such as yesterday, last week, two years ago, in 2008, etc. Instead, it is used with time expressions that indicate a continuity to the present time such as today, this week, this year, recently, etc.

Exercise 23.12: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate forms of the present perfect from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- My cell phone is such good quality that I _____ the same phone for about 10 years now.
A. have have B. have had C. had had
- The old vase my family has had for years _____ quite valuable – though we wouldn't want to sell it.
A. has become B. has became C. has becomed
- Nuclear power _____ make the environment much cleaner.
A. have helped B. had helped C. has helped

4. I _____ the first suit I bought for many years and it still looks brand-new!
 A. have weared B. have wore C. have worn
5. I _____ many times by people for the wooden truck I made when I was a teenager.
 A. have been complimented B. have be complimented C. have be compliment
6. I _____ thousands of words using a computer that would have taken me much longer if I had had to write them by hand.
 A. have write B. have written C. have wrote

Answer order

Remind yourself of the answer order you should use when giving a monologue about an object.

Stage 1: Say what it is and why you have it.

Stage 2: Say what its purpose is.

Stage 3: Evaluate it.

Stage 4: Say why it is important and how you feel about it.

Exercise 23.13: Ordering

Using the answer order above, put the following extracts from a model answer into the correct order.

- A. Cable cars are used very rarely in cities, but...
- B. I think it'd be great if every city had cable cars, just like New York City.
- C. Not only are cable cars environmentally friendly, but they are extremely cheap...
- D. Interviewer: Talk about a form of transport you use.
- E. When I was living in New York City, I used a cable car every day...
- F. If there weren't cable cars...
- G. I'm going to talk about cable cars...

Formula 24

Past Event Monologue

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for giving a monologue about a past event. Typical IELTS Part Two questions about a past event include:

- Talk about a party you attended.
- Talk about a stage in your life that you enjoyed most.
- Talk about a sports event you attended.
- Talk about a journey you have been on.
- Talk about a story you heard as a child.
- Talk about a time when you were late for something.
- Talk about something you did that helped you learn a language.

Answer order

To give a good monologue about a past event, you should use the following native speaker answer order.

- Stage 1: Say what it was and when it happened.
- Stage 2: Say why it happened, where it happened and who was there.
- Stage 3: Say what happened.
- Stage 4: Say why the event was special and how you feel/felt about it.

Model answer

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer: Talk about a story you heard as a child.

Stage 1: Say what it was and when it happened.

Sophia: I want to talk about a story called "The Boy Who Cried Wolf". When I was a child, my mother always used to read me bedtime stories to help me get to sleep. My mother would lie next to me on the bed and read a different story every night. When she was reading, I would often lay my head on her chest and listen to the voices she made for the different characters in the stories. The story I remember best is "The Boy Who Cried Wolf".

Stage 2 Say why it happened, where it happened and who was there.

Sophia In the story there was a boy who was a shepherd. His job was to look after his father's sheep in the fields outside his village, but he found it very boring to be by himself all day.

Stage 3 Say what happened.

Sophia Once, he decided to play a trick on his fellow villagers. He ran into the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!" Immediately, all the villagers stopped working and ran to the field to help protect the sheep. When they found there was no wolf, the boy laughed at them. Another day, the boy played the same trick on the villagers and again laughed at them when they came running into the field looking for a wolf. One day, a real wolf did get into his field and start attacking his sheep. Again, the boy ran into the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!" But to his surprise nobody believed him and all his sheep got killed.

Stage 4 Say why the event was special and how you feel/felt about it.

Sophia The moral of this story is that you shouldn't lie, otherwise people won't believe you – even when you are speaking the truth. I liked this story as a child and I think it has a good message. I will definitely read this story to my children in the future.

The formula

For STAGE 1 of a past event monologue, you must: Say what it was and when it happened.

Language steps

1. Use words & phrases for events accurately.

It was a great family holiday in the German countryside.

2. Use prepositions of time and time phrases correctly.

In 1989,...

Quite a while ago, I went to a great party.

3. Use the past continuous & past simple and past perfect & past simple for setting a scene correctly.

I had been at university for a couple of years, so I decided to have a huge party.

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
used to		to say that something always happened or was true in the past (especially if this is not true now)	I used to go running every few days to keep fit, but nowadays I hardly do anything; I'm getting fatter and fatter.
get to sleep		to fall asleep; to go to sleep (especially if it is a little difficult to fall asleep)	I couldn't get to sleep for a long time last night; I was too worried about today's exam.
bedtime	noun	the time when you usually go to sleep (especially for children)	Now listen to your mother: bedtime was an hour ago and you've got school tomorrow. It's time to go to sleep.
character	noun	a person in a film, story or play	I'm bored with watching Ben Stiller films; he always plays the same type of character – a nice, ordinary guy who is really unlucky or who experiences strange things.
5-a-side	adjective	describing the size of a sports team, where usually the team has more members; also 7-a-side, 3-a-side, etc.	I'm really tired after playing 5-a-side football all day – you need so much energy to run all over the pitch for so long.
secondary school		UK: secondary school vs. US: high school; the type of school for students aged 11-16 or 11-18	Lots of people love their time at secondary school. God knows why; I hated every minute of it and couldn't wait to go to university.
affect	verb	to influence, alter, change	Lucy hasn't been doing very well at university since she broke up with her boyfriend. It's really affected her grades.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Interviewer: Talk about a story you heard as a child.

Sophia: I want to talk about a story called "The Boy Who Cried Wolf". When I was a child, my mother always used to read me bedtime stories to help me get to

sleep. My mother would lie next to me on the bed and read a different story every night. When she was reading, I would often lay my head on her chest and listen to the voices she made for the different characters in the stories. The story I remember best is "The Boy Who Cried Wolf"...

Interviewer Talk about a sports event you attended.

Mike I'd like to tell you about a football competition I participated in. It was a 5-a-side football competition held when I was working for my last company, about four years ago...

Interviewer Talk about a time when you were late.

Jean I'd like to talk about the time that I was late for an exam. It was in my last year at secondary school, when I was taking my final exams. Obviously, these exams were very important, as they affected what university I would be able to go to after school...

Language step 1 Words & Phrases for Events

Let's look at how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use the words and phrases for events in their monologues.

Sophia I want to talk about a *story* called "The Boy Who Cried Wolf". When I was a child, my mother always used to read me *bedtime stories* to help me get to sleep...

Mike I'd like to tell you about a *football competition* I participated in. It was a *5-a-side football competition* held when I was working for my last company, about four years ago...

Jean I'd like to talk about *the time that I was late for an exam*...

Obviously, the first thing you should do when beginning your monologue about a past event is to say what type of event it was. Look at the following words and phrases:

Stories	Competitions/Sports	Learning a Language	Journeys
children's story	sports match	class	school trip
bedtime story	boxing match	activity	educational trip
novel	sports competition	exercise	road trip
poem	athletics competition	role-play	day trip
play	chess competition	summer camp	holiday/vacation
film	speech contest	English corner	family holiday
opera	the Olympic Games	friendly game	tour

Stories	Competitions /Sports	Learning a Language	Journeys
fable	the Asian Games	class discussion	romantic weekend away
fairy tale		debate	
legend			

Parties	Parties
birthday party	TV programme
housewarming party	TV drama
hen party	TV show
stag party	soap opera
wedding reception	documentary
ball	comedy


As well as the above, you can also use the following phrases to say what the event was:

the time (that/when) + did something

- ...*the time when* I saw an interesting story on TV...
- ...*the time that* my friends and I went on a day trip...
- ...*the time* I went to the Houston Rockets...

the first time + did something

- ...*the first time* I learned to ride a bike...
- ...*the first time* I played chess...
- ...*the first time* I flew in a plane...

 **Exercise 24.1: Gap Fill**

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

fairy tale	legend	poems	road trip	role-play
epoch contest	romantic weekend away	the first time	the time when	

1. I would like to talk about _____ I went abroad. My boyfriend and I went to Rome for a _____ and he proposed to me. Since then, we've had many such short trips.
2. I want to tell you about the _____ of King Arthur. It's a very old story, though it's probably not true.
3. I'd like to speak about _____ I rode my motorcycle for hundreds of kilometres around Inner Mongolia. It was a fantastic _____.

4. One thing that really helped me to learn Spanish was the time that I competed in a Spanish . As well as giving a long talk, we also had to recite famous and act in a with the other contestants.
5. The story I really like is the “Cinderella”, which is about the girl with two ugly sisters who marries a prince.

Language step 2 Prepositions of Time & Time Phrases

Let's see how the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean, use prepositions of time and time phrases.

Sophia	I want to talk about a story called “The Boy Who Cried Wolf”. <i>When I was a child...</i>
Mike	...It was a 5-a-side football competition held when I was working for my last company, <i>about four years ago...</i>
Jean	I'd like to talk about <i>the time that I was late for an exam. It was in my last year at secondary school, when I was taking my final exams...</i>

As you can see from the above model answer extracts, it's important to use prepositions of time or time phrases in your monologue to explain when the past event happened like a native speaker. First, remind yourself of the following essential prepositions of time for specific times:

last (weeks, weekends, months, years, festivals)

...*last weekend...*

...*last month...*

in (months, seasons, years, long periods of time)

...*in December...*

...*in 1979...*

on (days, special days)

...*on the 5th of November 2005...*

...*on my parents' 25th wedding anniversary...*

at (specific times, noons, midnights, festivals)

...*at noon on my birthday...*

...*at Christmas...*

during (months, seasons, long festivals, long periods of time)

...*during the Tet holiday...*

...*during the spring...*

You can also use the following words and phrases for unspecific times:

around /about (times, months, occasions, festivals, special days)

...around Christmas...

About my 10th birthday...

once

Once I went on a school trip.

I attended a strange party once.

one day

One day I watched a football match with my cousin.

One day I took a bus into the countryside.

a few years ago

A few years ago, I was late for work.

I was late for work a few years ago.

quite a while ago /some time ago

I started going to English corners quite a while ago.

Some time ago, a friend gave me this piece of advice.

when

When I was a child...

I went on a trip when I was at university.



Before cannot be used to replace ago. Generally speaking, after **before**, we should use a time phrase or clause; therefore, instead of saying It happened a few years *before*, you should either say It happened a few years *ago*, or It happened a few years *before* I went to university.

Exercise 24.2: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate prepositions of time or time phrases to complete the sentences below.

1. I was studying at school...
A. During B. In C. When
2. I think it was my 8th birthday that my family...
A. at B. on C. when
3. August 2008 I bought tickets for the Olympics.
A. In B. At C. On

4. I travelled by myself _____ years ago.
 A. some time B. a few C. about
5. My friends and I saw the TV show _____ the summer vacation.
 A. during B. about C. on
6. I remember the match very clearly; it only happened _____ week!
 A. in B. during C. last
7. _____ I was late for my dentist appointment...
 A. Some time B. During C. Once
8. The appointment was _____ 3:35 p.m.
 A. on B. at C. about
9. I graduated from university _____, so I haven't had classes or exams recently.
 A. quite a while ago B. some time C. one day
10. I was at work _____ when my boss came and told me...
 A. one day B. some time C. quite a while
11. I caught the plane home _____ Easter, so all the family were together.
 A. on B. in C. around

Language step 3 **The Past Continuous & Past Simple and Past Perfect & Past Simple for Setting a Scene**

Let's look at the model answer extracts by the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

- Sophia ...My mother would lie next to me on the bed and read a different story every night. *When she was reading*, I would often lay my head on her chest and listen to the voices she made for the different characters in the stories...
- Mike ...It *was* a 5-a-side football competition held *when I was working* for my last company, about four years ago...
- Jean I'd like to talk about the time that I was late for an exam. It *was* in my last year at secondary school, *when I was taking* my final exams...

Notice that in the above model answers, the candidates all set a scene of their monologues by using the past continuous and past simple to help them say when the event occurred.

Past continuous & past simple

When using the past continuous and past simple, the shorter past simple action happened during the longer past continuous (**was/were + verb-ing**) action.

Let's look at the two structures of the past continuous and past simple again:

(while/when) + was/were + verb-ing + (when) + past verb

While/When I was studying at university, I heard an interesting story.

I was studying at university when I heard an interesting story.

(when) + past verb + (while/when) + was/were + verb-ing

I heard an interesting story while/when I was studying at university.

When I wrote this letter, I was travelling back to my university.

Past perfect & past simple

You can also use the past perfect and past simple to set a scene of your monologue.

The past perfect (**had + past participle**) action happened before the past simple action. The two structures of the past perfect and past simple are:

had (already) + past participle + past verb

I had studied at university for a few months before my teacher told me...

Because I had already performed really well on the school sports day, the headmaster made me attend another competition.

past verb + had (already) + past participle

My teacher told me something really important after I had studied at university for a few months.

The headmaster made me attend another competition because I had already performed really well on school sports day.

Exercise 24.3: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate forms of the past continuous & past simple or past perfect & past simple to complete the sentences.

1. My friends and I _____ football in the street when a car _____ up and squashed the ball.
A. were playing; driving B. were playing; drove C. played; drove
2. I _____ to listen to BBC programmes when I _____ for my university entrance exams.
A. started; was studying B. was starting; studied C. had started; was studying
3. While I _____ in Japan, I _____ to take a trip to Tokyo.
A. had travelled; was deciding B. was travelling; decided C. travelled; was deciding

4. I _____ quite a few parties in my house, so I _____ it was only fair that someone else have a party.
 A. have had; thought B. was having; think C. had had; thought
5. I only _____ I didn't have my wallet after we _____ for about 30 miles.
 A. realised; had travelled B. had realised; travelled C. realised; were travelling

The formula

For STAGE 2 of a past event monologue, you must: Say why it happened, where it happened and who was there.

Language steps	
1. Use the passive voice for location or cause of events accurately.	The party <i>was held</i> in a restaurant.
2. Use prepositions of location correctly.	She lived <i>above</i> a Chinese restaurant. There were many trees <i>along</i> the river bank.
3. Use relationship, occupation and group words accurately.	My <i>uncle</i> , who lived in Ha Noi, was an <i>engineer</i> .

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
shepherd	noun	a person responsible for taking care of sheep	I think it must be quite nice to be a shepherd as you have no stress or anything to worry about, just sit in fields all day with your sheep.
find	verb	to think, feel a certain way about something or somebody	I find Ben really boring; all he does is talk about himself and his car.
all over somewhere		everywhere in a particular place	My husband is so messy; whenever I come home I always find his dirty clothes, plates and cups all over the living room, kitchen and bedroom.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
senior	adjective	high-level; high-ranking	We are only low-level staff; the decision about who will be the next CEO of the company will be made by senior management.
out of shape		saying that somebody is unfit, not in a good physical condition	Although it was really hot on the beach, I didn't feel comfortable taking my T-shirt off like the other guys because I'm so out of shape.
goalkeeper	noun	the player in certain sports who protects the goal for their team	Stephanie never agreed to be the goalkeeper in hockey because she was too scared of getting hit by the ball or other players.
loads	noun/ adverb	(informal) a lot; very many; very much	I love you loads./I can't come to the party; I've got loads of work to do.
revise	verb	to study something again in preparation for an exam	It's not surprising that Bob didn't do well in the history exam; he didn't revise at all.
all-nighter	noun	(informal) spending the whole night studying, either writing homework or preparing for an exam	I must go to sleep early tonight; I'm exhausted after doing an all-nighter last night.
cram	verb	to study very hard and learn many things in a very short period of time, usually before an exam	Most students have a habit of trying to cram before their exams, though this isn't a very effective way to study.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...In the story there was a boy who was a shepherd. His job was to look after his father's sheep in the fields outside his village, but he found it very boring to be by himself all day...

Mike ...The competition was organised by a national football association, and teams from all over the country came to my hometown to compete. The other members of our team were all my colleagues, who either worked in different departments to me or were more senior managers than I was. Most of us were quite out

of shape, and a few players were getting a little bit too old to play competitive football. Our main concern though was our goalkeeper, Mark, who was absolutely awful!...

Jean ...There were loads of exams and I had been revising really hard in preparation for them, especially my English exam. I had studied so hard that I got more and more tired as time went by. Then, the night before my English exam, I did an all-nighter to try and cram as much as I could...

Language step 1 The Passive Voice for Location or Cause of Events

In his model answer, Mike says: ...The competition *was organised* by a national football association...

When talking about a past event, native speakers will often use the passive voice to say why or where an event occurred in the past.

You may remember the passive voice from previous lessons, but remind yourself of its structure: **be + past participle (+ by + agent)**

I was given a present for my 8th birthday.

The party was held in an office.

I was told the story *by my teacher*.

The competition was organised *by my school*.

I was taken to the swimming pool *by my father*.

Exercise 24.4: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct passive forms of the verbs in brackets.

- Our basketball matches (play) at the local park.
- I (invite) to the party my sister-in-law.
- Lots of stories (read) to me my grandparents.
- I (promote) my boss, and as a result I became the manager of my colleagues.
- The English corners at university (teach) in a corner of the library.
- We (take) to the cinema my aunt before she took us to lunch in a really expensive restaurant.
- The Christmas tree (carry) into the living room and then my sister and I spent ages decorating it.
- Thankfully, my plane ticket to Japan (buy) for me my parents.

Language step 2 Prepositions of Location

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use prepositions of location.

Sophia ...His job was to look after his father's sheep *in* the fields *outside* his village, but he found it very boring to be by himself all day...

Mike ...The other members of our team were all my colleagues, who either worked *in* different departments to me or were more senior managers than I was...

Obviously, when you are talking about a past event, you need to say where it happened. To do this well, you need to use prepositions of location correctly.

Remind yourself of these prepositions of location:

in + an enclosed or larger place

...*in* my house...

...*in* Vietnam...

at + a specific place or location

...*at* the market...

...*at* the centre of the page...

on + a surface or road

...*on* the highway...

...*on* the wall...

over/above + a certain place or location

...*above* the building...

...*over* the bridge...

next to/beside/by + a certain place or location

...*by* the lake...

...*next to* the post office...

...*beside* a Chinese restaurant...

opposite/across from + a certain place or location

...*opposite* the bank...

...*across from* the drugstore...

between + two places or locations

...*between* Saigon and Ha Noi...

...*between* the mountains...

in front of + a certain place or location

...*in front of* my house...

...*in front of* the Rex Hotel...

outside of (a town / city)

...*outside of* Ho Chi Minh City...

near (to)

...*near* the zoo...

...*near (to)* London...

far from

..*far from* home...

..*far from* the gas station...

Exercise 24.5: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate prepositions of location from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- I was sitting _____ the living room when my mother told me a great documentary was going to be _____ TV.
A. at; on B. in; at C. in; on
- An interesting story I heard as a child was about Yu Gong, who lived _____ a mountain.
A. outside B. beside C. inside
- I was later for the meeting than anyone else because I lived so _____ the office. Ben's house, on the other hand, is just _____ where we work.
A. far from; opposite B. outside of; near to C. above; in front of
- I once went to a fantastic party _____ the beach.
A. on B. in C. over
- The basketball tickets my brother bought were fantastic; there was only a few metres _____ our seats and the basketball players.
A. outside of B. in front of C. between
- A great journey I had a few years ago was when my wife and I flew in a helicopter _____ the Grand Canyon in the USA.
A. over B. under C. in front of
- I remember having my photograph taken _____ the Great Wall when a bird landed on my head.
A. outside B. far from C. in front of
- Last year I went to Can Gio and visited the Mangrove Forest just _____ the centre of Ho Chi Minh City.
A. next to B. outside of C. between

Language step 3 Relationship, Occupation and Group Words

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the relationship, occupation and group words in their monologues.

Sophia ...In the story there was a boy who was a *shepherd*. His job was to look after his *father's* sheep in the fields outside his village, but he found it very boring to be by himself all day...

Mike ...The other members of our team were all my *colleagues*, who either worked in different departments to me or were more senior *managers* than I was...Our main concern though was our *goalkeeper*, Mark, who was absolutely awful!...

Most past events native speakers talk about involve other people as in the above model answers. You should similarly use relationship, occupation and group words to describe the people involved.

