

IELTS TEST DAY

Improve Your Band Score
IELTS SPEAKING Test
Top 30 Tips

By ielts-jonathan.com



IELTS TEST DAY
EXAMS



Congratulations on your Speaking Test Top Tips Download

I hope that you gain an insight into the Speaking Test that will aid your understanding of the IELTS Test and improve your score.

When you finish - Feel Free

- to explore our website ieltsjonathan.com for further valuable information,
- follow our Facebook page and other social media, where you can discuss and share topics and tips with other candidates,
- and look out for further tips and tricks in your inbox.

Please feel free to contact me via the contact page on www.ieltsjonathan.com with any comments or questions you may have. I value your feedback.

On the following pages, you will find an overview of the IELTS speaking test and 30 Top Tips and Hints to help you.

Happy Reading and Warm Regards.

Jonathan



General Overview of the Speaking Test

- The speaking test lasts between 11 and 14 minutes.
- The speaking test is in the form of an interview with a trained examiner.
- The exact, same test is conducted all over the world; therefore all examiners anywhere in the world complete the same training to the same standard.

The interview is recorded but please there is no reason to panic. The tests are recorded in order to monitor the examiner standard and ensure you are getting a fair test.

There are three parts to the speaking test:

These can be divided into:

The Ice-Breaker

Part 1 (4-5 minutes)

In this section, you answer questions about topics you know well, such as your home life, family life, work or study and your interests. You also answer questions about other simple, familiar topics, which are quite general and do not require any specialised knowledge.



The Long Turn

Part 2 (3-4 minutes)

The examiner gives you a particular topic and asks you to talk about it for 1-2 minutes. Before you talk, you are given exactly 1 minute to prepare yourself. The topic is written on a card, which the examiner will give you, and there are also some instructions which will help you guide your talk. At the end of the talk, the examiner asks one or two questions related to your talk.

The Development of a Discussion

Part 3 (4-5 minutes)

This part of the test is a discussion with the examiner based on themes connected to the previous topic in Part 2. In this part of the test, you discuss and develop more theoretical ideas over one or two themes.

Now you have the basic format and idea behind the speaking test, look at the following 30 Top Tips for the IELTS Speaking Test.



ielts-Jonathan's Top Tips and Hints

Top Tip No 1

- Know where you are Going.

Make sure you know beforehand where your interview room is or where you need to wait if you are escorted by an invigilator.

Top Tip No 2

- Be on Time

Arrive at least a few minutes before your interview time.

Generally speaking, candidates who arrive late are usually stressed and upset and perform poorly. Don't do this to yourself!

Top Tip No 3

- Be Calm.

It's easy to say relax, but studies report students perform better in tests if they try to remain calm. Remember, it is in the examiner's interest to show the best of your ability so be calm, polite and positive, listen carefully to the examiner's questions and demonstrate your language ability



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Top Tip No 4

- Speak up, with rounded Answers.

Remember that in Part 1 (and Part 2) of the test, the examiner can only ask the scripted questions card so it's up to YOU to make sure you speak. You need to develop full, rounded answers.

What's a full rounded, answer?

Let me explain further with an example;

Part 1 question

- Question; 'Do you like reading?'
- Answer 1 'Yes/No'

- Question; 'Do you like reading?'
- Answer 2 'I love reading and always try to have a book in my bag. At the moment, I'm reading 'xxxx' which I'm really enjoying.' **OR** 'To be honest I'm not a great fan of reading. I'm more of an outdoors person and love sport. In fact, the only books that I read are for my course.'

So, which answer gives a better indication of your ability to speak English? Number 2 of course! It agrees and further gives an example or disagrees with the question and presents an alternative.



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Top Tip No 5

- Understand the Band Scoring.

The examiner does not give you an overall Band Score out of 9 for your speaking test. A candidate is scored out of 9 in four different aspects of speaking ability. Your final speaking Band Score is an average of these four scores.

Top Tip No 6

- A balanced Focus.

You must consider these four areas during your test and attempt to balance between being fluent and being accurate, for example, in order to get the Band Score you need. Here are the four areas the examiner gives you a score for:

Top Tip No 7

- Fluent and Coherent.

Making Criteria 1 - Fluency and Coherence.

Here the examiner is looking at how your speech flows. *Do you speak at a 'normal speed' and without hesitation? Do you speak too quickly or make long pauses.*



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Top Tip No 8

- Coherent and Cohesive.

An examiner also assesses how you link ideas and language together to make coherent, connected speech.