We've already looked at some words of relatives, occupations and social positions (Person Monologue Stage 1, Language Step 1). The following table contains a few of these words to remind you, as well as words to describe groups of people.

Relatives	Occupations	Relationships	Groups
grandparents	accountant	friend of a friend	a crowd of people
aunt	waiter/waitress	next-door neighbour	loads of people
uncle	musician	colleague	a big group of people
			(sport) supporters
			party-goers
			a tour group
			audience
			guests
			passengers
			players

You can also use the following structure to introduce and describe the people in your past event monologue (for more information about relative clauses, see Person Monologue Stage 1, Language Step 2).

person + relative clause

Susan, *who was an accountant with HSBC*, was waiting for me outside.

My grandfather, *who was a very kind and gentle man*, got so angry that he...

All of the party-goers *who had been dancing all night* decided to go to another bar.

Exercise 24.6: Table Completion

Write the following words in the correct places in the table on the previous page.

friend of the family	acquaintance	spouse	mother-in-law
nephew	childhood friend	distant relation	

Now, think about who you are likely to talk about when you give a monologue about a person. Write the appropriate relationship and occupation words for these people in the table until it is complete.

Exercise 24.7: Rephrasing

Combine the following sentences. For each, write one sentence that combines both items of information using a relative clause.

For example:

Many students had been studying hard. They all decided to have a party after their exams.

→ All of the students who had been studying hard decided to have a party after their exams.

1. Simon gets carsick very easily. He felt very ill on the school bus one day.
2. Susan is very forgetful. She forgot her handbag.
3. Many tennis fans didn't manage to buy tickets. They all watched the match on TV screens outside.
4. Ralph was a friendly old man. He used to talk to me every day on my way home from school.
5. Lots of passengers hadn't bought a ticket. They were thrown off the bus.
6. Some members of the tour group were American. They didn't understand what I said.

The formula

For STAGE 3 of a past event monologue, you must: Say what happened.

Language steps

1. Use direct and indirect speech accurately.

He said he would never go to university.

She said, 'You are my best friend.'

2. Use the past simple with sequence markers correctly.

My cousin went next door to get the ball. *Shortly afterwards* he came running back...

3. Use the past continuous & past simple and past perfect & past simple with adverbs of surprise.

While we *were cycling* along the road, *suddenly* a man *jumped* out of the trees!

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
play a trick on somebody		to confuse somebody or cause somebody a problem for one's own amusement	Every year, April 1 is a great day in our office because everybody tries to play a trick on each other.
intimidated	adjective	feeling frightened or nervous because you are not confident in a situation	Students of a new language often feel intimidated speaking in front of their classmates.
draw	noun/verb	when two teams/players have an equal score and so both sides neither lose nor win	If there is a draw in the World Cup final, the teams have to take part in a penalty shoot-out to decide who wins the cup.
manage	verb	to succeed in doing something	Unfortunately, Shirley didn't manage to get enough points in her exams to enter the university.
get sent off		to be ordered to leave a game/match because you have behaved badly or broken the rules	David Beckham is a very popular player now, but after he got sent off in the 1998 World Cup, lots of English football fans were extremely angry with him.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
referee	noun	the person in charge of a game who makes sure the rules are followed	Most football fans and players shout at referees, but they're an essential part of every match.
whistle	noun	a small piece of metal object that you put in your mouth to make a loud, high sound	In some, the umpires don't use whistles when a problem happens, but just shout or use their loud microphone.
stream in/out/through		to move continuously in one direction	When school finishes, you can see hundreds of students streaming out of their classrooms.
why/how/what when/who/ where on earth		used when you are very surprised, angry or confused about something	When I was young, I played with my friends near the sea and got covered in mud. I looked really strange, so when I got home, my mother asked me where on earth I'd been to.
give somebody a look/get a look		to show somebody/receive a disapproving or angry expression	At university, there was a huge party where all the players dressed in women's clothes. They got lots of looks from the teachers and staff.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...In the story there was a boy who was a shepherd...Once, he decided to play a trick on his fellow villagers. He ran into the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!" Immediately, all the villagers stopped working and ran to the field to help protect the sheep. When they found there was no wolf, the boy laughed at them. Another day, the boy played the same trick on the villagers and again laughed at them when they came running into the field looking for a wolf. One day, a real wolf did get into his field and start attacking his sheep. Again, the boy ran into the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!" But to his surprise nobody believed him and all his sheep got killed...

Mike ...Two weeks before the competition we all started playing football and training together, though not very seriously. On the day, we arrived at the football arena quite early, and we all waited nervously for the matches to begin. Looking at the other teams, we felt quite intimidated because many of them looked much younger and fitter than our team. Anyway we played our group matches, and did surprisingly well; we managed to draw most matches and even won a couple. I

was also pleased because I had managed to score the most goals for our team – usually I don't score at all because I play in defence. We got through to the next round where we played a team that was very aggressive. The match was very close but right at the end one of their players got sent off for fouling me. One of my teammates passed me the ball then I ran to the other end and smashed it into their goal – just before the referee blew the whistle!...

Jean ...I remember studying by myself in my bedroom and feeling exhausted. I'm not really sure what happened next, but I must have fallen asleep when I was studying because the next thing I knew it was the next day and the sunlight was streaming through the window. Straight away, I started panicking as it felt very late. Looking at my watch, I found that I was already 20 minutes late for my exam! So without showering or changing my clothes, I ran out of the house and caught the bus to school. I think I was about 40 minutes late by the time I entered the examination hall. As soon as my teacher saw me, he asked what on earth I thought I was doing. But he didn't wait for an answer and just helped me to find my seat. I got a few looks from my classmates, but of course nobody said anything. I remember hurriedly opening my exam paper, taking a deep breath and then writing as fast as I could...

Language step 1 Direct & Indirect Speech

In her model answer, Sophia says: ...In the story there was a boy who was a shepherd...He ran into the village *shouting* "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!"...

There are two ways to report what somebody has said: direct speech and indirect speech.

Direct speech

The above example is direct speech as Sophia uses quotation marks to say what another person said. (Obviously quotation marks can't be heard by the examiner during the IELTS test, but you can still use this way to report speech.)

Other examples are:

She always says: "Wear more clothes; don't catch a cold."

He said: "I really don't like this party."

I said: "I will not go home now."

This is probably the easiest way to report what somebody has said because you do not need to change the language used.

Indirect speech

When you do not use quotation marks and instead use what the person has said as part of your own sentence, this is indirect speech. When using indirect speech, you usually have to change the pronouns, time markers and the tenses of all verbs in the sentence.

The tense should go back one tense further into the past, so that present simple becomes past simple, past simple becomes past perfect, etc.

Examples:

She said: "I love you." → She said that she *loved* him.

I said: "I have never loved you." → I said that I *had* never *loved* her.

When reporting questions, yes/no questions should be changed using *if*, while questions that use question words such as *how*, *who*, *why*, etc. should be included in the indirect speech.

Examples:

I asked her: "Will you go?" → I asked her *if* she *would* go.

She asked him: "Why don't you love me?" → She asked him *why* he *didn't* love her.

Look at the following examples:

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
My mother said: "I won't have time to read you a story."	My mother said that she wouldn't have time to read me a story.
Our teacher said: "Stay together so you won't get lost."	Our teacher told us to stay together so that we wouldn't get lost.
She said: "John was hungry yesterday."	She said that John had been hungry the day before.
He said: "Mary will go to New York tomorrow."	He said that Mary would go to New York the next day.
She asked him: "Do you like ice cream?"	She asked him if he liked ice cream.
The teacher asked: "Why didn't you come to class today?"	The teacher asked me why I hadn't gone to class that day.



In indirect speech, the verbs *could*, *should*, *would*, *might*, *must*, *need*, *ought to*, *used to* are kept unchanged.

Exercise 24.8: Rephrasing

Rewrite the following sentences, changing them from direct to indirect speech.

1. He said: "I'm Vietnamese."
2. She said: "I'm not going to study next year."
3. He asked me: "Can you come to my house tonight?"
4. She told him: "I don't love you anymore."
5. I said: "I won't be able to leave the party now."
6. My dad said: "I went to Ha Noi many years ago."
7. I asked Jack: "Where is Jill?"
8. I said to my parents: "I can't tell you as it's a secret."
9. He said: "I have never been to Ba Dinh Square."

Language step 2 The Past Simple with Sequence Markers

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use the past simple with sequence markers.

Sophia ...In the story there was a boy who was a shepherd...He *ran* into the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!" *Immediately*, all the villagers *stopped* working and *ran* to the field to help protect the sheep. *When they found* there was no wolf, the boy *laughed* at them...

Jean ...I remember studying by myself in my bedroom and feeling exhausted. I'm not really sure what *happened next*, but I must have fallen asleep when I was studying because *the next* thing I *knew* it *was* the next day and the sunlight was streaming through the window. *Straight away*, I *started* panicking as it *felt* very late. Looking at my watch, I *found* that I *was* already 20 minutes late for my exam! So without showering or changing my clothes, I *ran* out of the house and *caught* the bus to school...

When describing a past event, you need to use the past simple accurately. You should also use sequence markers to structure your monologue – this makes it clear what order things happened in and also makes you sound much more like a native speaker.

Look at the following useful sequence markers:

to start with
 at the beginning
 at first
 as soon as
 immediately
 straight away
 by the time that
 then
 so
 afterwards
 following that
 following on from that
 after (that)
 next
 soon after / afterwards
 shortly after / afterwards
 in the end
 finally

Examples:

To start with I felt very nervous, but *after* a few dances I relaxed and *in the end* had a really great time.

As soon as we entered the stadium we realised we were very early.

I watched a documentary about wild animals a few years ago. *Following that*, I decided not to eat meat anymore because I think it's cruel.

Exercise 24.9: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate sequence markers from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. I remember when I started learning Italian by using a CD. _____, I found it very useful and I learnt a lot quickly. But _____, when I went to Italy and tried to speak Italian, I had lots of problems and realised it wasn't a good way to learn a language.
 A. To start with; as soon as B. At first; next C. At the beginning; finally
2. The party started at 7 p.m., but I was really late. _____ I got there, most of the guests had already left.
 A. By the time that B. As soon as C. Immediately

3. I got in a bus in Tokyo to go to Kyoto but _____ leaving the bus station, we crashed into a car.
 A. following that B. shortly after C. afterwards
4. At school there was an organised trip to the Cu Chi Tunnels. _____ we ate ice cream and sang songs on the way home.
 A. So B. Next C. Afterwards
5. I really loved the end of my high school although there were lots of exams. _____, it was really hard work, _____ I was tired all the time. _____ I got used to the excitement of the exams and rushing to write so much, and found that I actually enjoyed the exams!
 A. At the beginning; then; Following that
 B. To start with; so; Then
 C. At first; following that; In the end
6. In the story, Goldilocks eats the bears' porridge. _____, she feels really tired and sleeps in one of their beds. _____, the three bears come home and find her.
 A. Soon afterwards; In the end
 B. As soon as; Next
 C. Following that; So

Language step 3 The Past Continuous & Past Simple and Past Perfect & Past Simple with Adverbs of Surprise

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use adverbs of surprise in their monologues.

Sophia ...Again, the boy ran into the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf killing my sheep!" But *to his surprise* nobody believed him and all his sheep got killed...

Jean ...I'm not really sure what happened next, but I must have fallen asleep when I was studying because *the next thing I knew* it was the next day and the sunlight was streaming through the window...

Notice that both Sophia and Jean use adverbs of surprise in their monologues. These are very frequently used by native speakers when they talk about past events or stories as they add interest and drama.

Look at the following highly useful adverbs of surprise:

suddenly
 all of a sudden

to (one's) surprise
 out of the blue
 surprisingly
 unexpectedly
 unbelievably
 incredibly
 the next thing I knew



When **when** or **and then** appears in the middle of a sentence, they are put in front of **suddenly**, **all of a sudden**, **to (one's) surprise** and **out of the blue**.


These phrases are commonly used in combination with the past continuous and past simple or past perfect and past simple as in the examples below:

with past continuous & past simple

We were quietly walking along the road *when suddenly* a car crashed right in front of us.
I was sleeping in my parents' car on the way to the airport *and then the next thing I knew* we were flying in an aeroplane!
We were watching the basketball match on TV *when* the electricity *unexpectedly stopped*.
When we were learning the first conditional, the activity our English teacher *made* us do *was surprisingly* enjoyable and useful.

with past perfect & past simple

I had just sat down in the restaurant *when all of a sudden* a woman came to my table and threw a glass of wine over me!
 My girlfriend *had told* me that there *was* a problem with our flat, and *asked* me to come home quickly. *Incredibly*, when I *got* home I *found* all my friends and family *were* there to give me a surprise birthday party!
I had prepared for the presentation for a very long time and although I *was* nervous, it *went unbelievably* well.
 My classmates and I *hadn't prepared* well for the exam and so *were* really worried. *Out of the blue*, our teacher *told* us it was cancelled – it *was* such a relief!
 We *had asked* our parents for a pet dog many, many times and they always *said* no. Then one day, *to our surprise* they *said* yes!

 **Exercise 24.10: Matching**

Match the sentence halves 1-9 with the sentence halves A-I.

1. I had left my house just wearing shorts and a T-shirt when...
2. My class was visiting an old castle together when...
3. I had volunteered to join a classroom activity and then...

4. I was trying to paint a picture – and not doing very well – when...
 5. We had been told that it would take a long time to get through customs at the border...
 6. I was delivering newspapers for my paper round when...
 7. We were watching the football match in the stadium when...
 8. We hadn't seen my mother's family for many years before that Tet holiday...
 9. I didn't want to watch this particular programme although my mother had told me to...
-
- A. ...but when we got there, it was incredibly easy and straightforward.
 - B. ...However, when I watched it I found it was unexpectedly fascinating.
 - C. ...unbelievably our teacher started buying us all ice creams!
 - D. ...out of the blue, a footballer jumped off the pitch and into where we were standing!
 - E. ...suddenly an enormous dog started chasing me!
 - F. ...to my surprise my cat ran across the painting.
 - G. ...But her family was surprisingly friendly and generous with us.
 - H. ...all of a sudden it started to rain really heavily.
 - I. ...the next thing I knew I was doing a role-play in front of everybody.

The formula

For STAGE 4 of a past event monologue, you must: Say why the event was special and how you feel/felt about it.

Language steps

1. Use adjectives for describing events & adjectives of feeling well.

This event was important to me because it was such a *crazy* time!

I feel very *nostalgic* whenever I think of those times.

2. Use the third conditional & present perfect to express the importance of an event accurately.

If I hadn't had this experience, I would never have had the confidence to learn the language.

3. Use concluding expressions correctly.

I wish I hadn't done it; I still feel stupid whenever I think about it!

Native speaker words

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answers on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
the moral of something		the practical lesson or an experience or story that refers to what one learns from it about how to behave	Last week I invited all my boyfriend for not phoning me or sending me a text message for ages. Eventually I realised that my phone had no money on it. The moral of that story is that I should check the facts first before I blame somebody.
take part in something		to join others in doing an activity	When I was young I was too shy and nervous to take part in school plays.
horrible	adjective	very unpleasant; very bad	I don't know why so many women ask men what they look like before they go out; even if they look horrible the men will always say they look good.
pretty	adverb	quite; extremely	I have to say that last night's party was pretty boring. There were only a few interesting people there.
anxious	adjective	worried and nervous	Before meeting a boy on a date I always feel really anxious; I worry about my clothes, my hair and whether he will like me.
worried sick		extremely worried	A few years ago I went out with my friends but didn't take my mobile phone. When I got home really late, I remember my mum being really angry with me and saying that she had been worried sick - she had even phoned all the local hospitals to make sure I hadn't been in an accident.
wonder	verb	to think; to ask yourself questions about something	Whenever I spend the night on my uncle's fishing boat, I always look at the stars and wonder how big the universe is and whether there are different people on different planets.
punctual	adjective	arriving or doing something at the right time, not late	To make a good first impression, you should never be late for a job interview; always be punctual.

Model answers

Read the model answers from the three IELTS candidates, Sophia, Mike and Jean.

Sophia ...The moral of this story is that you shouldn't lie, otherwise people won't believe you – even when you are speaking the truth. I liked this story as a child and I think it has a good message. I will definitely read this story to my children in the future.

Mike ...Although we lost the next match and so didn't win any cups or anything, I was really pleased with my performance. Besides, it was a really fun day for all of us. I've always liked playing football, but that was probably the most enjoyable football competition I've ever taken part in.

Jean ...Needless to say, this was a pretty horrible experience for me to go through. Apart from feeling so anxious on the day of the exam, I was also worried sick about what my result was going to be for weeks afterwards. In the end, my exam result was much better than I had expected, although not great. I got into a good university, but I always wonder what my life would have been like if I had done better in the exam and gone to a better university. This event taught me the importance of not being late – I've always been punctual ever since!

Language step 1 Adjectives for Describing Events & Adjectives of Feeling

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Mike and Jean, use certain adjectives in their monologues.

Mike ...I was really *pleased* with my performance. Besides, it was a really *fun* day for all of us. I've always liked playing football, but that was probably the most *enjoyable* football competition I've ever taken part in.

Jean ...Needless to say, this was a pretty *horrible* experience for me to go through. Apart from feeling so *anxious* on the day of the exam, I was also *worried sick* about what my result was going to be for weeks afterwards...

As you can see in Mike's and Jean's model answers, you should use adjectives for describing events in your monologue.

Here are some more adjectives for you to use:

Interesting	Strange	Surprising	Good	Bad
funny	unusual	amazing*	inspiring*	horrible
amusing*	bizarre	astounding*	life-changing	terrible

Interesting	Strange	Surprising	Good	Bad
interesting*	weird	astonishing*	enjoyable	awful
fascinating*	mysterious	awe-inspiring*	wonderful	depressing*
curious	peculiar	incredible	fun	unpleasant
stimulating*	random	breathtaking	refreshing*	frustrating*
thought-provoking	crazy		encouraging*	disappointing*
enlightening*	wild		moving*	embarrassing*

In addition to describing what the past event was like, you should also talk about how you felt. This makes your monologue more interesting to the examiner and explains why this event was important to you.

Let's look at some useful native speaker adjectives of feeling:

embarrassed

irate

incredulous

moved

pleased

delighted

thrilled

over the moon

enthusiastic

reassured

satisfied

Here are some examples using both kinds of adjectives:

I felt extremely *satisfied* to see my paper be published in the school newspaper.

Although it was *embarrassing* at the time, when I think about it now I guess it's pretty *amusing*.

I was really *moved* to visit a place with such an *awe-inspiring* history.

Exercise 24.11: Table Completion

The above adjectives for describing events that are marked with * can all be changed into adjectives of feeling. Complete the following table by changing the adjectives for describing events into adjectives of feeling.

Adjectives for Describing Events	Adjectives of Feeling
amazing	
amusing	

Adjectives for Describing Events	Adjectives of Feeling
astonishing	
astounding	
awe-inspiring	
depressing	
disappointing	
embarrassing	
encouraging	
enlightening	
fascinating	
frustrating	
inspiring	
interesting	
moving	
refreshing	
stimulating	

Have you noticed the pattern for changing adjectives for describing events into adjectives of feeling? Think of some more adjectives that can describe events and feelings and write them in the above table.

Language step 2 The Third Conditional & Present Perfect to Express the Importance of an Event

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Mike and Jean, stress the importance of a past event in their monologues.

Mike ...I've always liked playing football, but *that was probably the most enjoyable football competition I've ever taken part in...*

Jean ...This event taught me the importance of not being late – *I've always been punctual ever since!*

In your monologue about a past event, you should also tell the examiner what you learned from it or how it has affected your life. This is a great way of saying why the event was important.

To do this, you can use either the third conditional or the present perfect.

The third conditional

We've already looked at the third conditional in previous lessons, but just remind yourself of its structure before looking at some examples below.

If + had(n't) + past participle, would(n't) have + past participle

If I hadn't participated in the speaking competition, I wouldn't have had the confidence to continue studying Italian.

would(n't) have + past participle + if + had(n't) + past participle

I probably wouldn't have chosen architecture for my major if our school hadn't taken us to St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

The present perfect to express the importance of an event

To talk about the importance of a past event, you can use the present perfect in the following ways:

(event) was + the superlative (type of event) I have ever + past participle

That match was the best match I have ever played in.

This story was the most memorable tale I have ever heard.

since (event) I have (adverb of frequency) + past participle

Since I saw that TV programme, I have often thought about all the animals that become extinct every year.

Since that party I have been much more interested in foreign cultures and customs.



Exercise 24.12: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct third conditional, present perfect, superlative or passive forms of the words in brackets.

- If I _____ (not be) late to work that day, I possibly _____ (be) promoted.
- I _____ (not take) up photography as a hobby if I _____ (not travel) through the Vietnamese countryside.
- If I _____ (go) to a different university, I'm sure I _____ (not make) such good friends or _____ (enjoy) myself so much.
- I _____ (keep) in contact with those old workmates if I _____ (not lose) that cell phone.
- That class was _____ (good) I _____ (ever have).
- Since my mother gave me this advice, I _____ (always try) to pay more attention to other people's feelings.
- That family day out was _____ (exciting) day trip I _____ (ever be) on.
- Since that interview I _____ (never arrive) late for anything – honestly!

Language step 3 Concluding Expressions

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Jean, use concluding expressions.

Sophia ...I liked this story as a child and I think it has a good message. I will definitely read this story to my children in the future.

Jean ...This event taught me the importance of not being late – I've always been punctual ever since!

When talking about a past event, native speakers will often use a concluding expression to sum up or conclude their monologue – you should too!

Here are our “top ten” concluding expressions:

The (event) taught me that...

Writing this letter and the effect it had on my friend taught me that making just small signs that you care about someone can have a big impact on their life.

The (event) was important to/for me because...

This trip was important to me because I learnt a lot about travelling alone and staying safe.

Through this experience, I learnt the importance of...

Through this experience, I learnt the importance of studying as well as I could, and not being lazy.

I will always remember...

I will always remember that sunny afternoon in the park with my boyfriend.

I will never forget...

I will never forget watching that crazy basketball match with my father.

Overall, it was a rewarding experience and I learnt a lot.

I'm glad I did it – it was a very (adjective) experience.

I'm glad I did it – it was a very inspiring experience.

I would love to do it again if I had the chance.

Although I enjoyed it at the time, I wouldn't want to do it again because...

Although I enjoyed it at the time, I wouldn't want to do it again because I don't think it would be as much fun now that I'm older.

In the future, I will...

In the future, I will try to share the same piece of advice with others.

Exercise 24.13: Gap Fill

Write the concluding expressions below in the correct spaces.

this event taught me	important for me	I learnt the importance of
I will never forget	in the future, I will	
a very stimulating experience	I would love to do it again	
I wouldn't want to do it again	rewarding experience and I learnt a lot	

- I'm glad I did it – it was _____.
- Through this experience _____ not believing everything I am told.
- _____ make sure my children have the opportunity to do the same kind of things.
- _____ that everyone, even people younger than yourself, can give good advice – you just have to listen.
- _____ my 10th birthday party.
- Although I enjoyed it at the time, _____ because looking back I guess it was quite dangerous.
- Overall, it was a _____.
- It was _____ because it made me realise that people everywhere are basically the same.
- _____ if I had the chance.

Answer order

Remind yourself of the answer order you should use when giving a monologue about a past event.

Stage 1: Say what it was and when it happened.

Stage 2: Say why it happened, where it happened and who was there.

Stage 3: Say what happened.

Stage 4: Say why the event was special and how you feel/felt about it.

Exercise 24.14: Ordering

Using the answer order above, put the following extracts from a model answer into the correct order.

- I was out partying with my friends when...
- On the whole, it was an enlightening experience, though I certainly wouldn't want to do it again!
- Then suddenly, I realised...
- Interviewer: Tell me about a time you lost something.
- I got in a taxi and we started travelling on the way home...
- I want to tell you about the time I lost my mobile phone.

ĐỀ THI THỬ ĐẠI HỌC NĂM 2010

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1. Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

2. Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

3. Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

4. Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

5. Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

6. Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

Formula 25

Giving and Supporting Opinions

Aims

In the following lessons you'll learn how to give good discussion answers to IELTS Part Three questions.

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Giving and Supporting Opinions. This is a skill that you will need to use in all Part Three lessons. It is a basic native speaker discussion skill.

Do you think children should be made to wear a uniform to school?

Do you believe it is acceptable that animals are used for cosmetics testing?

Do you feel that city life is suitable for elderly people?

What do you think about there being a single international language?

The formula

To give and support opinions, you should:

Answer order

1. Introduce and state your opinions clearly.
2. Support your opinions with reasons or examples.

Language steps

1. Use native speaker expressions for giving and supporting opinions.

I believe that...

I feel that...

I hold the opinion that...

2. Use native speaker expressions for introducing opinions.

I think that...

I don't think that...

I am convinced that...

3. Use native speaker expressions for supporting your opinions.

It is good for...

It is essential for...

It has a positive effect on...

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
identity	noun	who somebody is; what makes somebody different to other people	She reacted very angrily when I said she should stop wearing a leather jacket and changing the colour of her hair to pink and green – she said these were part of her identity.
unity	noun	the concept/idea of being one, being a united group, being together, being the same as others in the same group	There has been a great sense of unity in the whole community after the terrible disaster.
snobbish	adjective	being arrogant, believing and acting like you are better or superior to others	He is incredibly snobbish. He thinks he's better than his classmates just because he has really expensive shoes and fashionable jackets.
ridicule	verb	to make fun of; to mock; to pick on; to criticise and make jokes about somebody	Sometimes kids can be quite cruel and ridicule their classmates and friends.
pick on		to make fun of; to mock; to be nasty to somebody unfairly	The boys always picked on Mike because he was smaller than any of the other boys in the class.
designer clothes		clothes made by famous, "highend" fashion designers; clothes and shoes with famous "names"	He's a really rich man. He is always wearing the latest designer clothes and likes to show them off.
discriminate (against)	verb	to treat somebody or a group of people differently (usually in a worse way) for a superficial reason such as the colour of their skin, sex, or age	In recent years, there have been a lot of new laws to stop black and Asian people being discriminated against by employers.
Inappropriate	adjective	unsuitable or not correct for a particular person or situation	Most people would agree that it's inappropriate to laugh, chat and smoke at a funeral.
patronising	adjective	having an attitude or behaviour of looking down on others; believing others to be inferior or less worthy or less able to think intelligently or make decisions of their own	I can't stand Ben, he's such a patronising idiot; he talks to me as if I am about ten years old and don't know anything!

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer	Do you think that children should wear a uniform to school?
Sophia	Yes, I think that children in middle school and high school should wear a uniform to school. I strongly believe that it is essential for giving children a sense of identity and unity. Young children can be very snobbish about fashion and often ridicule and pick on children who don't wear expensive or designer clothes. If all schoolchildren have to wear a uniform, they will all look the same and so poorer children won't be discriminated against by the richer children.
Interviewer	What about in university? Should university students all wear a uniform?
Sophia	Certainly not! We are all adults by the time we get to university, so I believe that we should have the freedom to choose what we want to wear and when we want to wear it. It would certainly be inappropriate to make university students wear a uniform, and incredibly patronising too!

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
convinced	adjective	certain; sure	Many people say that society is getting better and better, but I'm not convinced.
emphasis	noun	special stress laid upon, or importance attached to something	When I was in school, there was a strong emphasis on academic success rather than on doing well in sports.
academic	adjective	relating to schools, universities; studying in general rather than practical things	Universities in the UK are investing millions of pounds in their science departments. But this is mainly so that they can make scientific discoveries which they can sell, not just for purely academic reasons.
facilities	noun	the various buildings and equipment available for use at a certain place	The medical facilities at my local hospital are fantastic; all of the beds are brand-new, the buildings are well designed and the hospital has the latest machines for examining and testing for cancer, heart disease and other problems.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
co-operate	verb	to work together with other people in a group towards the same goal	The team did especially well in the competition because each member co-operated really well with the other members.
build (up)	verb	to develop; to make stronger (skills, abilities)	He's been building up his leadership skills since becoming manager of the team.
mature <i>matur</i>	adjective	mentally and emotionally developed; behaving well	Some people think that people under the age of 18 should be given the right to vote, but I don't agree; at that age nobody is mature enough to make such big decisions.
competitive	adjective	having or causing people to have a strong desire to compete with others	The banking industry is highly competitive – everyone is constantly striving and competing to do better than their co-workers so they can get better promotions and raises.

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer Do you think that young people should do more sport in schools today?

Mike I certainly do. I think that young people today are getting quite lazy and this is bad for their health. I'm convinced that schools put too much emphasis on academic subjects, so I firmly believe that good sports classes and sports facilities are very important.

Interviewer Do you believe that children can learn a lot from team sports?

Mike Yes, I do. Children need to learn to work in groups and co-operate as well as build leadership skills. Sport is also good for children to learn to be competitive in a mature manner. It's also very important that children keep fit and healthy. For example, it's been proven that children who learn to play team sports grow up to be more understanding and co-operative adults.

Language step 1 Giving and Supporting Opinions

To express your opinions like a native, you must:

1. Introduce and give your opinions clearly.
2. Support your opinions with reasons or examples.

Let's look at the model answers from the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike.

Interviewer Do you think that children should wear a uniform to school?

Sophia Yes, I think that children in middle school and high school should wear a uniform to school. *I strongly believe that it is essential for giving children a sense of identity and unity. Young children can be very snobbish about fashion and often ridicule and pick on children who don't wear expensive or designer clothes...*

Interviewer Do you believe that children can learn a lot from team sports?

Mike Yes, I do. *Children need to learn to work in groups and co-operate as well as build leadership skills. Sport is also good for children to learn to be competitive in a mature manner. It's also very important that children keep fit and healthy. For example, it's been proven that children who learn to play team sports grow up to be more understanding and co-operative adults.*

Giving and Supporting Opinions is a basic skill you'll need for any type of IELTS Part III answer. You should use this skill in every one of your Part III lessons and consider it as a basic requirement for all native speaker discussions.

Notice how Sophia and Mike both follow their introduction of opinion with reasons and examples. Sophia says that she believes that children in middle school and high school should wear a school uniform because:

...it is essential for giving children a sense of identity and unity.

...children can be very snobbish about fashion and often ridicule and pick on children who don't wear expensive or designer clothes.

When asked whether university students should wear a uniform, Sophia says that she thinks they certainly should not and gives her reason:

We are all adults...we should have the freedom to choose what we want to wear...

● Remember to state your opinion and then give a reason or example to back it up. It's a simple formula:

opinion

reasons / examples

Exercise 25.1: Matching

Match the sentence halves 1-6 (opinions) with the sentence halves A-F (reasons / examples).

1. The law that people can't steal is a good law...
2. Charities are really important in a society...
3. No; it's not necessary to give expensive gifts to people...

4. It is very important that the government protect the environment more...
 5. The Internet is a great educational tool...
 6. It is important that all children learn to read from a young age...
- ^ A. ...because we should help people who are less fortunate than ourselves.
 - ^ B. ...because it gives us instant access to a wealth of information.
 - ^ C. ...because clean food and water are essential for the health and happiness of a nation.
 - ^ D. ...for it is the thought and intention which carries more meaning than the price of a present.
 - ^ E. ...because in a competitive society, a good education is vital if you want to get a good job.
 - ^ F. ...because a society would not function properly if people stole other people's possessions.

Language step 2 Introducing Opinions

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, introduce their opinions.

Interviewer	Do you think that children should wear a uniform to school?
Sophia	<i>Yes, I think that children in middle school and high school should wear a uniform to school. I strongly believe that it is essential for giving children a sense of identity and unity...</i>
Interviewer	What about in university? Should university students all wear a uniform?
Sophia	<i>Certainly not! We are all adults by the time we get to university, so I believe that we should have the freedom to choose what we want to wear and when we want to wear it...</i>
Interviewer	Do you think that young people should do more sport in schools today?
Mike	<i>I certainly do. I think that young people today are getting quite lazy and this is bad for their health. I'm convinced that schools put too much emphasis on academic subjects, so I firmly believe that good sports classes and sports facilities are very important.</i>
Interviewer	Do you believe that children can learn a lot from team sports?
Mike	<i>Yes, I do. Children need to learn to work in groups and co-operate as well as build leadership skills...</i>

Notice how Sophia and Mike both use native speaker expressions to introduce their opinions.

Expressing agreement or disagreement with the question

- Yes, I do.
- Sure.

Certainly.
 Certainly not!
 Absolutely not!
 Not really.
 I'm not sure I agree.

Introducing opinion expressions

I believe that... / I think that...
 I don't believe that... / I don't think that...
 I really think that...
 I strongly believe that...
 I am of the opinion that...
 For me...
 The way I see it...
 I am convinced that...

Examples:

A: Do you think that vegetables are an important part of a diet?

B: *Sure. I think that* they give people a lot of vitamins.

A: Do you believe people should pay to enter public parks?

B: *No, absolutely not! The way I see it,* all public parks should be free for everyone.

Exercise 25.2: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

believe that	certainly do	convinced that	don't think
of the opinion	not really	strongly believe	

- I really _____ people are happier if they live in a big house rather than a small apartment. People need space to live in and space to think.
- I _____ that people should buy products from their own countries as much as possible, and not from outside.
- I am _____ it's very important to have good, friendly relationships with one's neighbours. It helps build community spirit and good feeling.
- Yes, I _____ ! I am firmly _____ that older people should be taken care of by their sons and daughters.
- I _____ young people should be made to do chores in the household because they need to spend their free time working towards their exams.
- _____. I think that animals have their rights too and shouldn't be used in scientific experiments.

Language step 3 Supporting Your Opinions

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia explains why students should wear a uniform.

Sophia ...I strongly believe that *it is essential for giving children a sense of identity and unity...*

Supporting a positive opinion

Look at these other positive expressions to say why something is a good thing:

- It's good for + verb-ing
- It's essential for + verb-ing
- It's vital for + verb-ing
- It's very important for + verb-ing / that + clause
- People should all + verb
- It gives us the opportunity / freedom to + verb
- People should make an effort to + verb

Examples:

I really think that *people should all try and eat healthily.*

A solid education *is essential for finding a good job.*

Better public transport *gives us the opportunity to stop using private vehicles which hurt the environment.*

Look at how Sophia expresses why making students in university wear a uniform would be bad.

Sophia ...*It would certainly be inappropriate to make university students wear a uniform, and incredibly patronising too!*

Supporting a negative opinion

Look at these other negative expressions to say why something is a bad thing:

- It would be inappropriate to + verb / for + noun
- It could have a bad effect on...
- It's not good for society if people...
- It's unfair to + verb / somebody...
- It's not necessary to + verb
- It's unethical to + verb
- It's unreasonable to + verb

Examples:

I'm convinced that *it would be inappropriate to make children under the age of 12 work for a living.*

I feel that *it's unfair to deny people health care just because they are poor.*

For me, *it's not necessary to make education free because it's already extremely cheap.*

Exercise 25.3: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate expressions from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. _____ make an effort to learn other languages because that is what enables countries to communicate openly.
A. People should all B. It gives us the opportunity to C. It's unreasonable to
2. Smoking should be banned from public places because _____ non-smokers to make them breathe in dangerous smoke.
A. it's unethical to B. it's not good for society if C. it's unfair to
3. _____ people are allowed total freedom of information because their minds could be corrupted by false news stories.
A. It could have a bad effect on B. It's not good for society if C. It's unfair to
4. _____ keep animals as pets because animals deserve to enjoy their native habitats.
A. People should all B. It's important that people C. It's unethical to
5. _____ to lie to people because we expect to be trusted and to be able to trust others.
A. It's very unreasonable B. It's not necessary to C. It's vital to
6. _____ the stability and safety of society that everyone is treated equally before the law.
A. It's very important that B. It's vital for C. It's essential

Extra language point **Techniques for Supporting Your Opinions**

Here are some really useful techniques for supporting your opinions.

Example

For example...

For instance...

Let me give an example...

Example:

For example, whenever I go to a bar there are always people smoking and I breathe in their smoke. This makes me a smoker even though I don't want to be.

Common sense

Everyone knows...

It's common knowledge that...

Example:

It's common knowledge that birds do not enjoy being trapped in cages!

Statistics

Use numbers.

Use figures to support an argument.

You don't have to know lots of complicated statistics, but if you do know some very general figures to back up what you want to say, then use them.

Example:

Traffic should be reduced in Beijing. *Over 1,000* new cars go onto the roads every day. This is becoming a major problem.

Expert opinion

According to...

To quote...

The book says...

I heard / read / saw somewhere that...

Example:

According to many experts, global warming is not actually scientifically proven to exist.

Exercise 25.4: Matching

Match the sentences 1-8 with their supporting opinion types A-D.

1. The latest research says that more women smoke in the UK than men.
 2. It is common knowledge that big cities are more expensive to live in than country towns.
 3. To quote Robert Frost, "Forgive me my nonsense, as I also forgive the nonsense of those that think they talk sense."
 4. I heard that almost 35% of 8th graders in the USA said they'd participated in musical activities in school.
 5. Everyone knows that children are naturally naughty and need to be strictly disciplined.
 6. Let me give you an example: only last week, I saw two young people helping an old lady across the street – therefore, I do believe that young people today are caring and kind.
 7. Of course global warming is a problem! Global temperatures will rise between 1°C and 6°C this century alone!
 8. I don't think much more can be done to help the elderly. I remember reading somewhere that the population of almost every country is aging rapidly, so that soon the elderly will far outnumber the young – we won't be able to afford to do more for them.
- A. Giving an example or personal anecdote to support an argument.
B. Stating that something is common sense to support an argument.
C. Using statistics to support an argument.
D. Stating expert opinion to support an argument.

Formula 26

Evaluating Two Different Opinions

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Evaluating Two Different Opinions.

Why do some people think that university life is the best stage in life while others disagree? Give reasons why some people hold the opinion that it is acceptable to eat meat, while others insist on being vegetarians.

Why are there many people in society who prefer to do sports in their free time, while there are others who would rather go shopping?

Suggest reasons why some people prefer to travel in groups, yet others prefer to travel alone.

The formula

To evaluate two different opinions, you should:

Answer order

1. Talk about which types of people hold which opinions.
2. State why different people hold these opinions.

Language steps

1. Talk about quantities of people and types of people in society.

The vast majority of working people think...

Most young students believe...

Many elderly people are of the opinion that...

2. Use transitional words and phrases to compare different opinions.

Some people believe that city life is stressful, *while* others find it exciting.

Many elderly people like to do calm, leisurely sports, *yet* there are some who still enjoy strenuous exercise.

3. Use adjectives and adjective phrases to say why people have different opinions.

They think it is *more convenient* than...

They believe it is *more rewarding*...

They feel that it is *better for*...

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
appealing	adjective	attractive or interesting	I can't understand why people like camping; sleeping in the middle of nowhere, with no showers or decent food isn't appealing to me!
footage	noun	scenes from a film or recorded by a video camera, usually scenes from news reports or documentaries	The footage of the war in Vietnam was shocking! It was horrible to see so many people dying and suffering.
report	verb	to recount or tell the facts of an event, often relating to newspaper, radio and TV news	The journalist reported the sad news of the disaster, while the footage of the plane wreck was shown behind him. It was a moving moment.
launch	verb	to take off (often used for rockets and spaceships)	When the rocket was launched, everyone was amazed at the amount of smoke and fire from its engines.
astronaut	noun	a spaceman; a person who travels in a spacecraft from earth into space and back again	You have to have a lot of skill and courage to be an astronaut – travelling into space is extremely dangerous.
spectator	noun	similar to audience, but can also refer to people who watch other things, such as sports, fights, etc. (Audience only refers to people who watch performances, plays, movies, etc.)	All the spectators were really impressed with the outdoor concert!
visual	adjective	related to seeing (It is often used in contrast to "audio" – related to hearing – or things that you can only think of, but cannot see.)	I am a visual learner – I must see new words written down, otherwise I find them too hard to remember.
charm	noun	a quality that makes you attractive to somebody or something	James Bond 007 is a successful spy not only because he is intelligent and resourceful, but also because of his charm – he can make any woman tell him everything he wants to know.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
soothing	adjective	describing something that is relaxing or eases pain or tension	Some classical music is very soothing. It helps me wind down after a hard day at work.
distract	verb	to make somebody stop giving their attention to something	I hate it when I am trying to study and people play loud music or talk loudly. It really distracts me.