Do you sequence your ideas in a logical way? Do you use (but not overuse!) cohesive devices (connectors, pronouns and conjunctions)?

Top Tip No 9

- Choose your words Carefully

Marking Criteria 2 – Lexical resource.

Here the examiner looks at the range of vocabulary you use. *Do you use a reasonable variety of words? Are they appropriate and adequate to express your meaning? Do you attempt idiomatic language. Is the idiomatic language appropriate?*



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Top Tip No 10

- Variation and Accuracy.

The examiner looks at the accuracy, the appropriacy and the range of your grammar.

Do you make a lot of grammatical errors when you speak and do those errors make it difficult for people to understand you or are they natural native speaker mistakes?

Do you attempt to use more complex grammar and subordinate clauses?

Top Tip No 11

- Being Understood.

Marking Criteria 4 – Pronunciation

Here the examiner assesses your ability to produce comprehensible speech. The examiner considers how easy or difficult it is to understand you and how much of your speech (if any) is unintelligible.

Do you use English sounds, follow English stress and intonation patterns correctly and is there too much of your first language interference?



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Top Tip No 12

- Grammar focus in Speaking.

Teachers generally notice students focus a lot on their grammar when preparing for the IELTS test. Undoubtedly, grammar is important but it only represents 25% of your Band Score. Content and structure, vocabulary and pronunciation account for 75% of your Band Score. Remember that!

Top Tip No 13

- Self-Correction.

Don't be afraid to correct yourself OCCASIONALLY if you make a grammatical mistake. Self-correction is a natural feature of speech and even native speakers self-correct. However, don't let your correcting yourself stand in the way of your fluency.



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Top Tip No 14

- Wrong grammar choice in an Answer.

There is a very simple trick for avoiding some verbal grammar mistakes especially in Part 1. Listen attentively to the question! Generally the verb tense used in a question is the verb tense you are expected to use in the answer.

Here is an example

1. Question; 'Do you like reading?' The verb 'like' is in the present simple so the answer will be present simple too.

Answer 'I love reading actually and always have a book in my bag. At the moment, I'm reading* 'xxxx' which I'm really enjoying.*' (* still present tense but the candidate is speaking about 'at the moment' so the present continuous is necessary) **OR** 'To be honest I'm not a great fan of reading. I'm more of an outdoors person and love sport. In fact, the only books that I read are for my course.'



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Here is an example

2. Question; 'Did you like reading when you were a child?'
The verbs are in the past simple so the answer will be too.

Answer I **loved** reading actually and always asked for books for my birthday. **OR** 'To be honest I **wasn't** a great fan of reading. I **was** more of an outdoors child and loved sport. In fact, the only books that I **read** were at school.'

Top Tip No 15

- If you don't understand a question, ask the Examiner..
'I'm not sure what you mean. Could your repeat the question please.'

Candidates often think that asking the examiner to repeat the question risks making their level of English look lower. The examiner should not consider this is true without further evidence. Asking for clarification is a natural feature of speech. It is much better to ask for the question to be repeated than to simply 'freeze'.

Ask the examiner to repeat the question if you don't understand what they asked you.



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Top Tip No 16

- Can't think of anything to say in Part 2?

An awkward moment for candidates is when they cannot think of anything else to say in Part 2.

You have between 1 and 2 minutes to speak but how you say something is far more important to the examiner than how long you speak. Have a few phrases ready for these situations, such as:

'I think that's about it'. 'I can't think of anything else right now.'

By saying one of these phrases, you're giving the examiner a clear message that you can't think of anything else to say and not just hesitating and making the examiner wonder if the problem is a language problem.



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Top Tip No 17

- How long is a minute - Practice.

In Part 2 you are expected to talk for one to two minutes. The examiner will stop you when two minutes has passed. Obviously, you want to make sure that you speak for at least one minute. Practice makes perfect, but also allows you to judge how long a minute really is.

So practise speaking about a topic and also time your speaking so that you know what a minute really feels like.

Top Tip No 18

- Don't Hesitate.

Examiners often report in Part 2 after 1 minute's preparation some candidates have asked 'What does 'vocabulary related to the question' mean?

General advice in this situation is **firstly**, Don't wait for a whole minute to ask a question about the vocabulary! If you don't know, ask!

Secondly, the examiner can only repeat the questions on their card but that might be the difference between understanding or not.