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer	Why do some people prefer listening to the news on the radio, while others prefer TV news?
Sophia	<p>Today, not many people like listening to the radio. Pretty much everyone has a television now. For most people, televisions are very appealing because you can actually see real footage of what's being reported – for example, when I saw a report on the launching of a space rocket, I could actually see the rocket take off, the astronauts inside and all the spectators on the ground. So TV is a powerful source of news.</p> <p>However, there are many people that don't share the same opinion. While some say the television is better, more visual and more modern, others feel the radio has a certain charm, and is more soothing and relaxing. It also depends on the lifestyle of the individual – many taxi drivers love listening to the radio because it is a very convenient way to hear news and plays without distracting them from driving.</p>

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
Buddhist	noun	a person who follows the Buddhist faith; a person who believes in the philosophy taught by the Buddha and/or his followers	There are many different Buddhist temples and shrines in Vietnam.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
animal rights		the belief that animals have certain rights that cannot be taken away, such as the right not to be mistreated	Many years ago, people treated animals quite badly but I think that people nowadays are much more aware that animals should be treated well and now respect most animal rights.
movement	noun	a group of people with a particular set of (usually political) aims	In the West the feminist movement was at its strongest during the 1970s, and it did succeed in winning more equality for women.
concerted effort		a determined and serious attempt to do something	He was really worried that he might be fired, so recently he has been making a concerted effort not to be late, do a good job and go home later than usual.
ethics	noun	set beliefs or social codes which promote good behaviour for the benefit of society; what we think of as "right" and "wrong"	Society's ethics are constantly changing, that's why lots of behaviour that was unacceptable to my parents' generation is now acceptable.
ethical	adjective	describing something which is good moral behaviour or behaviour or beliefs which are good for society	Some people believe that eating meat is totally not ethical because animals deserve the right to life.

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer Why do some people choose not to eat meat?

Mike That's an interesting question. In my country nearly everyone enjoys eating meat, though not in large quantities. However, some people, mainly Buddhists and young people who are members of animal rights movements, make a concerted effort not to eat meat for ethical reasons - they believe animals have the same right as us humans to live full, natural lives, so we humans should not eat animals. Although some scientists say it is important to eat meat for health reasons, others claim that if you eat the right vegetables and fruits, eating meat is not necessary to maintain a good standard of health.

Language step 1 Quantities of People & Types of People

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, talk about the quantities and types of people.

Sophia Today, *not many people* like listening to the radio. *Pretty much everyone* has a television now. For *most people*, televisions are very appealing because...However, there are *many people* that don't share the same opinion...It also depends on the lifestyle of the individual – *many taxi drivers* love listening to the radio because it is a very convenient way to hear news and plays without distracting them from driving.

Mike ...In my country *nearly everyone* enjoys eating meat, though not in large quantities. However, *some people*, mainly *Buddhists* and *young people who are members of animal rights movements*, make a concerted effort not to eat meat for ethical reasons...Although *some scientists* say it is important to eat meat for health reasons...

When evaluating two different opinions, we should start by saying how many and what types of people hold those opinions.

Quantities of people

nearly everyone
 almost everybody
 the (vast) majority of + types of people
 most + types of people
 a large percentage of + types of people
 some + types of people
 a few + types of people
 a handful of + types of people

Types of people – ages

elderly people / retired people / the older generation
 working people
 office workers
 students
 adolescents / teenagers
 married couples

Types of people – behaviour

very active people / sporty people / energetic people
 religious people
 animal lovers / food lovers
 lazy people

Types of people – specific

People with + adjective-noun combination

People with creative talent believe...

People with strong political views think...

People with a lot of energy like to...

People who have...

People who have an interest in art...

People who have lots of free time...

People who have their own pets...

More examples:

Most people with a lot of energy like to regularly play team and individual sports.

A handful of people who have lots of free time actually decide to do volunteer work.

A large percentage of teenagers have problems communicating properly with their parents and teachers.

Exercise 26.1: Gap Fill & Matching

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces and then match the sentence halves 1-6 with the sentence halves A-F.

a lot of	large percentage	most
political views	people with a lot of	vast majority

1. The _____ of older people...

2. _____ animal lovers...

3. _____ students...

4. A _____ of office workers...

5. People with strong _____ think...

6. _____ creative talent believe in...

A. ...tend to enjoy parties and social occasions.

B. ...teaching children about art and drama and philosophy.

C. ...don't really like to listen to dance music.

D. ...that the USA should never have invaded Iraq.

E. ...believe they should get paid overtime.

F. ...can't accept people doing cosmetic tests on dogs and cats.

Language step 2 Transitional Words & Phrases

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use transitional words and phrases in their responses.

Sophia ...*However*, there are many people that don't share the same opinion. *While* some say the television is better, more visual and more modern, others feel the radio has a certain charm, and is more soothing and relaxing. It *also* depends on the lifestyle of the individual...

Mike ...*However*, some people...make a concerted effort not to eat meat for ethical reasons...*Although* some scientists say it is important to eat meat for health reasons, others claim that if you eat the right vegetables and fruits, eating meat is not necessary to maintain a good standard of health.

When talking about different types of people and the opinions they have, you should use transitional words and phrases to link your ideas together.

Here are some of the most useful transitional words and phrases:

while

Some people believe that city life is stressful, *while* others find the buzz and energy of living in a city exciting.

yet

Some people are of the opinion that computer games can help children learn certain skills, *yet* other people think that they are just a waste of time.

however

People who believe in animal rights think that we should not wear leather shoes or animal skin clothes. *However*, people who think that we are superior to animals believe we have the right to use them as we wish.

although

Although some people hold the opinion that war is wrong, others believe that there are sometimes good reasons why countries should go to war.
Some believe that there are sometimes good reasons why countries should go to war *although* others hold the opinion that war is wrong.

conversely

The majority of people feel that living in an apartment is very convenient. *Conversely*, others believe that living in a house is a better option.

on the one hand...on the other hand

On the one hand, there are old people that do a lot of exercise; *on the other hand*, there are many elderly people that prefer to sit and read, or play board games.

drivers love listening to the radio because it is a very *convenient* way to hear news and plays...

Mike ...Although some scientists say it is *important* to eat meat for health reasons, others claim that if you eat the *right* vegetables and fruits, eating meat is not *necessary* to maintain a *good* standard of health.

When people weigh up two different opinions, they often describe why these people have those opinions using adjectives or adjective phrases in the following structures.

Some people think / believe / enjoy / prefer X because it's + adjective

You may use the following adjectives and adjective phrases:

convenient
 important / necessary / vital
 interesting / fascinating / stimulating / exciting / inspiring
 beneficial
 healthy / better
 rewarding
 challenging
 informative
 unnecessary / unimportant / a waste of time

Examples:

Many famous people believe it's really *convenient* to own a private aeroplane.
 A lot of young people today think it's very *rewarding* to go overseas for a year.

Some people think X is good / better / important / useful + for + verb-ing

You may use the following verb-ing phrases:

cultivating one's mind
 developing a greater sense of social responsibility
 teaching people to empathise with each other more
 maintaining social control
 keeping people happy and content
 establishing positive international relations
 keeping our natural environment cleaner
 contributing to making society a better place for poor people

Examples:

They believe that this experience is *good for cultivating one's mind*.
 They consider learning more than one language as a good thing because it is *important for establishing positive international relations*.

Exercise 26.3: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

better for
much wider variety
necessary for
it is very important that
because it's a very therapeutic hobby
rewarding and fulfilling
for establishing positive international relations
I think almost everyone agrees that it's important

energetic
more convenient
while younger people like
is a better place for relaxing
keep our natural environment cleaner

1. Some people prefer to go to the beach on holiday rather than to the countryside because, for them, the beach .
2. Older people, like my grandmother, often enjoy knitting , while younger people like to get into more hobbies in their free time.
3. A lot of people choose to use public transportation only because it helps .
4. Many people argue we should all have more paid holidays. However, most of us think that the citizens of a developing country work especially hard to help the country grow.
5. Most countries believe that good communication is important . Yet, there still exist a few countries that don't seem to want to co-operate or communicate openly.
6. There are a few young people today who believe that working for a charity organisation to help the poor is a experience. Yet, there are others that still feel that having a proper, well-paid job is gaining stability and a secure life.
7. Some people prefer to shop in small, more friendly local stores, while others like to shop in big supermarkets and malls because there's a of goods in stock and it's a lot .
8. Quite a few adolescents in England don't eat meat because they say it's cruel to kill animals. Other people, however, feel that eating meat is maintaining a healthy diet and a strong body.
9. The older generation usually prefer quiet family gatherings, loud, crazy parties because these are great places to meet new friends!
10. to teach social responsibility in schools because this is essential for making society a better place. However, there are some who firmly believe it is the parents' responsibility.

Formula 27

Agreeing and Disagreeing

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Agreeing and Disagreeing.

Do you agree that famous people should be used to advertise products on television?

Would you agree that people should have four-day working weeks and three-day weekends?

Do you agree or disagree that office workers should all wear very formal clothes?

Are you in agreement with the opinion that many young people today care too much about fashion and not enough about social responsibility?

The formula

To agree and disagree, you should:

Answer order

Decide what your opinion is about the question the examiner asks.

1. If you agree, you should:

State your agreement.

Give reasons why you agree.

2. If you only partially agree / disagree, you should:

Say to what extent you agree, then state your disagreement.

Give reasons to support this.

3. If you totally disagree, you should:

State your strong disagreement politely.

Give reasons why you disagree.

Language steps

1. Use agreement expressions.

I wholeheartedly agree!

I couldn't agree more!

I totally agree with you!

2. Use total and partial disagreement expressions.

I can agree with you to a point, but...

I can see your point, but...

I can agree to some extent, but have you considered...

3. Use cause and effect logic to support your opinion.

I can't possibly agree because if we do X, then Y might happen.

I'm sorry but I absolutely disagree. If people continue to do X, then it could be very bad for society.

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
constraint	noun	something which controls what you do by keeping you within particular limits	Due to financial constraints, the company could not afford to give the employees a pay rise this year.
stage	noun	a period or time in life	John was at the stage in life when he really felt he wanted to get married and have children.
independently	adverb	freely; on one's own	It was the first time that she had lived independently.
unique	adjective	special; different from the usual; very rare	I would recognise your handwriting anywhere: it is really unique.

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer: Some people say that one's university years are the happiest time in life. Would you agree?

Sophia: Yes, I couldn't agree more! I think that university life is probably the best stage in life because we are free from the constraints of home-life with our parents and we get the opportunity to discover the world for ourselves, much more independently than ever before. We can meet new people, study a variety of interesting subjects and learn to look after ourselves. So, I completely agree that this is by far the happiest time in our lives.

Interviewer But I've heard that many students find university life incredibly stressful and sometimes quite a tough experience?

Sophia Well, it depends on the person, but I don't think you're right in saying many students find it difficult. I am sure that some do, but the vast majority of people I know share my opinion that it's a unique and truly fantastic time in life.

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
celebrity	noun	a famous person, usually in entertainment (such as movie stars, singers, sports players; does not refer to famous politicians, businessmen, etc.)	Daniel Radcliffe became a big celebrity after the Harry Potter film series.
deodorant	noun	a substance that you put on your body to prevent or hide unpleasant smells	He sweats a lot and did not put on any deodorant today, so he smells pretty bad!
make	noun	the brand, or name of the company that produces a particular product	There are many different makes of car, including BMW, Chrysler and VW.
unethical	adjective	not conforming to social codes which are good for society	His behaviour is unethical – it is wrong to treat his family in that selfish way!
fast-paced	adjective	describing something that moves or develops quickly	Life in Ho Chi Minh City is very fast-paced; everyone is rushing everywhere and nobody seems to slow down and relax.
take advantage of		to benefit from; to use; to utilise for your own ends	He took advantage of his mother's generosity by constantly asking her to give him more money.
impose regulations on		to put controls on something (used when a government or authority makes and enforces laws or rules to control people's actions)	After the riots in London, the police imposed stricter regulations on demonstrations in the city centre.
ensure	verb	to make sure something is certain to happen; to guarantee	The airline is taking steps to ensure higher levels of safety on the aircraft.

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer Many believe that famous people should not be used in advertisements to sell products. Do you agree?

Mike No, I can't agree with that. I firmly believe that everyone, whether they are famous or not, has the freedom to advertise what they want. Just because Jackie Chan is a celebrity, why should this stop him advertising a deodorant or a make of camera?

Interviewer I see your point, but some people would disagree and say that advertising companies are using his public image as a famous star as a way to convince people in society to buy their product. Is that not unethical?

Mike OK, but it seems to me that many people, especially younger people, are very vulnerable, particularly in today's fast-paced competitive society, and big companies are taking advantage of them to make money from them. However, I don't think this is solely the responsibility of a famous star who advertises a product - I think the government should impose stricter regulations on advertising agencies to ensure that the information is honest and fairly presented.

Language step 1 Agreement Expressions

Let's look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses the agreement expressions.

Interviewer Some people say that one's university years are the happiest time in life. Would you agree?

Sophia Yes, I couldn't agree more!...

Notice how Sophia expresses total agreement with the examiner's question by saying *Yes, I couldn't agree more!* This is a very native speaker way to say that you agree 100% with the other person.

Look at this list of similar agreement expressions:

Yes, I agree wholeheartedly.

I completely agree.

Sure, I too believe that's true / the case.

Yes, I share the same opinion.

Now look at these agreement expressions in the context of IELTS Speaking tests. Notice how the student not only expresses his agreement, but continues to elaborate on the point and gives reasons to support his agreement:

Interviewer Well, some people would argue that the best stage in life is after retirement because life is relaxed and predictable.

Donald Yes, I totally agree. After a person has retired, they have gone through the challenges of their life and can finally sit back and watch life with a more relaxed attitude.

Interviewer Many say that parents should give their sons and daughters the freedom to choose their own majors. Do you agree?

Donald Yes, I agree wholeheartedly on that point. Too many parents think they know best what their sons and daughters should choose to study in university. This means many young people study subjects they don't like, so they don't study with passion or enthusiasm.



It is a good tactic to use an agreement expression first, then you can state your reasons and provide examples.

Exercise 27.1: Gap Fill

Write the agreement words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

completely agree with couldn't agree agree believe that's true

- A: Today a lot of people feel that smoking should be banned in all public places. Do you agree?

B: I _____ wholeheartedly that smoking should, indeed, be prohibited in public. It's not fair that non-smokers should have to breathe in toxic smoke.
- A: Do you agree that children should wear school uniforms?

B: I _____ more! Children should wear uniforms not only so that they are all "equal" when at school but also for safety purposes.
- A: Do you agree or disagree with the view that everyone should get a university education?

B: Sure, I _____. A university education is beneficial for anyone, regardless of their ability or background.
- A: Many people say that historic buildings should be carefully preserved and protected. Do you agree?

B: Yes, I _____ that view. Historic buildings are vital for allowing us to remember our own history and culture; they remind us who we really are.

Language step 2 Total & Partial Disagreement Expressions

Let's take a look at how the IELTS candidate Mike uses various total and partial disagreement expressions.

- Interviewer Many believe that famous people should not be used in advertisements to sell products. Do you agree?
- Mike *No, I can't agree with that...*
- Interviewer *I see your point, but some people would disagree and say that advertising companies are using his public image as a famous star as a way to convince people in society to buy their product. Is that not unethical?*
- Mike *OK, but it seems to me that many people, especially younger people, are very vulnerable, particularly in today's fast-paced competitive society, and big companies are taking advantage of them to make money from them...*

Partial disagreement

If you don't agree with what the interviewer says, it's polite to say that you can understand the other person's opinion but you don't agree with it.

Look at this list of partial disagreement expressions:

I can see your point, but...

I can see what you're saying, but...

I agree up to a point, but...

I understand what you're saying, but I don't really agree because...

OK, but have you considered...

Some may hold that opinion, but I'm afraid I disagree because...

Now look at these partial disagreement expressions in the context of IELTS Speaking tests. Again, notice how the student not only expresses his disagreement, but continues to elaborate on the point and gives reasons to support his disagreement:

- Interviewer Some parents do not accept that their sons and daughters, when in university, go to bars and nightclubs on weekends. Do you agree?
- Donald *Erm...I can agree to a point, but I do believe that many parents here are too strict and too traditional. Whilst young people should respect their parents to a certain point, parents should also understand that life is different now to when they were young.*
- Interviewer But, many people would argue that young people are not responsible enough for themselves, so they need their parents to stop them from getting into danger or into trouble.

Donald *I can see what you're saying, but I don't totally agree. I think that when we're in university, we have reached an age where we should be able to make decisions for ourselves.*

Total disagreement

It's also very useful to be able to express total or strong disagreement when you want to be assertive – without, however, sounding rude. When you do this, it's even more important to give good reasons why you do not agree.

Look at these total disagreement expressions:

I absolutely disagree because...

I'm sorry, but I can't agree with that because...

I can't possibly agree with that because...

I can't share your opinion on this issue, to be honest, because...

Now look at these total disagreement expressions in the context of IELTS Speaking tests. Again, notice how the student not only expresses his disagreement, but continues to elaborate on the point and gives reasons to support his disagreement:

Interviewer *Do you agree that humans should not be allowed to eat animals?*

Donald *I can't possibly agree with that because humans need to eat meat, at least occasionally, to stay healthy. If we don't eat meat, we don't grow up so fast or strong and we will frequently be under the weather and suffer from minor complaints like colds and coughs.*

Interviewer *But many scientists say that's not true, humans can be equally healthy if they have a completely vegetarian diet.*

Donald *I absolutely disagree because I have had a few vegetarian friends over the years and they haven't been as healthy as my meat-eating friends.*

Exercise 27.2: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate disagreement expressions from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. Interviewer: I think that most teenagers today are very lazy about their studies. Do you agree?

David: I don't entirely agree with you. A lot of teenagers do lack interest and motivation in their studies. But I don't think that it is because they are lazy – I think it's because their classes are boring!

- A. I can see your point
- B. I can see what you're saying, but
- C. I can't possibly agree with that because

2. **Interviewer:** A lot of people are of the opinion that train travel is preferable to flying? Would you agree?
- David:** because many feel that train travel is a more romantic way to get around a country. However, I disagree; travelling by plane is much more convenient and efficient.
- A. I absolutely disagree
 B. I understand what you're saying
 C. I can understand why some people might think that
3. **Interviewer:** Some people think it's OK to hunt animals for sport. Do you agree or disagree?
- David:** hunting is very cruel and painful for animals. I strongly believe we should not get enjoyment from the pain or suffering of other living things.
- A. I can possibly agree with that because
 B. I can't share your opinion on this issue, to be honest, because
 C. I can't possibly agree with that because
4. **Interviewer:** Some people think that every week all workers should have three-day weekends. What do you think?
- David:** Ha ha...that would be wonderful! I can see why some hold that opinion, if we all had three-day weekends, I don't think a country would develop and maintain a healthy economy.
- A. but I'm afraid I disagree because
 B. but have you considered
 C. but I absolutely disagree because
5. **Interviewer:** Many animal rights activists believe that all zoos should be closed and the animals returned to the wild. Do you agree?
- David:** without a safe enclosure, many of these animals would soon die, and their species become extinct. Besides, most of these animals grew up in zoos, and so don't actually know how to look after themselves.
- A. I can't share your opinion on this issue because
 B. I'm sorry, I can't agree with that because
 C. OK, but have you considered
6. **Interviewer:** Do you agree that health care should be provided free to everybody?
- David:** I think rich people or the comfortably off should pay for their own health care, and not rely on the other taxpayers. It should mainly be provided free to the poor.
- A. I absolutely disagree because
 B. I'm sorry, but I can't agree with that because
 C. I agree up to a point, but

Language step 3 Cause & Effect Logic

As you have noticed in Language Steps 1 and 2, it is vitally important that, whatever your opinion, you support your point with reasons and say why you think that way.

Native English speakers often use the logic of cause and effect to support their opinions. This means that you say what will or what would happen under the circumstances being proposed.

For example, we shouldn't just say The rainforests should all be protected as this is not a very strong argument. It would be much better to say: The rainforests should all be protected because otherwise global warming will get much worse and many animal species will be killed. This is a much more powerful and convincing statement.

Look at a few more examples of cause and effect logic supporting opinions:

Opinion	Cause & Effect Logic
I can't agree with that	because if we don't take care of the natural environment, then we'll regret it in the future.
I completely agree that sports players' salaries should be reduced	because sports are ruined when there is too much money involved and teams start to resemble businesses.
I absolutely disagree with you	for if we don't invest in alternative energy, the pollution will reach a dangerous level.
I can't possibly agree that we should give children more holidays	as it will have a detrimental effect on their studies.
I agree with you to a point	since I think it is unfair that some people can't go to university just because they can't afford it, but then again the country can't pay for everyone to go as we'd run out of money!
I really don't agree that women should always stay home and look after the children	because today women also have the right to earn money for the family.

Exercise 27.3: Matching

Match the opinions 1-5 with the cause & effect logic sentences A-E.

- I disagree. If we keep paying workers too little,...
- I couldn't agree more. Because if we don't plant more trees and flowers in our city,...
- I'm sorry, but I hold a different opinion. It's very important to spend a lot of money on the military,...
- No, I don't agree that traditional culture is always a good thing;...
- Yes, I totally agree that parents should send their children to kindergartens;...

- A. ...so the country can keep strong and defend itself if necessary.
- B. ...some traditions hold a country back from developing properly and bring much suffering.
- C. ...it won't be a bright and pretty environment for us all to live in and this will inevitably affect the happiness and spirit of its inhabitants.
- D. ...if they don't then children won't learn to get along with other children harmoniously.
- E. ...they will lose their loyalty to the company.

Extra language point Rhetorical Questions

Let's see how the IELTS candidate Mike use the rhetorical questions.


Mike No, I can't agree with that. I firmly believe that everyone, whether they are famous or not, has the freedom to advertise what they want. *Just because Jackie Chan is a celebrity, why should this stop him advertising a deodorant or a make of camera?*

Sometimes, native speakers will use a rhetorical question, usually at the end of their statement, to express disagreement. A rhetorical question is a question form, but does not actually require the other person to answer. It is used as a challenge or for persuasive effect when we are disagreeing.

In the model answer extract above, notice how Mike makes his point, then ends with the question: *Just because Jackie Chan is a celebrity, why should this stop him advertising a deodorant or a make of camera?* Mike is actually saying: Just because Jackie Chan is a celebrity, it doesn't mean he should not advertise things.

Look at the examples of rhetorical questions and what they actually mean in the table below.

Rhetorical Question	Meaning
Do you really think that it is fair to stop children playing computer games?	I don't think it is fair at all that people stop children playing computer games.
How can anyone possibly suggest old age is the best time in life?	Old age is undoubtedly not the best time in life!
Given the facts I've just mentioned, how could anyone justify capital punishment?	There is no way capital punishment can be justified.
How can anyone possibly argue that exercise is bad for their health?	Everyone knows that exercise is good for their health.

 **Exercise 27.4: Matching**

Match the rhetorical questions 1-5 with their more direct meanings A-E.

1. Considering what I've just said, how can anyone claim university life is the easiest time in life?
 2. They are doing everything they can. What more could our government do to help the farmers?
 3. Given these facts, how can anyone argue that testing cosmetics and medicines on innocent animals is a fair thing?
 4. Given the amount of work they do, why should construction workers live in such bad conditions and get paid so little?
 5. Just because my skin is a different colour, does that mean I should be treated differently?
-
- A. People that work on building sites deserve to be paid more and treated better.
 - B. I don't think I should be treated differently to other people.
 - C. In my opinion, there is no justification for animal testing.
 - D. I don't agree that life as a student is at all easy. I think it's quite a tough time.
 - E. I believe that they're doing everything they can to help countryside people.

Formula 28

Talking about Advantages and Disadvantages

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Talking about Advantages and Disadvantages.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying and using a motor car?

Tell me about the advantages of keeping pets like dogs and cats in the home.

Describe some of the disadvantages of big city life.

The formula

To talk about advantages and disadvantages, you should:

Answer order

There are three types of questions the examiner is likely to ask you:

1. What are the advantages of X?

Talk about two or three advantages of X and give reasons and examples.

2. What are the disadvantages of X?

Talk about two or three disadvantages of X and give reasons and examples.

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of X?

Talk about two advantages and disadvantages of X and give reasons and examples.

Language steps

1. Use introducing advantages phrases.

One of the main advantages of X is...

Another major advantage is...

A good thing about X is...

2. Use introducing disadvantages phrases and highlighting bad points phrases.

One principal drawback of X is...

One big disadvantage is...

X is detrimental to one's health...

X is unsuitable for...

3. Use transitional words and phrases properly to weigh up advantages and disadvantages of something.

While plane travel is very convenient, it can be very expensive.

On the one hand, fast food can be great when you are in a rush; *on the other hand*, it is not very good for your health.

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
stressful	adjective	describing something that can make somebody worried or experience a lot of tension	His day job is very stressful; he has too much work to do in too short a time.
manage one's time		to be very organised with one's work tasks, one's hobbies and interests and one's free time	Sarah is very efficient; she works really hard, but also makes enough time to go to the gym, paint and do all sorts of other hobbies. She manages her time very well.
routine	noun	the general schedule or order in which you do things in a day	Her daily routine is fairly normal: she wakes up, has a shower, gets dressed, goes to work, returns home, has dinner, then watches movies with her boyfriend.
smart	adjective	presentable; well-dressed	Jason is very smart this week - he has been wearing a suit to work every day.
work-from-home job		a job where you don't have to go to a workplace or office but work at home	The advantage of being a writer is that it is a work-from-home job.

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer: What are the advantages of doing a job where you can work from home?

Sophia: One of the main advantages of working from home is the amount of freedom you have. You don't have to worry about travelling to work on public transport, which can be very stressful, and you can often manage your time more efficiently according to your own routine. Another good thing about

working from home is that you don't have to get changed into smart clothes or uncomfortable office shoes.

Interviewer Are there any disadvantages to working from home?

Sophia Yes, many work-from-home jobs don't pay as well as full-time jobs in a workplace. A lot of work-from-home jobs are part-time or offer a few hours' work per day, rather than standard jobs that pay a fixed amount every month. So, they are not as secure and stable as most other jobs.

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
poorly-paid	adjective	describing low-paid salary; paid little money	Working as a waiter or waitress is often very poorly-paid.
physical	adjective	describing something which involves or is related to using your body	The advantage of physical work is that you can exercise your body at the same time as working.
open air		outside, not in an enclosed space, usually with a sense of freedom	I'm going camping in the countryside this summer; it's going to be great to spend so much time in the open air.

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer What are the advantages and disadvantages of working outdoors?

Mike That's a good question! I think it really depends on what kind of job you have outdoors. In general, most outdoor jobs are quite physical, so I think that they can help people keep fit and healthy and strong as well as being outside in the open air. On the other hand, it can be awful to work outside because you may have to work in terrible weather conditions like rain, snow and extreme cold. Outdoor work in my country is generally quite poorly-paid, so that's certainly another disadvantage.

Language step 1 Introducing Advantages Phrases

Let's have a look at this part of Sophia's response.

Sophia *One of the main advantages of working from home is the amount of freedom you have...Another good thing about working from home is that you don't have to get changed into smart clothes or uncomfortable office shoes...*

When you introduce the advantages of something, you should use a variety of expressions so that you really sound like a native.

Here are some really common and useful introducing advantages phrases:

one of the main advantages of
 one of the main benefits of
 one of the major strong points of
 the great advantage of
 a key advantage of
 a really / very good thing about
 another good thing about
 another advantage of
 one more great thing about

All of the above phrases can be completed with the following:

verb-ing / noun is you can...
 verb-ing / noun is that you're able to...
 verb-ing / noun is you don't have to...
 verb-ing / noun is you don't need to...

Look at the table below for examples of the above phrases combined:

Introducing Phrase	Object / Activity	Advantage
The main advantage of	cycling to work	is that you don't pollute the air.
Another key advantage of	riding your bike	is that it's a good form of exercise.
One of the major strong points of	eating in restaurants	is you don't have to do the washing-up.
One more great thing about	eating out	is you can taste a wide variety of different dishes.
A very good thing about	mobile phones	is you can get in touch with anyone, anytime.
The great advantage of	the electronic dictionary	is that it's so light and portable, so you can carry it everywhere.

Exercise 28.1: Matching

Match the introducing phrases with the objects / activities and their advantages.

Introducing Phrase	Object / Activity	Advantage
The main advantage of	living in the countryside	is you can travel to work quickly and cheaply.
The good thing about	working in an office	is that you can take peaceful walks and breathe fresh air.
One of the main benefits of	having regular holidays	is that you are able to keep up with the latest fashions, go to clubs, bars and restaurants.
A major advantage of	living in cities	is you can sit in a comfortable chair all day and drink tea!
A key advantage of	taking the subway	is that you can give the mind and body a rest from the stress of work.

Extra language point 1 Positive Adjectives

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the positive adjectives.

Sophia ...Another *good* thing about working from home is that you don't have to get changed into *smart* clothes or uncomfortable office shoes...A lot of work-from-home jobs are part-time or offer a few hours' work per day, rather than *standard* jobs that pay a *fixed* amount every month. So, they are not as *secure* and *stable* as most other jobs.

Mike That's a *good* question!...In general, most outdoor jobs are quite physical, so I think that they can help people keep *fit* and *healthy* and *strong* as well as being outside in the open air...

When talking about why something has certain advantages or strong points, you should use positive adjectives to help support your claims.

Look at the following table of useful positive adjectives:

Activities	Objects	Habits / Customs	Laws
rewarding	practical	socially beneficial	reliable
challenging	environmentally friendly	sensible	impartial
inspiring	sophisticated	educational	just
refreshing	good for society	culturally rich	sound

Activities	Objects	Habits / Customs	Laws
healthy	aesthetically pleasing	ethical	supportive
exhilarating	convenient	familial	fair
interesting	portable	atmospheric	righteous

Examples:

The main advantage of the laptop computer is that it is *portable*.

The one good thing about the new advertising laws is that they protect the consumer and so I think they are *just* and *sensible*.

The major advantage of the new curriculum is that it provides *nurturing* and *culturally rich* environment.

Language step 2 Introducing Disadvantages & Highlighting Bad Points Phrases

To introduce disadvantages or highlight bad points about X, you should first use some of the following phrases:

the main disadvantage of

a / the bad thing about

a major disadvantage of

one drawback of

a / the one bad point about / of

another disadvantage of

Then use one of the following:

verb-ing / noun is you can / might / may / could

verb-ing / noun is that it can / might / may / could / is possible that it may

Then use one of the following:

damage / harm

cause illness / health problems / stress / harm to

get damaged / get stolen / get broken easily / get cheated by / get addicted to / get obsessed

with / get bored with / get frustrated by

not be so good for

be problematic for

be inconvenient because / for

be confusing

give a bad impression of somebody / something to somebody

Examples:

The main disadvantage of working outside is that it might cause health problems in winter.

The bad thing about owning an expensive bike is that it could get stolen.

One *drawback* of being a computer programmer is that the work can be quite confusing sometimes.

The *one bad point* about being outspoken and confident in class is that some people may think you are arrogant.

Exercise 28.2: Gap Fill

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

annoying	too obsessed with
can give a very bad impression to others	can get stressful
get bothered by	can get complicated
might get bored	inconvenient for
might get stolen	not good for
the bad thing	the disadvantage of

1. A big disadvantage of student life is that it _____ near exam time.
2. A major disadvantage of being very rich is that you might get _____ money and possessions, and this _____.
3. A bad thing about parties is that you _____ with crazy drunken people, and this is very _____ if you want to relax and have an intelligent conversation.
4. One drawback of being a celebrity is that you might _____ the media all the time, and this is _____ your private life.
5. _____ living in the suburbs is that it can be _____ using public transport to commute into town.
6. _____ about owning a bicycle is that it _____ if you lock it up in some areas of the city.
7. Although it is a challenging profession, the bad part about being an engineer is that with some projects it _____ at times. This means it can be a tiring job.

Extra language point 2 Negative Adjectives

Let's see how the IELTS candidate Mike uses the negative adjectives.

Mike ...On the other hand, it can be *awful* to work outside because you may have to work in *terrible* weather conditions like rain, snow and extreme cold. Outdoor work in my country is generally quite *poorly-paid*, so that's certainly another disadvantage.

When talking about disadvantages or drawbacks, it's good to use a range of adjectives to help explain what these are.

Activities	Objects	Habits / Customs	Laws
dull/boring	not user-friendly	outdated	unfair
tiring/exhausting	overly-complicated	old-fashioned	overly-restrictive
time-consuming	unattractive	a little ridiculous	oppressive
difficult	fragile	unhealthy	narrow-minded
repetitive	impractical	environmentally unfriendly	discriminatory
poorly-paid	poorly-made	anti-social	vague
unstable	overpriced	annoying	a little harsh
counterproductive	low-quality	a bit sexist	unjust

Examples:

The disadvantage of the new subway system is the cards – they are all disposable and made of plastic and therefore this is quite *environmentally unfriendly*.

The drawback of going to the gym is that it's quite *exhausting* after you've done a long day's work.

The bad thing about the legal system there is that sometimes the laws are very *oppressive*.

Language step 3 Transitional Words & Phrases

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use transitional words and phrases in their responses.

Sophia ...A lot of work-from-home jobs are part-time or offer a few hours' work per day, *rather than* standard jobs that pay a fixed amount every month. *So*, they are not as secure and stable as most other jobs.

Mike ...people keep fit and healthy and strong as well as being outside in the open air. *On the other hand*, it can be awful to work outside because you may have to work in terrible weather conditions like rain, snow and extreme cold...

Sometimes the interviewer will ask you about the advantages and disadvantages at the same time. You should try to show that there are good points and bad points, weighing them up with a transitional word or phrase.

Look at the following transitional words and phrases:

although
however
while

yet at the same time
while at the same time
having said that
then again
on the one hand...on the other hand

Examples:

The main disadvantage of eating in restaurants is that it's expensive *although* it can be exciting and fun to eat out every now and again.


A great thing about computers is that you can buy a computer now that was state-of-the-art only a few months ago quite cheaply. *Then again*, this means that the computer you buy now will soon be outdated.

The telephone is incredibly useful, *while at the same time* it can be quite annoying when you want to be left alone.

Being into fashion can be a really good thing, *yet at the same time* it can sometimes be a bit silly if people spend too much time thinking about fashion.

Going to see sports games can be fun and exciting and exhilarating. *Having said that*, it can be annoying to be in a crowded stadium with lots of people.

On the one hand contact sports are a great way to exercise, but *on the other hand* they can be quite dangerous.

 **Exercise 28.3: Matching**

Match the sentence halves 1-7 with the sentence halves A-G.

1. One drawback of having holidays in the countryside is that there are lots of mosquitoes in the early summer...
 2. While there are many disadvantages to getting old, like suffering poorer health, for example,...
 3. The good thing about hot, sunny weather in my town is that you can go to the beach and relax in the sunshine...
 4. On the one hand, working for a small company means that you don't get all the benefits and security you get when you work for a large firm...
 5. The advantage of the motor car is that it's good for getting to work when you live far from the city centre...
 6. The one bad thing about having visitors to your home is that you have to wash a lot of dishes after they leave...
 7. The key advantage of going abroad to study is to improve one's academic experience and one's education,...
- A. ...However, the bad thing is that it's fairly humid and uncomfortable if you have to work long hours outside.
- B. ...Yet at the same time this contributes to a lot of air pollution.

- C. ...Having said that, it's fairly easy to buy mosquito repellent, and it certainly is worth getting out of the city and enjoying natural beauty.
- D. ...On the other hand, you tend to get more opportunities for promotion and are given more responsibility.
- E. ...Then again, the great thing about receiving guests is the conversation and laughter that we all have when we eat and drink with friends.
- F. ...it's also a very peaceful and contemplative stage in life.
- G. ...although it can still be difficult to find a job when you return to your country.

Formula 29

Expressing Importance and Priority

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Expressing Importance and Priority.

What are the most important things to bear in mind if you are planning an overseas trip?

Which subjects, sports, activities or lessons do you believe to have the highest priority in a child's education?

What environmental concerns today should be addressed most urgently?

The formula

To express importance and priority, you should:

Answer order

1. Say how important you think X is.
2. Compare the importance of X with other things.
3. Explain why you think this.

Language steps

1. Use native speaker importance phrases and adverbs of degree to introduce your opinion.

Yes, computers *play a big role* in our lives.

Indeed, this is *an important issue* for our country today.

I think economics is *especially important* in today's society.

2. Use comparatives and superlatives to say why one thing is more important than another.

Personality is *more important than* physical appearance.

It's *more valuable* to teach children maths *than* art.

3. Use expressions to say why something is important.

Gymnastics is *essential for* maintaining a supple body.

Reading is *crucial for* developing good vocabulary.

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
drama	noun	a performing art involving acting, especially a school subject	Drama classes are really fun. We are putting on the Shakespeare play <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and I'm going to be acting the rôle of Theseus.
sound	adjective	good; of high quality; reliable	He has a sound knowledge of maths and science. I am sure he will get a good job.
establish a career		to find a secure career or profession that you feel comfortable with	He was studying hard because he wanted to establish a career in medicine.
promote	verb	to be good for; to encourage the development of	It's common knowledge that regular exercise promotes good health.
express oneself		to communicate what you are thinking or feeling in speech or writing	I am not good at expressing myself sometimes; I know what I want to say, but I don't seem to be able to explain myself well.
valuable	adjective	having value, importance, significance, benefit (not only used for monetary value)	I think that living and working in a foreign country is a very valuable learning experience.
not to be neglected		an expression used to say that something is important and should not be left out or forgotten about while considering an issue	While I believe personality is more important than physical appearance, being clean and presentable is something that is not to be neglected.

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer Which is more important in a child's school education: academic subjects, learning teamwork through sporting activities, or learning about art and drama?

Sophia That's a tough question because so much depends on the individual pupil. As a general rule, I think that academic subjects are the most important part

of a child's education. Children need to have a sound academic basis in order to progress successfully onto further education and establish a career in the future, for this is what society requires.

Having said that, I do feel that sporting activities should play a role in a child's school education, not only because this promotes good health, but also because learning to work in a team is considerably important. For this reason, I feel that team sports are certainly more valuable than individual sports in a child's education.

Learning about art and participating in drama activities, though not as important as academic pursuits and sports, in my opinion, are also fairly important for helping young people develop more creative skills as well as learning to express themselves. So I have to say that although I feel academic studies and learning teamwork through sports are more important, learning about art and drama should not be neglected.

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
extent	noun	the length, amount or distance; the area something covers	The extent of the damage to the building after the storm was enormous.
take precedence over		to be more important than something; to have greater priority than something	Oral fluency should take precedence over grammar when teaching English to business students.
controversial	adjective	describing a subject that can cause disagreement, discussion or debate because many people have different opinions about it	Controlling Facebook access is a controversial issue.
pose a dilemma		to create a situation where there are two choices or decisions to be made and it is very hard to decide which is the best	The crisis posed a dilemma: should the government put more money into saving the natural environment or try to boost the economy first?
environmental concerns		problems related to the pollution or the damage of the natural environment	Many environmental concerns have been addressed by our government in the past few years, but still there is a long way to go.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
reduce	verb	to make something smaller in size, amount or degree	The government has recently reduced the tax on motor cars by 17%.
come at a cost		to cost a lot of money to do something or to put into action	Economic development comes at a cost – the price you pay is the environmental damage that comes as a result.
put greater emphasis on/upon		to think one thing is more important than another thing; to emphasise one thing rather than another	The Western education system puts a greater emphasis upon learning skills and developing abilities rather than remembering lots of information and passing exams.
manufacturer	noun	the company that makes products	The manufacturers of electronic goods are suffering from economic problems this year.
emissions regulations		the rules that governments make to control the amount of toxic gases or chemicals that are released by factories	It's very hard for the authorities to get factories to comply with the government's emissions regulations.