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Thirdly, if you really don't understand the question, interpret it in your own way and when the time to speak comes, say simply to the examiner, *'I'm not really sure what 'leisure' means but I think it means, so I'm going to talk about that.'*

Lastly, according to the banding, speaking off topic should not affect your score but sitting in silence certainly does!

Top Tip No 19

- Topic Development.

In Part 3 the examiner finally enters into a two-way discussion. Although it is a discussion, you are still expected to do most of the talking in response to the examiner's prompts. These prompts are designed to encourage your speaking through topic development but not for you to ask questions.



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Top Tip No 20

- Abstract rather than Personal.

Candidates need to be aware that the questions in Part 3 are of a general nature and not about your personal life.

Candidates must be able to respond to questions and prompts about abstract ideas. However, if a candidate approaches the question on a personal level, the examiner will try to move the discussion to a general stance.

Top Tip No 21

- Stage and Developments.

Each part of the test assesses your speaking in stages and in different ways.

- Part 1 is examining how you perform with familiar topics.
- Part 2 is examining how you perform if you speak alone for a set period of time.
- Part 3 examines how well you perform when talking about more general, abstract topics.



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Top Tip No 22

- Reformulate.

Unlike in Parts 1 and 2 where the examiner can only repeat the question if you ask for clarification, in Part 3 the examiner is allowed to re-phrase the prompt if you ask.

This means that you can actually ask the examiner '*Can you ask the question in a different way*' which might make answering the question easier.

Part 3 is designed to be the most linguistically challenging part of the test. The examiner is trying to push you to see how far you can go. Examiners have reported giving a higher than the intended final band score on the basis of a candidate's performance in Part 3.

Top Tip No 23

- Set phrases for coherence and Cohesion.

Learn some phrases for giving opinions such as *In my opinion...*, *I think that...* or *As far as I'm concerned...* These are useful as they link the examiner's question directly to your answer, and demonstrate levels of coherence and cohesion.



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Top Tip No 24

- Use future tenses in Part 3.

Part 3 of the test might contain hypothetical and abstract ideas and so you will need to use some future forms and phrases.

Review the basic future tenses grammar and in addition learn some useful phrases such as: Probably 'something' will happen or 'something' might even happen'.

Top Tip No 25

- But, don't overuse the future 'will'.

Try not to use 'will' exclusively to talk about the future as this often sounds unnatural.

As a general rule, when we are sure about a statement, we use 'will'.

Top Tip No 26

- Speculate in Part 3.

Can we always be sure about the future? When you speculate in Part 3 try to use words such as, 'probably', 'possibly', 'might', 'may', 'perhaps' with a future form for example, 'probably going to, will possibly', these words really do add weight to discussion.



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Top Tip No 27

- Being stopped by the Examiner.

Expect the examiner to stop you as you are speaking and say *'thank you'* or *'That is the end of the speaking test.....'*

In order for IELTS to be a fair test, and standardised wherever you take it, the examiner must strictly adhere to their timing. To make IELTS a fair test for all is also the reason why examiners ask exact questions in Parts 1 and 2 and cannot re-phrase.

Top Tip No 28

- Don't worry about the result.

Don't ask the examiner for your Band Score. They cannot give you that information; you will receive your result from IELTS after a few weeks. In fact, the examiner should not speak to you at all at the end.



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Top Tip No 30

- It's what you Know!.

It is generally accepted that any exam is 50% how much you know and 50% how well you know the exam and what's expected of you so, practise, practise, practise.

BONUS Tip No 31

- It's Free.

- to explore our website ieltsjonathan.com for further valuable information,
- to follow our Blog ieltsjonathan.com/blog.com for daily lesson materials,
- to follow our Facebook page and other social media, where you can discuss and share topics and tips with other candidates,
- and to look out for further tips and tricks in your inbox.

Feel free to contact me via the contact page at ieltsjonathan.com and

Good Luck!



Additional Information

Whichever test version you choose, IELTS can help you make the most of your time in your chosen country.

Downloads

- Information for candidates - English UK (PDF, 2 MB)
- Information for candidates - English US (PDF, 2 MB)
- Information for candidates - Arabic (PDF, 973 kb)
- Information for candidates - Korean (PDF, 1 MB)
- Information for candidates - Portuguese (PDF, 1005 kb)
- Information for candidates - Simplified Chinese (PDF, 1 MB)
- Information for candidates - Spanish (PDF, 988 kb)
- Information for candidates - Traditional Chinese (PDF, 1 MB)
- Information for candidates - Vietnamese (PDF, 1014 kb)

I hope the information provided is useful.

Good Luck

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