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer Today in society, environmental concerns often feature in the news. To what extent do you believe the economic development of a country should take precedence over protecting the environment?

Mike Well, that's quite a controversial issue at the moment. It's hard to say, whilst environmental concerns are indeed important, this question poses a bit of a dilemma to most governments – protecting the natural environment and reducing air and water pollution are incredibly important if a country is to progress, develop and maintain a healthy population. However, protecting the environment also comes at a cost: it is expensive to ensure that factories and car manufacturers comply with certain emissions regulations, and to be able to do this the country must make money and spend that money wisely.

Now that I think about it, in the short term I believe that economic development is more important than environmental concerns because this enables a country to become strong enough to address environmental issues in the long term. Once a country is richer and more developed, it should then put greater emphasis upon protecting the environment.

Language step 1 Importance Phrases & Adverbs of Degree

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the importance phrases and adverbs of degree.

Sophia ...As a general rule, I think that academic subjects are *the most important part of* a child's education...Having said that, I do feel that sporting activities should *play a role* in a child's school education...Learning about art and participating in drama activities...are also *fairly important* for helping young people develop more creative skills as well as learning to express themselves...

Mike Well, that's quite a *controversial issue* at the moment...protecting the natural environment and reducing air and water pollution are *incredibly important* if a country is to progress, develop and maintain a healthy population...

Importance phrases

When you are asked how important something is, it's best to begin by using an importance phrase as in the following:

- X should play a role
- X plays a big role in our lives
- X is an important part of our lives
- X is a controversial issue /question
- X is an important issue /question
- X is a top priority

Examples:

- Yes, computers *play a big role in our lives*.
- I think it's *an important issue* today.
- Entertainment *has always been an important part of our lives*.
- Friendship is something we should always *take very seriously*.
- Being responsible at work *is a top priority* in life.

Adverbs of degree

When you begin to talk about how important or valuable something is, it's good to use a variety of native speaker adverbs of degree as in the following phrases:

- to some extent...important
- important up to a point
- quite important
- fairly important
- very important
- especially important
- particularly important

considerably important
incredibly important

Examples:

I think that art is *very important* in life.

I don't think learning history is *particularly important* for people.

To some extent fashion is important.

Being able to do mathematics is *important up to a point*, but...

Being a good speaker is *fairly important* in life.

Diplomacy is *especially important* in today's society.

Learning to read and write is *incredibly important* for every person in society.



The adverbs **completely** and **absolutely** are usually used with **unimportant** to indicate a negative meaning, for examples:

Age is *completely unimportant* when I think about my ideal husband.

Being interested in fashion is *absolutely unimportant!* I think it is ridiculous and superficial!

I think it is *totally unimportant* if a husband and wife are of different social backgrounds. Care and love are the highest priority in a relationship.

Exercise 29.1: Multiple Choice & Matching

Choose the appropriate words and phrases from the choices below and then match the sentence halves 1-5 with the sentence halves A-E.

- When you are planning to set up a new apartment for the first time, it is important...
A. absolutely B. particularly C. completely
- When you are planning to travel overseas to another country, it is buy a good guidebook...
A. totally unimportant to B. absolutely essential to C. a matter of life and death to
- You must follow three rules when you go into some temples and sacred places...
A. incredibly important B. totally important C. not very important
- Learning to respect our fellow workers, neighbours, and even strangers in the street should always be a if...
A. especially important B. thing of little importance C. top priority

5. I think that teaching children to paint and draw in schools is important but not of great importance...

- A. to some extent B. at some extent C. on some extent

- A. ...I think that other subjects should be given precedence over art and music.
B. ...we want to maintain a friendly and happy society.
C. ...to get some practical things like kitchen equipment and bathroom accessories.
D. ...Firstly, you must take off your shoes; secondly you must remove your hat; and thirdly you mustn't take photos.
E. ...and learn some basic words like "please" and "thank you" in that language.

Extra language point 1 **Time Buying Expressions & Backtracking**

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use certain expressions to gain time and how they reconsider as well as adjust their previous opinions.

Sophia *That's a tough question* because so much depends on the individual pupil...
Having said that, I do feel that sporting activities should play a role in a child's school education...

Mike *Well, that's quite a controversial issue at the moment. It's hard to say*, whilst environmental concerns are indeed important, this question poses a bit of a dilemma to most governments...*Now that I think about it*, in the short term I believe that economic development is more important than environmental concerns because this enables a country to become strong enough to address environmental issues in the long term...

Time buying expressions

Notice how Sophia and Mike use native speaker time buying expressions in introducing their answers. Buying time is a useful skill because it can give you a few more valuable seconds while you think about what your opinion is and how to express it.

So, if the question the interviewer asks is something which is a little controversial, or subject to different opinions, you can "buy yourself some time" with:

- That's a tough question...
- Mmm, that's an interesting point...
- Let me think for a second...
- Let me see...
- I have to say that...
- It's hard to say...
- Actually...

In fact...
 You see...
 Well...

Backtracking

Sometimes, native speakers will think back at what they have just said, and change their opinion slightly or add an extra, slightly contrasting point. It's completely acceptable to do this, you won't lose points for backtracking because natives do it all the time!

You can backtrack with:

Having said that...

Now that I think about it, I guess...

Come to think of it...

Language step 2 Comparatives & Superlatives

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use comparatives and superlatives.

Sophia ...As a general rule, I think that academic subjects are *the most important* part of a child's education...I feel that team sports are certainly *more valuable than* individual sports in a child's education. Learning about art and participating in drama activities, though *not as important as* academic pursuits and sports... although I feel academic studies and learning teamwork through sports are *more important*, learning about art and drama should not be neglected.

Mike ...in the short term I believe that economic development is *more important than* environmental concerns because this enables a country to become strong enough to address environmental issues in the long term. Once a country is *richer* and *more developed*, it should then put *greater emphasis upon* protecting the environment.

Comparing importance or priority

When you are discussing how important something is or how high a priority something should be given, most native speakers will use the following comparative structures:

X is more convenient than Y because...

I am convinced that watching DVDs is much *more convenient than* watching films in the cinema *because...*

X should have / has a higher priority than Y because...

I believe science *should have a higher priority than* art in schools *because...*

X is more important than Y because...

I hold the opinion that keeping healthy *is more important than* just hanging out with friends and having fun *because...*

X is undoubtedly of greater importance than Y because...

I feel that quality education *is undoubtedly of greater importance than* economic development *because...*

X is certainly in need of more attention than Y because...

For me, slowing down global warming *is certainly in need of more attention than* saving particular species of animals *because...*

X should take precedence over Y because...

Spending money improving our hospitals *should take precedence over* spending money renovating historic buildings *because...*

Another way of expressing that one thing is more important than another is by saying:

Before doing X, we should do Y.

Before spending more money on education, we should try to raise the standard of living of the countryside population.

If the two things you are comparing have the same importance or priority, you can use:

X is equally as important as Y because...


Developing the economy *is equally as important as* saving the environment *because...*

Superlatives

It's also useful to use the superlative as Sophia did in the beginning of her answer:

As a general rule, I think that academic subjects are *the most important* part of a child's education.

The way I see it, looking after the ordinary people is *the highest* priority of the state.

 **Exercise 29.2: Gap Fill**

Write the words and phrases below in the correct spaces.

before thinking	equally as important as
have a higher priority	in need of more attention than
more important	much more valuable
should try to	take precedence over
than	undoubtedly of greater importance than

1. I believe that learning to use a computer is _____ than anything else if you want to get ahead in a good career in accounting.
2. Teaching children to respect and listen to others and be good citizens should _____ than pushing them to learn about politics and history.
3. Getting regular physical exercise is _____ learning about art or music in school. Health is the most important thing we have.
4. When it comes to environmental concerns, big city air pollution is without doubt _____ other environmental issues like noise pollution or damage to historic buildings.
5. Spending taxpayers' money to improve the standards of countryside schools should _____ trying to build huge expensive shopping malls to make our big cities look modern!
6. _____ about a person's physical appearance and beauty, we _____ get to know them and look into their heart and personality.
7. Learning languages is _____ learning to do mathematics, learning about history, or learning about politics; it really depends what you want to do in the future.
8. Everyone would agree that when you give gifts, giving a home-made gift from the heart is _____ and meaningful _____ an expensive present.

Language step 3 Expressions to Say Why Something Is Important

Let's have a look at how the IELTS candidate Sophia explains why something is important.

Sophia ...Having said that, I do feel that sporting activities should play a role in a child's school education, not only because *this promotes good health*, but also because learning to work in a team is considerably important...Learning about art and participating in drama activities...are also fairly *important for helping* young people develop more creative skills as well as learning to express themselves...

Of course, after you have expressed how important something is in relation to something else, you should support your claim with reasons, saying why it is important.

X + is + important / necessary / crucial / useful / good + for + verb-ing

...because caring for the environment is *necessary for helping* people keep healthy.

Physical exercise is *useful for keeping* fit and healthy and happy.

Doing adventure sports is *good for breathing* fresh air and *experiencing* nature.

The upkeep of historic buildings is *important for building* national identity.

Disciplining children is absolutely *essential for teaching* them respect for others.

Eating a balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables is *crucial for staying* in good shape.

Or you can use:

activity (verb-ing) + promotes + noun

Giving gifts on special occasions promotes good feeling amongst friends and family.

Donating money to charity on a regular basis promotes the development of a caring and unselfish community spirit.

Offering employees good salaries and fair holidays promotes a happy and warm working environment.

Exercise 29.3: Matching

Match the sentence halves 1-5 with the sentence halves A-E.

1. Friends are more important than anything else in life...
 2. Souvenirs and handicrafts are very important for...
 3. Giving expensive gifts is sometimes important and is certainly...
 4. Being able to cook well is very important for...
 5. Today, speaking more than one language is good for...
-
- A. ...becoming an independent young person if you move away from home.
 - B. ...opening up greater, more international career opportunities.
 - C. ...giving tourists an insight into the local culture of a place of interest.
 - D. ...because they are necessary for fun, laughter and sharing your feelings in times of need.
 - E. ...essential for developing good business relationships in some countries.

Extra language point 2 Sequencing

Another way to express degree of importance is to list “priorities” or “sequence”. This is quite simple. You can list two or three things and put them in order of importance as in the following example:

Well, I think that, when you go on a long journey with a friend, *the first thing* that you should consider in planning the trip is the amount of time you have and the distance you hope to travel in that time. *Secondly*, you should think about what kind of things you want to see, and *thirdly* you need to think about your budget for travel, food and accommodation.

Look at these variations:

Firstly/The first thing you/we/they should consider is...

Secondly/The second consideration should be...

Thirdly/The third thing that you/we/they must do is...

Formula 30

Proposing Solutions to Problems

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Proposing Solutions to Problems.

Think about restaurants and customer services in your town or city. What kinds of problems are there? How would you suggest they improve?

What are the main environmental problems facing the world today? How could they be addressed?

What are the drawbacks of travelling in your country as a foreigner? How could tourist companies as well as individuals go about surmounting these problems?

The formula

To propose solutions to problems, you should:

Answer order

1. Identify problems.
2. Suggest solutions.
3. Suggest definite actions that should be taken.

Language steps

1. Use expressions to identify problems.

The system *is rife with problems*.

The main problem with X *is...*

2. Use phrases to suggest solutions.

They *should make an effort to...*

We *must pay more attention to...*

You *could spend more money on...*

3. Use verbs and verb phrases to express definite actions.

They *should prohibit* people from...

They *could get rid of* poor workers.

We *could impose strict regulations on...*

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
up to date	adjective	modern, recent or containing the latest information	I like to stay up to date with the international news so I know what's going on in the world.
hygiene	noun	the practice to which people keep themselves and their surroundings clean	The hygiene standards in some restaurants in my hometown are really not very good – you sometimes get sick after eating there.

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer: What kinds of problems do students sometimes have in university, and what could be done to address them?

Sophia: Well, firstly, I think the main problem is that the classes are exceedingly boring. In more active and modern classes students are more interested, work harder and learn faster. I believe that teachers should be made to go on more up-to-date, modern training courses. Secondly, I think that the restaurants and canteens on campus have a very poor standard of food and don't offer much variety. They could pay more attention to hygiene and to making the menus more interesting.

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer on the next page more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
be rife with problems		to be full of problems	His body is rife with problems: he's overweight, balding, has heart problems, and he's got a bad back.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
bus lane		part of the road or avenue which is only for public buses to travel on	There aren't enough bus lanes in Ha Noi, but the authorities are building more and more every day.
extend	verb	to make something bigger or longer or more extensive	We are extending the university campus, so that we can build new tennis courts and a sports stadium.
measure	noun	a step or a means of solving a problem	We need to take measures to improve the conditions in local hospitals.

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer	How would you suggest that the government improve the transport system in your city?
Mike	<p>The transport system is rife with problems: there are too many motorbikes on the roads, there are not enough bus lanes and the railway system is not extensive enough.</p> <p>There are a few measures that can be taken to improve the transport system. The most important thing is to build more roads and be very careful where those roads are built. Then, when there are more and better roads, they can make more bus lanes and extend the railway lines. These are big projects and may take some time, but are necessary if transport problems are going to be solved.</p>
Interviewer	What should we do to deal with the problem of environmental pollution?
Mike	<p>That's a good question, and a very important one today. Well, there are a lot of environmental problems facing us today. I think the most important issues are water and air pollution. The authorities should make more effort to address the issue of water pollution by putting pressure on factories to stop pumping their chemical waste into rivers and lakes. Another measure would be to encourage people to only buy products from companies that respect the environment.</p>

Language step 1 Expressions to Identify Problems

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, identify problems in their responses.

Sophia Well, firstly, *I think the main problem is that* the classes are exceedingly boring...

Mike The transport system *is rife with problems*: there are too many motorbikes on the roads, there are not enough bus lanes and the railway system is not extensive enough...

...Well, *there are a lot of environmental problems* facing us today. I think the most important issues are water and air pollution...

Notice how both Sophia and Mike identify the problems under discussion. Here are some other expressions to identify problems:

There're a lot of problems with X.

There're a lot of problems with the national football team.

One major concern with X that needs addressing is Y.

One major concern with the ageing population *that needs addressing is* how we are going to pay for all of those pensions.

The biggest problem with X is Y.

The biggest problem with professional sports *is* that teams become businesses rather than playing for the love of the sport.

The main reasons behind X are Y and Z.

The main reasons behind desertification *are* agricultural misuse *and* rising global temperatures.

The main issue many people have with X is Y.

The main issue many people have with warfare *is* that they feel it is immoral.

Most people believe that X is the main problem.

In regard to the spread of AIDS in Africa, most people believe that the teachings about the use of condoms *are the main problem*.

Exercise 30.1: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate expressions to identify problems from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. _____ many people have with football stars is the amount of money they get paid.
A. The main reasons behind B. The main issue C. One major concern

2. that rising house prices is the main reason behind the financial crisis.
A. There're a lot of problems B. One major concern that needs addressing is
C. Most people believe
3. I have about our schools is the very poor quality of teachers they employ.
A. The biggest problem B. A major concern C. The main reason
4. our transport system is the sheer quantity of cars that go on the roads each day.
A. The biggest problem with B. Most people believe that C. The main reasons behind
5. petty crime in my country are poverty and the wealth gap behind rich and poor.
A. There are a lot of problems B. The biggest problem with C. The main reasons behind
6. the labour laws in many countries.
A. There are a lot of problems with B. The biggest problem with C. Most people believe that

Language step 2 Phrases to Suggest Solutions

Let's see how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, suggest their solutions.

- Sophia ...I believe that teachers *should be made to* go on more up-to-date, modern training courses. Secondly, I think that the restaurants...*could pay more attention to* hygiene and to making the menus more interesting.
- Mike ...when there are more and better roads, they *can make more* bus lanes and extend the railway lines...The authorities *should make more effort to* address the issue of water pollution by putting pressure on factories to stop pumping their chemical waste into rivers and lakes...

Imagine if the interviewer asked you these questions:

What do you think the government should do to deal with this problem?

What can be done to improve the conditions in the countryside?

How can we try to solve this problem?

To answer such questions, you should use modal verbs, such as **could**, **ought to** and **should**, as in the following phrases to suggest solutions:

could spend more money on

should pay more attention to

ought to make an effort to

can provide more

could try harder to

should take measures to

ought to take steps to

Look at the way native speakers use these phrases to answer this type of question:

One thing that they *could do* is to *make an effort* to provide farmers with more access to better medical care.

I believe we *should take steps* towards dealing with the problem of water pollution.

I believe that young people *ought to pay more attention* to how they behave towards old people in public.

I am sure that we *should try harder* to solve the current traffic problems.

We *should* certainly *take measures* to improve the customer services in this country.

The British government *could spend more money on* public transport to reduce the cost of travel.

Hospitals *could provide better and more customer-centred care*.

Exercise 30.2: Gap Fill

Write the phrases below in the correct spaces.

could spend more money on	ought to provide	ought to try harder to
pay more attention to	should make a real effort to address	
take measures to	to take steps to	

1. I feel that the police really ought _____ reduce the number of traffic accidents.
2. To encourage poorer students to attend university, universities and educational organisations _____ more scholarships.
3. We _____ deal with corruption amongst businessmen.
4. Because environmental concerns are the most pressing issues facing society today, I feel we _____ these issues before moving on to worrying about urban planning.
5. I strongly believe that we should _____ taking care of animals in danger of distinction.
6. It is absolutely necessary that we _____ improve the quality of food products sold in our national supermarkets.
7. Some people believe that the Egyptian government _____ alleviating rural poverty.

Language step 3 Verbs & Verb Phrases to Express Definite Actions

Let's look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, express definite actions.

Sophia ...I believe that teachers should be made to *go on* more up-to-date, modern training courses...

Mike ...The authorities should make more effort to address the issue of water pollution by *putting pressure on* factories to stop pumping their chemical waste into rivers and lakes. Another measure would be to *encourage people to* only buy products from companies that respect the environment.

Look at these verbs and verb phrases that native speakers use to propose concrete actions to solve problems:

- to get rid of
- to abolish
- to clean up
- to spend more money on
- to impose tighter regulations on
- to put pressure on
- to encourage people to
- to repair
- to renovate

These verbs and verb phrases can be used in two ways.

should + verb / verb phrase

The above verbs and verb phrases can be used with the structure **should + verb / verb phrase** as in the following examples:

- I strongly believe the authorities *should put pressure on* factory owners to reduce emissions.
- I am of the opinion that they *should clean up* the poorer ends of town.
- I think they *should impose tighter regulations on* the DVD sales.
- I really believe they *ought to spend more money on* improving the school facilities.
- I am convinced that they *should abolish* certain outdated laws in this country.
- Do you feel that it is advisable to *get rid of* all cigarette advertisements in public places?
- One step would be to *encourage people to* stop buying products from manufacturers that damage the environment.

by + verb-ing

The above verbs and verb phrases can be used with the structure **by + verb-ing**.

- They could improve the situation *by imposing tighter regulations on*...
- They could improve things *by cleaning up* the most polluted areas of...
- We could fix this problem *by putting pressure on* local governments to...
- We could take measures to solve this problem *by spending more money on* education and less on arms.
- We can make it a lot better *by repairing* the damage and *by renovating* the building.

Exercise 30.3: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate verbs and verb phrases to express definite actions from the choices below to complete the sentences.

1. The law that university students are not allowed to get married should be because it is an unfair law.

A. cleaned up

B. put pressure on

C. abolished

2. I am of the opinion that governments ought to _____ public health care and less on defense.
 A. abolish B. spend more money on C. clean up
3. Many people feel that we should _____ to be more culturally aware when we visit tourist sites in foreign countries.
 A. get rid of people B. encourage people C. spend more money
4. I think the only solution to the problem of contaminated food would be to _____ on the factories and companies that produce food products.
 A. abolish B. clean up C. impose tighter regulations
5. If we want to improve the conditions in most Egyptian cities, I think we will have to _____ some of the corrupt officials that take a lot of taxpayers' money and put it into their own pockets.
 A. get rid of B. impose stricter regulations C. encourage people
6. I believe developing countries should _____ developed countries to have more representation at international organisations such as the G8, the UN and the IMF.
 A. clean up B. impose tighter regulations on C. put pressure on

Formula 31

Speculating about Future Events and Outcomes

Aims

In this lesson you'll master the Formula for Speculating about Future Events and Outcomes.

Describe some of the major changes you think will happen in your country in the next 20 years.

Do you think that people in the future will have solved many of the environmental and social problems that we are still facing today?

What future predictions would you make about how technology in the future will develop and how it will affect the daily lives of humans?

The formula

To speculate about future events and outcomes, you should:

Answer order

1. State present conditions.
2. Predict future outcomes.
3. Talk about what will happen in the future if we take certain steps.

Language steps

1. Use common present conditions & future outcomes phrases.

Given that the level of unemployment is high, I don't think many people will find jobs.

Taking into consideration the current situation, I think John will succeed.

2. Use the future perfect tense accurately with time phrases.

By the year 2030 scientists say that all ice caps will have melted.

In about 20 years another 34 species of animals will have died out.

3. Use the future continuous tense to predict and talk about continuous, uncompleted future actions. Know when to use the future continuous and future simple.

By next century I believe that humans will be living much better, happier lives.

In the future we may be all travelling around in flying cars!

Native speaker words 1

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
rate	noun	a measurement of the speed at which something happens or changes	After the Wall Street crash of 1929, the unemployment rate increased dramatically as a result of the economic problems.
alarming	adjective	shocking; worrying; surprising	The amount of mosquitoes in the garden this year is alarming!
global warming		the increase of the temperature of the earth's surface – believed to be a danger related to pollution	Most people today are of the opinion that carbon dioxide emissions are the main cause of global warming.
melt	verb	to turn from something solid into a liquid due to heat	The ice cream melted because it was so hot outside. They should have put it in the fridge.
ice cap		a thick layer of ice that permanently covers areas at the north and south poles	The ice caps have been melting for years and years as the earth's temperature has been increasing.

Model answer 1

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Sophia.

Interviewer: What do you think your country will be like in about 20 years time?

Sophia: Well, it's hard to predict because things change so fast sometimes, and unexpected things happen. Mmm, I think that given the current rate of development, Vietnam will be a very strong and modern country in quite a short time. At the moment the cities are becoming more and more modern, people are constructing more and more office blocks, and traditional residential areas are disappearing at an alarming rate. Taking all these facts into consideration, I have no doubt that Vietnam will be a safer, cleaner and more beautiful and convenient place to live in the future.

Interviewer: Let's talk about our planet. Some people are not hopeful about the future of earth. What do you think will happen to the world in the future?

Sophia Well, that's another tough question. A lot of scientists are suggesting that due to global warming, it is very likely that we will face serious problems in the next 30 years. They say that by the year 2030, the ice caps will have melted and we will be paying the price for the damage we did to the environment. Some say that we will possibly be living a very different lifestyle and others even suggest we may be living on other planets by then!

Native speaker words 2

Let's learn some native speaker words which are useful for answering this type of question. These words can also help you understand the model answer below more thoroughly.

Native Speaker Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Example Sentence
transform	verb	to change from one thing/ state into another	Caterpillars transform into butterflies.
dramatically	adverb	suddenly; noticeably	The weather changed dramatically: one minute it was beautiful and sunny and the next minute it was pouring down with rain!
wristwatch	noun	a timepiece which is worn on the wrist	Making a good wristwatch is a fine art. That's why many high-quality watches are very expensive.
activate	verb	to cause something to start	He pressed the button and activated the machine. It made a loud noise as the engine started.
voice control		an electronic feature that enables a user to speak into a device instead of typing or pushing buttons	He always uses the voice control function on his mobile phone; he just speaks the name of the person he wants to call and the telephone recognises the name and dials the number!

Model answer 2

Read the model answer from the IELTS candidate Mike.

Interviewer Can you describe some of the changes you think will happen in the future because of technological developments?

Mike Yes, I've thought about this a lot recently, actually. I believe that technology will continue to transform our lives dramatically. For instance, I am quite sure that cell phones will be like wristwatches and will be activated by voice

control, rather than pressing buttons to input numbers. I am also convinced that technology will contribute enormously to advances in the medical industry. For example, I think that in about 50 years, we will have found a cure for cancer and other serious diseases.

Language step 1 Present Conditions & Future Outcomes Phrases

Let's have a look at this part of Sophia's response.

Sophia ...I think that *given the current rate of development, Vietnam will be a very strong and modern country in quite a short time.* At the moment the cities are becoming more and more modern, people are constructing more and more office blocks, and traditional residential areas are disappearing at an alarming rate. *Taking all these facts into consideration, I have no doubt that Vietnam will be a safer, cleaner and more beautiful and convenient place to live in the future...*A lot of scientists are suggesting that *due to global warming, it is very likely that we will face serious problems in the next 30 years...*

Notice that in talking about future predictions, Sophia describes what the present conditions are, and what future outcomes these may lead to.

- Let's look at these similar structures native speakers use:
- Given the + noun/noun phrase + future prediction
- Taking into consideration/account + noun/noun phrase + future prediction

Look at the following examples in the table and see how each of the parts of the sentence fits together.

Opener	Noun/Noun Phrase	Future Prediction
Given the	current situation	I am sure that the financial crisis will end in a few years.
Taking into consideration	the problems we are facing	I think we will have to take drastic measures to change things.
Taking into account	the amazing technological advances this century	I am sure we will be living on other planets in a short time.

- Or you can use these structures:
- Given that + clause + future prediction
- Considering that + clause + future prediction
- Since + clause + future prediction

Again, look at some examples of these structures in the table below:

Opener	Clause	Future Prediction
Given that	they are making so much effort	I am sure they will clean up the city before all the tourists come.
Considering that	they have been working so hard	I have no doubt they will all get the scholarships.
Since	they are currently putting more money into education	I think that in 10 years most of the schools will be very modern.

Exercise 31.1: Gap Fill & Matching

Write the phrases below in the correct spaces, and then match the sentence halves 1-5 with the sentence halves A-E.

are reforming the labour laws are spending a lot of money
 taking into consideration the current rate of international development
 we are constantly improving our education standards

1. Given ...
 2. the state of the economy in the Middle East...
 3. Given that ...
 4. Given that the authorities on restoring old buildings...
 5. Since they ...
- A. ...I think we will see a great improvement in working conditions in the next few years.
 B. ...I am sure there will be less poverty in the world by 2020.
 C. ...I think it will be in trouble after about 50 years and everyone stops using oil.
 D. ...I believe the future for our country will be a bright one.
 E. ...I believe that we will have an even greater tourist industry in the coming few years.

Language step 2 The Future Perfect & Time Phrases

Let's have a look at how the two IELTS candidates, Sophia and Mike, use the future perfect tense and time phrases.

Sophia ...They say that *by the year 2030*, the ice caps *will have melted* and we will be paying the price for the damage we did to the environment...

Mike ...I am also convinced that technology will contribute enormously to advances in the medical industry. For example, I think that *in about 50 years*, we will have *found* a cure for cancer and other serious diseases.

Like Mike and Sophia, to predict future outcomes you should use the future perfect tense. The future perfect is used to talk about things that will have been completed or finished at or by a certain point in the future.

The structure of the future perfect is: **will + have + past participle.**

Examples:

I will have eaten my dinner by 5 p.m.

We will have solved many environmental problems in...

We can use the future perfect with the following time phrases:

in the future

in the next few years

in about 40 years

in the next two decades

in a short time

in only a couple of years

in our lifetime

by the year 2055

by 2030

by next century

by the time + clause



In is followed by a period of time whereas **by** must be followed by a certain point of time.

Take a look at the following examples, which combine the future perfect and time phrases:

They say that *by the year 2030*, the ice caps *will have melted*.

Some believe that *by the time* we are old, mankind *will have cut down* all the rainforests on earth.

Some scientists say that *by the late 2050s*, man *will have built* cities on the moon.

Many believe that *in only a few years*, another 200 species of endangered animals *will have become* extinct.

I am pretty sure that *in 100 years*, we *will have succeeded* in finding a cure for cancer.

Exercise 31.2: Multiple Choice

Choose the appropriate future perfect forms and time phrases from the choices below to complete the sentences.

- Some people believe that _____ 20 years, we _____ acroplanes that can go around the world in only a few hours.
 - in the future; will invented
 - in the next; will have invent
 - in about; will have invented
- I am convinced that _____ the 22nd century, humankind _____ all the animal lives on the planet.
 - by; will destroyed
 - by; will have destroyed
 - in about; will be destroyed
- I am quite sure that _____, our government _____ most transport problems facing the nation.
 - in a very short time; will have solved
 - in the future; will having solved
 - in only a couple of years; will have solve
- A lot of medical research has been done in recent years. I think that _____, scientists _____ cures for most known diseases.
 - in a short time; will have find
 - by next century; will have discovered
 - in the next few years; will discovered
- A lot of my friends believe the world is getting worse and worse, but I don't agree. I think that in just _____ or two, we _____ the problem of world poverty.
 - our lifetime; will had solved
 - a short time; would have solved
 - a decade; will have solved

Language step 3 The Future Continuous

Let's see how the IELTS candidate Sophia uses the future continuous tense.

Sophia ...They say that by the year 2030, the ice caps will have melted and we *will be paying* the price for the damage we did to the environment. Some say that we *will possibly be living* a very different lifestyle and others even suggest we *may be living* on other planets by then!

Notice how Sophia talks about what things they think people will be doing in the future as continuing future actions, as opposed to finished actions. The future continuous is used to talk about something that we think will happen in the future and will continue to happen for a period of time, rather than a sudden or finished event in the future.

The structure of the future continuous is: will + be + verb-ing.

Examples:

The Vietnamese countryside *will be developing* for many years to come.

By 2015 I *will be studying* in England.

We can also use the future continuous with the following time phrases:

in the future

in the next few years

in about 40 years

in the next two decades

in a short time

in only a couple of years

in our lifetime

by the year

by 2030

by next century

by the time + clause

Examples:

I believe that *in about 50 years*, we *will be living* on the moon.

I think that *in about 100 years*, we *will be driving* flying cars like we see in the movies.

Some people are convinced that *by the 22nd century*, humans *will be living* on the moon.

Many are of the opinion that *in only a short time*, everyone in the world *will be using* a home computer.



We do not say *we will be having* or *we will be tasting* because these verbs are stative verbs or sense verbs, not action verbs. As a rule, they are not used in the continuous tenses. The following are some stative verbs and sense verbs:

realise - do not say *will be realising*

know - do not say *will be knowing*

love - do not say *will be loving*

want - do not say *will be wanting*

believe - do not say *will be believing*

hear - do not say *will be hearing*

smell - do not say *will be smelling*

Exercise 31.3: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below by writing the correct future forms of the words in brackets.

1. Some believe that in a few years, we _____ (pay) the price for the damage we have inflicted upon the natural environment.
2. I think that in one or two decades, people _____ (use) mobile phones inserted into their brains.
3. Because fashion is constantly changing, many people think that in the future, people _____ (wear) very different clothes than we wear today.
4. Due to the increasing levels of air pollution, many are sure that in only 10 years or so, we _____ (have to wear) special masks when we go outside.
5. A lot of my colleagues are of the opinion that in only a short time, everyone in the world _____ (have) a home computer and a mobile telephone.
6. Many people think that it is not fair that London _____ (host) the Olympic Games again in 2012.
7. In the near future, we _____ (all drive) around in environmentally friendly cars which do not pollute the atmosphere.
8. I believe that if we continue to invite artists and musicians from all over the world to our country, everyone _____ (love) art and music.

Extra language point **Expressing Likelihood with the First Conditional**

Another extremely useful way of predicting future outcomes is to use the first conditional. Remind yourself of its structure:

if + present verb + will + verb

If we continue to treat the planet in this way, we will be in serious trouble in the future.

If we don't address the current traffic problems soon, we will face serious problems in the near future.

To make your predictions sound more like a native speaker, you can use the following types of likelihood expressions in your first conditional sentences.

it is likely/quite likely/highly likely/very likely/extremely likely

it is probable/quite probable/highly probable

it is possible/quite possible

Examples:

If we continue to treat the planet in this way, it is very likely that we will be in serious trouble in the future.

If we don't address the current traffic problems soon, it is highly probable that we will face serious problems in the near future.

Remember that we can also reverse the first conditional structure.

Examples:

It is extremely likely that people will be a lot more open-minded in the future if our society continues to welcome art and culture from all over the world.

It is quite possible that the world will be a really clean and harmonious place in the future if we take measures to take care of our planet.

Appendices

Top 10 Do's and Don'ts for the IELTS Speaking Test

We've put together our top 10 do's and don'ts so that you can avoid all those mistakes that other candidates make.

1. **Do** develop your answers, don't just say "yes" or "no".

By adding a little extra information, reasons and examples to support your opinions, you will score higher.

2. **Do** remember that it's not a test of your knowledge.

You don't have to know facts about the topics the examiner asks you; you just have to talk about your opinions and impressions.

3. **Do** listen carefully to the whole question the examiner asks, not just the first few key words.

Don't just "guess" what the examiner is going to say from the first few words. Make sure you listen carefully so your answer is relevant.

4. **Do** ask for clarification occasionally if you need to.

If you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask the examiner to rephrase or repeat the question.

5. **Do** include personal anecdotes and stories into your Part II monologue.

It gives your talk a more authentic and colourful feel, and helps to hold the examiner's interest.

6. **Don't** learn or memorise set answers to questions.

It's very easy to spot a student who is reciting memorised full answers. The examiner will certainly lower your score or move on to another question.

7. **Don't** ask the examiner to change the topic if you don't feel comfortable with it.

You have to talk about the topic he or she selects – those are the rules.

8. **Don't shout or speak really loudly at the examiner.**
 Speak at a normal, natural volume and pace you feel comfortable with.
9. **Don't worry if the examiner stops you and moves you on to another question.**
 The examiner has to keep to certain times for each part of the test so he or she may jump in and interrupt you a few times.
10. **Don't go to the test without being clean and fresh.**
 An examiner can feel very uncomfortable if a student smells unpleasant or has bad breath.

Verbs Most Commonly Misused by IELTS Candidates

We have conducted several research and analyses of the IELTS Speaking test to find out that the following 60 irregular verbs are most commonly misused by the candidates.

If you want to get high scores, use these verbs accurately. By mastering various forms of these verbs, you won't make a mistake!

Base Form	Past	Past Participle
is/are	was/were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cut	cut	cut
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed

Base Form	Past	Past Participle
find	found	found
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten
get	got	got/gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
leave	left	left
let	let	let
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made

Base Form	Past	Past Participle
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
put	put	put
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
sleep	slept	slept

Base Form	Past	Past Participle
stand	stood	stood
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wake	woke	woken
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

Answer Key

Part ONE

Formula 1

Error Correction

1. I prefer to go to the cinema rather than watch DVDs at home.
2. My sister prefers writing letters to writing emails.
3. I prefer to talk with friends on the phone rather than use emails.
4. Correct
5. My mother prefers shopping at the market rather than in supermarkets.
6. My friends generally prefer to send text messages rather than talk on the phone.

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. A 6. C 7. B 8. A

Gap Fill

1. Needless to say 2. actually 3. Besides 4. in addition to; also 5. in fact

Formula 2

Word Order

1. I usually eat steamed buns. / Usually I eat steamed buns.
2. I almost never do exercise.
3. He hardly ever gets home early.
4. She never reads novels.
5. My father always rides a bike.
6. I sometimes read a magazine during lunch. / Sometimes I read a magazine during lunch.
7. Normally I watch TV with my parents. / I normally watch TV with my parents.
8. I rarely play computer games.
9. I often go cycling on the weekend.

Gap Fill

wake up; watch; eat; go out; hang out; play; have; meet up with; lie; watch

Error Correction

1. I often go to my sister's house for lunch on / at the weekend.
2. On holiday, I usually get up at 10 a.m. / in the morning.
3. I always go for a jog in the evening, when it is cool.
4. Normally, I go to bed at 11 p.m. / o'clock.
5. I try to have lunch at noon.
6. I leave for work at 6 a.m. / o'clock.

Gap Fill & Ordering

before; C Then; B After the shower; D After that; A

Formula 3**Error Correction**

1. When I'm not working, I really enjoy cycling in the countryside outside my city. It is a very healthy and exciting pastime.
2. I really like to get involved in team sports. They are particularly good for building up co-operative skills and healthy competition.
3. I especially like to spend my free time sleeping and being lazy in my dormitory.
4. My friends and I are really keen on playing computer games. They are a really good way to spend an evening.
5. I enjoy taking part in martial arts like kung fu; they can keep you fit and make you strong!
6. She enjoys going out to bars on weekends and hanging out with friends.

Word Order

1. I'm quite into watching detective stories on TV.
2. She's a huge fan of romantic comedies.
3. I'm extremely interested in the latest fashions.
4. He's very keen on dancing at clubs with friends.

Sentence Completion

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. satisfying | 2. boring | 3. excited |
| 4. fascinated | 5. interested | 6. satisfying |

Formula 4

Rephrasing

1. I hate travelling a lot for work, but my boss makes me.
2. I'm not keen on formal parties where I have to look very smart and behave very well.
3. I can't stand it when my manager criticises me in front of all my colleagues.
4. Susan isn't interested in English at all and she thinks it's a complete waste of time.
5. I'm not really a fan of going to expensive restaurants.
6. I don't enjoy watching TV soap operas.

Gap Fill

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. don't really | 2. strongly | 3. really don't like |
| 4. absolutely | 5. thoroughly dislike | 6. can't stand |

Error Correction

1. I really enjoy studying English.
2. I like going to the seaside and swimming in the sea very much.
3. I don't enjoy going to parties very much.
4. I really like all parts of my job.
5. Correct

Formula 5

Word Placement

- | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. A, B or C | 2. B | 3. B or C | 4. A, B or C | 5. A, B or C |
| 6. B | 7. B or C | 8. C | 9. B | |

Matching

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. D | 2. C | 3. B | 4. E | 5. A |
|------|------|------|------|------|

Formula 6

Error Correction

1. I really like meeting new people.
2. I particularly love travelling as part of my job.
3. She especially enjoys visiting the famous sights in my hometown.
4. I enjoy taking photographs and sending postcards home.
5. I really like living with my classmates in our dormitory.
6. Correct

Multiple Choice

1. A 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. B 6. A

Matching

1. D 2. G 3. F 4. H 5. B 6. C 7. E 8. A

Formula 7

Matching

1. D 2. F 3. E 4. C 5. B 6. A

Gap Fill

1. elderly people 2. the unemployed; adolescents 3. white-collar workers; wealthy people

Rephrasing

1. A lot of Vietnamese people regularly play badminton when they are young.
2. Not many women play golf in Vietnam.
3. The majority of single Vietnamese people like to listen to music.
4. Very few people / students at my university play table tennis.
5. Most people watched the Thang Long-Ha Noi 1,000-year Anniversary Celebration.
6. A small percentage of rich people ever ride a bike.

Word Order

1. As a rule, football is more popular with boys.
2. Generally speaking, Vietnamese people eat a lot of rice.
3. More often than not, university students play sports very regularly.
4. Men tend to like watching sport together.
5. In general, rich people like to drive cars.

Formula 8

Sentence Completion

1. the worst
2. the most beautiful
3. more suitable
4. The most pleasant
5. the best
6. the most fun
7. the most enjoyable
8. the warmest
9. hotter

Gap Fill

1. in the middle of winter
2. at the beginning of
3. during
4. in
5. at
6. on

Matching

1. B
2. E
3. D
4. A
5. C

Formula 9

Table Completion

Age Groups & Generations	Family / Relationship Groups	Work-related Groups	Social Classes
younger people	parents	retired people	poor people
the elderly	single parents	unemployed people	rich people
the older generation	married couples	white-collar workers	the working classes
school kids	grandparents	housewives	the middle classes
the younger generation	people in a relationship	office workers	the upper classes
adolescents	couples	job seekers	property owners
teenagers	single people		the homeless

Matching

1. G 2. D 3. E 4. F 5. B 6. A 7. C

Gap Fill

1. energetic 2. social 3. Apathetic
 4. curious 5. family-oriented 6. studious

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. A 3. C 4. A 5. C 6. B 7. C 8. A

Formula 10

Error Correction

1. The last time I played basketball was when I was at school.
2. On my 25th birthday, I went to a Japanese restaurant with my friends and colleagues.
3. I think my boyfriend's parents came to visit around Tomb Sweeping Day.
4. My grandmother gave me the computer as a present last Christmas, so it's still really new.
5. I went to Thailand on vacation about two years ago.
6. Correct
7. I finally passed my driving test in 1997.

Table Completion

Base Form	Past Tense Form	Base Form	Past Tense Form
are	were	know	knew
become	became	lay	laid
begin	began	leave	left
break	broke	let	let
bring	brought	lose	lost
build	built	make	made
buy	bought	mean	meant
catch	caught	meet	met
choose	chose	pay	paid
come	came	put	put

Base Form	Past Tense Form	Base Form	Past Tense Form
cut	cut	read	read
do	did	ride	rode
draw	drew	run	ran
drink	drank	say	said
drive	drove	see	saw
eat	ate	sell	sold
fall	fell	send	sent
feed	fed	sleep	slept
find	found	stand	stood
fly	flew	swim	swam
forget	forgot	take	took
get	got	teach	taught
give	gave	tell	told
go	went	think	thought
have	had	throw	threw
hear	heard	understand	understood
hide	hid	wake	woke
hit	hit	wear	wore
is	was	win	won
keep	kept	write	wrote

Gap Fill

1. annoying 2. intriguing 3. stimulating; enjoyable
 4. thrilling 5. exhilarating; frustrating

Formula 11

Sentence Completion & Matching

1. started; D 2. drove; C 3. got to grips; B 4. taught; E 5. went; A

Error Correction & Matching

1. I learned English from two really good teachers in middle school. C
 2. I learned to use spreadsheets by trial and error. I was not taught by anyone. B

3. I learned how to sing from a friend of my mother, A
4. I was first taught to write characters by my father, D
5. I learned how to do Web design by using an online tutorial and going through each section every day on my own. E

Formula 12

Sentence Completion

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. have cut | 2. have brought | 3. have fought |
| 4. has undergone | 5. have spent | 6. has become |

Sentence Completion

- | | | | | |
|--------|---------|------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| 1. are | 2. went | 3. did not look; looks | 4. cost | 5. played; enjoyed |
|--------|---------|------------------------|---------|--------------------|

Gap Fill

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. better; cheaper | 2. faster | 3. more fashionable |
| 4. wider | 5. more expensive | |

Formula 13

Matching

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. D | 2. E | 3. C | 4. A | 5. B |
|------|------|------|------|------|

Error Correction

1. Correct
2. To make my living room more homely, I would put a bookshelf in the corner and some plants.
3. To make the kitchen better, I would get rid of the old units and have a totally new, modern kitchen installed.
4. To make my house look more cheerful, I would paint the walls of my living room a brighter colour.
5. To let more light in my house and create more space, I would have the balcony extended.

Gap Fill

1. Installing; warmer 2. Hanging; cosier 3. would make; powerful
4. easier 5. Having

Formula 14

Gap Fill

1. especially 2. to some extent 3. completely
4. incredibly 5. fairly

Gap Fill

1. a good way 2. for helping 3. cycling; helps
4. excellent for 5. excellent way 6. can help us

Matching

1. H 2. C 3. G 4. E 5. J 6. F 7. D 8. I 9. A 10. B

Matching

1. D 2. E 3. A 4. B 5. C

Formula 15

Error Correction

1. In the future I would really like to travel in the desert.
2. Correct
3. What I would really like to do when I am older is live in a wooden house in California.
4. I hope to have the opportunity to go fishing in lake Tanzania.
5. What I'd really like to do is learn another foreign language.

Gap Fill

1. manage 2. dream 3. succeed 4. ambition

Sentence Completion

Possible answers:

1. If I pass the test, I will go to England on vacation.
2. If I achieve my ambition, I will be so proud of myself.
3. If I manage to do everything I want before I am 40 years old, I'll have a really happy life.
4. I will be so delighted if I fulfil my dream and travel to the moon.

Formula 16**Gap Fill**

1. think that; opinion
2. quite convinced
3. way; believe

Matching

1. H
2. D
3. F
4. G
5. B
6. A
7. C
8. E

Sentence Completion

Possible answers:

1. A tremendous amount of young people don't get enough money and time to travel around the world.
2. In my country, elderly people, in general, like to do exercise regularly every morning.
3. A large percentage of famous people don't get enough freedom and privacy.
4. Nearly all students are given far too much homework.
5. The majority of parents today don't give their sons and daughters enough privacy.

Gap Fill

1. ought
2. The best thing
3. would be
4. should
5. good idea
6. It would help if

Formula 17**Gap Fill**

1. blogs
2. advertisements
3. newsstands
4. magazines; reviews
5. features

Gap Fill & Matching

1. broadcasts; B 2. browse through; A 3. news reports; E
4. blogs; C 5. find out about; D

Gap Fill

1. biased / one-sided 2. objective / impartial 3. well respected
4. untrustworthy 5. unreliable

Formula 18

Gap Fill

- Mary: not; of the opinion
Mary: do; opinion
Mary: course not; believe

Multiple Choice

1. A 2. C 3. C 4. A 5. B 6. B

Gap Fill & Matching

1. are made; D 2. punish; C 3. have; E 4. are given; A 5. drive; B

Formula 19

Gap Fill

1. incredibly 2. unbelievably challenging 3. fairly frustrating
4. remarkably easy 5. awkward

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. C 4. A 5. B

Formula 20

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C 6. A

Matching

1. E 2. C 3. D 4. B 5. A

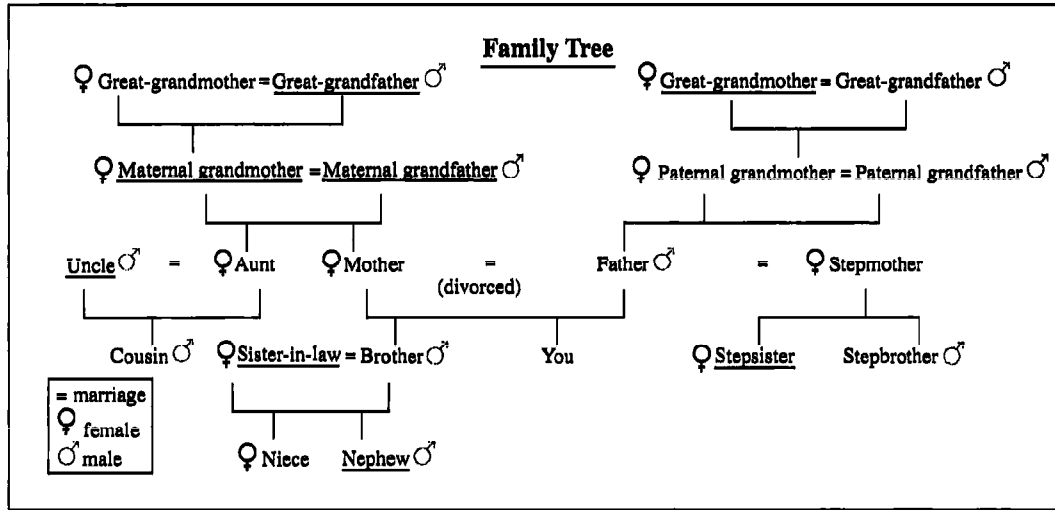
Matching

1. B 2. D 3. E 4. A 5. C

Part TWO

Formula 21

Gap Fill



Gap Fill

1. sports personality
2. ex-boyfriend
3. childhood friend
4. friend of the family
5. TV presenter
6. celebrity

Gap Fill

1. who was the President of America
2. who taught us mathematics at school
3. who lived near our family home
4. who now studies at Beijing University
5. who was a civil servant
6. who lived in Los Angeles

Multiple Choice

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. B

Gap Fill

1. moody
2. supportive
3. immature
4. frank
5. charming
6. ambitious
7. generous
8. reserved
9. humorous
10. bright

Gap Fill

1. seldom 2. frequently 3. every night
4. typically; twice a year 5. every now and again 6. constantly

Matching

1. C 2. E 3. B 4. A 5. D

Matching

1. E 2. B/D 3. F 4. A 5. C 6. B/D

Multiple Choice

1. A 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. A 6. B

Gap Fill

1. have the will to succeed 2. through sheer hard work 3. has a gift for
4. to fight for 5. earn the respect

Gap Fill

1. look up to 2. felt proud 3. hold; in high regard
4. greatly admire 5. special to me

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. A 3. B 4. A 5. A

Matching

1. F 2. B 3. G 4. D 5. H 6. E 7. C 8. A

Ordering

- F, D, B, C, A, G, E

Formula 22

Matching

1. E 2. A 3. F 4. D 5. B 6. G 7. C

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. A 3. B 4. C 5. A 6. C 7. A 8. C 9. C

Matching

1. E 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. D 6. F

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. B 3. C 4. B 5. A 6. C 7. A

Gap Fill

1. in addition to 2. both; and 3. As well as
4. Besides 5. Along with 6. not only; but also

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C

Gap Fill

1. always; used to 2. had; Whenever; would
3. often; went; was 4. lived; sometimes; took

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C

Matching

1. B 2. E 3. A 4. F 5. C 6. D

Gap Fill

1. makes me feel 2. important to me 3. provided me with 4. love; because
 5. I value; gives me 6. reminds me 7. lets me

Matching

1. D 2. B 3. E 4. C 5. F 6. A

Ordering

- E, C, F, A, D, B

Formula 23**Word Order**

1. a life-size golden statue 2. a handy antique silver lighter
 3. an elegant black silk dress 4. a boring grey mass-produced dictionary
 5. a modern spherical glass sculpture

Error Correction

1. I made him a toy car. 2. I bought a painting for my mother.
 3. My friend wrote me a story. 4. My father bought me a book.
 5. I gave it to a classmate. 6. I asked them to buy it for me.

Sentence Completion

1. bought; was studying 2. saw; was 3. told
 4. made; was 5. invented 6. was dating; bought
 7. gave; was staying 8. was working; was able

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. A 3. C 4. C 5. A 6. B

Gap Fill

1. are great for 2. are used for 3. provides people with
 4. provide 5. is important for 6. it's appreciated because
 7. can help 8. useful for 9. are valued for

Word Order

1. I last wore the watch two years ago.
2. The first time I took the subway was in 1989.
3. The last time I watched the film was yesterday.
4. I first used a dictionary a very long time ago.
5. The last time I looked at the painting was last month.
6. I first bought a cell phone in 2003.

Matching

1. B 2. F 3. D 4. A 5. K 6. C 7. G 8. E 9. I
10. L 11. J 12. M 13. H

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. C 5. B 6. A 7. C 8. B

Sentence Completion

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. (much) more important | 2. not as reliable | 3. not as advanced as |
| 4. more striking and innovative | 5. not as enlightening as | 6. as equally important; as |
| 7. more pleasant | 8. warmer; more colourful; than | |

Gap Fill

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. relaxed | 2. sentimental | 3. intrigued by |
| 4. nostalgic | 5. thrilled | 6. inspired |

Sentence Completion

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. was made; wouldn't be | 2. would play; had |
| 3. would be; were lost | 4. hadn't bought; would've been |
| 5. wouldn't have become; hadn't made | 6. had been made; wouldn't have been |

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. A 3. C 4. C 5. A 6. B

Ordering

D, G, E, A, C, F, B

Formula 24

Gap Fill

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. the first time; romantic weekend away | 2. legend |
| 3. the time when; road trip | 4. speech contest; poems; role-play |
| 5. fairy tale | |

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. A 6. C 7. C 8. B 9. A 10. A 11. C

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. A 3. B 4. C 5. A

Sentence Completion

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. were played | 2. was invited; by | 3. were read; by |
| 4. was promoted; by | 5. were taught | 6. had been take / were taken; by |
| 7. was carried | 8. was bought; by | |

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. A 5. C 6. A 7. C 8. B

Table Completion

Relatives	Occupations	Relationships	Groups
grandparents	accountant	friend of a friend	a crowd of people
aunt	waiter / waitress	next-door neighbour	loads of people
uncle	musician	colleague	a big group of people
spouse		friend of the family	(sport) supporters
mother-in-law		acquaintance	party-goers
nephew		childhood friend	a tour group
distant relation			audience
			guests
			passengers
			players

Rephrasing

1. Simon, who gets carsick very easily, felt very ill on the school bus one day.
2. Susan, who is very forgetful, forgot her handbag.
3. All of the tennis fans who didn't manage to buy tickets watched the match on TV screens outside.
4. Ralph, who was a friendly old man, used to talk to me every day on my way home from school.
5. All of the passengers who hadn't bought a ticket were thrown off the bus.
6. The members of the tour group who were American didn't understand what I said.

Rephrasing

1. He said that he was Vietnamese.
2. She said that she wasn't going to study the following year.
3. He asked me if I could go to his house that night.
4. She told him that she didn't love him anymore.
5. I said that I wouldn't be able to leave the party then.
6. My dad said that he had gone to Ha Noi many years ago.
7. I asked Jack where Jill was.
8. I said to my parents that I couldn't tell them as it was a secret.
9. He said that he had never been to Ba Dinh Square.

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. A 3. B 4. C 5. B 6. A

Matching

1. H 2. C 3. I 4. F 5. A 6. E 7. D 8. G 9. B

Table Completion

Adjectives for Describing Events	Adjectives of Feeling
amazing	amazed
amusing	amused
astonishing	astonished
astounding	astounded
awe-inspiring	awe-inspired
depressing	depressed

Adjectives for Describing Events	Adjectives of Feeling
disappointing	disappointed
embarrassing	embarrassed
encouraging	encouraged
enlightening	enlightened
fascinating	fascinated
frustrating	frustrated
inspiring	inspired
interesting	interested
moving	moved
refreshing	refreshed
stimulating	stimulated

Sentence Completion

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. hadn't been; would've been | 2. wouldn't have taken; hadn't travelled |
| 3. had gone; wouldn't have made; enjoyed | 4. would've kept; hadn't lost |
| 5. the best; have ever had | 6. have always tried |
| 7. the most exciting; have ever been | 8. have never arrived |

Gap Fill

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. a very stimulating experience | 2. I learnt the importance of |
| 3. In the future, I will | 4. This event taught me |
| 5. I will never forget | 6. I wouldn't want to do it again |
| 7. rewarding experience and I learnt a lot | 8. important for me |
| 9. I would love to do it again | |

Ordering

D, F, A, E, C, B

Part THREE

Formula 25

Matching

1. F 2. A 3. D 4. C 5. B 6. E

Gap Fill

1. believe that 2. strongly believe 3. convinced that
4. certainly do; of the opinion 5. don't think 6. Not really

Multiple Choice

1. A 2. C 3. B 4. C 5. A 6. B

Matching

1. A 2. B 3. D 4. C 5. B 6. A 7. C 8. D

Formula 26

Gap Fill & Matching

1. vast majority; C 2. Most; F 3. A lot of; A
4. large percentage; E 5. political views; D 6. People with a lot of; B

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. A 5. B 6. C

Gap Fill

1. is a better place for relaxing
2. because it's a very therapeutic hobby; energetic
3. keep our natural environment cleaner
4. it is very important that

- 5. for establishing positive international relations
- 6. rewarding and fulfilling; better for
- 7. much wider variety; more convenient
- 8. necessary for
- 9. while younger people like
- 10. I think almost everyone agrees that it's important

Formula 27

Gap Fill

- 1. agree
- 2. couldn't agree
- 3. believe that's true
- 4. completely agree with

Multiple Choice

- 1. B
- 2. C
- 3. C
- 4. A
- 5. B
- 6. C

Matching

- 1. E
- 2. C
- 3. A
- 4. B
- 5. D

Matching

- 1. D
- 2. E
- 3. C
- 4. A
- 5. B

Formula 28

Matching

The main advantage of working in an office is you can sit in a comfortable chair all day and drink tea.

The good thing about living in the countryside is that you can take peaceful walks and breathe fresh air.

One of the main benefits of living in cities is that you are able to keep up with the latest fashions, go to clubs, bars and restaurants.

A major advantage of taking the subway is you can travel to work quickly and cheaply.

A key advantage of having regular holidays is that you can give the mind and body a rest from the stress of work.

Gap Fill

1. can get stressful
2. too obsessed with; can give a very bad impression to others
3. might get bored; annoying
4. get bothered by; not good for
5. The disadvantage of; inconvenient for
6. The bad thing; might get stolen
7. can get complicated

Matching

1. C 2. F 3. A 4. D 5. B 6. E 7. G

Formula 29

Multiple Choice & Matching

1. B; C 2. B; E 3. A; D 4. C; B 5. A; A

Gap Fill

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. more important | 2. have a higher priority |
| 3. undoubtedly of greater importance than | 4. in need of more attention than |
| 5. take precedence over | 6. Before thinking; should try to |
| 7. equally as important as | 8. much more valuable; than |

Matching

1. D 2. C 3. E 4. A 5. B

Formula 30

Multiple Choice

1. B 2. C 3. B 4. A 5. C 6. A

Gap Fill

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. to take steps to | 2. ought to provide |
| 3. ought to try harder to | 4. should make a real effort to address |
| 5. pay more attention to | 6. take measures to |
| 7. could spend more money on | |

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. B 4. C 5. A 6. C

Formula 31**Gap Fill & Matching**

1. the current rate of international development; B
2. Taking into consideration; C
3. we are constantly improving our education standards; D
4. are spending a lot of money; E
5. are reforming the labour laws; A

Multiple Choice

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. C

Sentence Completion

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. will be paying | 2. will be using | 3. will be wearing |
| 4. will have to wear | 5. will have | 6. will be hosting |
| 7. will all be driving | 8. will love | |

31 High-scoring Formulas to Answer the IELTS Speaking Questions

Jonathan Palley - Adrian Li - Oliver Davies

Chịu trách nhiệm xuất bản

Giám đốc - Tổng Biên tập

Nguyễn Thị Thanh Hương

Biên tập Nguyễn Hoài Nam

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NHÀ XUẤT BẢN TỔNG HỢP THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH

62 Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai - Q.1 - TP.HCM

☎ 38225340 - 38296764 - 38247225 Fax: 38222726

E-mail: tonghop@nxbhcm.com.vn Website: www.nxbhcm.com.vn

Sách điện tử: www.sachweb.vn

NHÀ SÁCH TỔNG HỢP 1

62 Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai - Q.1 - TP.HCM ☎ 38256804

NHÀ SÁCH TỔNG HỢP 2

86 - 88 Nguyễn Tất Thành - Q.4 - TP.HCM ☎ 39433868

Công ty TNHH Nhân Trí Việt

83^B Trần Đình Xu, P. Nguyễn Cư Trinh, Quận 1

Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh

☎ 38379344 Fax: 39200681

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In 1.000 cuốn khổ 18,5 × 26cm tại Công ty TNHH MTV ITAXA - 126 Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai
Quận 3 - Tp. Hồ Chí Minh. XNĐKXB số: 206-2014/CXB/21-12/THTPHCM ngày 27-01-2014.
QĐXB số: 129/QĐ-THTPHCM-2014 ngày 11-2-2014. ISBN: 978-604-58-1427-7. In xong và nộp
lưu chiểu tháng 4-2014.