

By

J.P. Williams / Onlearn

My English Exam

IELTS Speaking Module



**Models for
High Band Scores**

**IELTS-style
questions & model
responses**

with detailed notes and explanations

IELTS SPEAKING MODULE:
Model Responses for High Band Scores

by

J.P. Williams / Onlearn



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OVERVIEW

About the IELTS Speaking Module eBook

This book has four main sections, which look at various parts of the IELTS Speaking Exam.

Section One looks at Part One of the Speaking Exam and provides 12 examiner questions and candidate responses. Each response is followed by notes and comments on the response. The topics examined are:

- * Local Shops
- * Going Out
- * Secondary School

Section Two provides 3 Part Two candidate talks on specific topics. Each 2-minute talk is followed by extensive notes and comments for each segment of the candidate's response. Topics covered are:

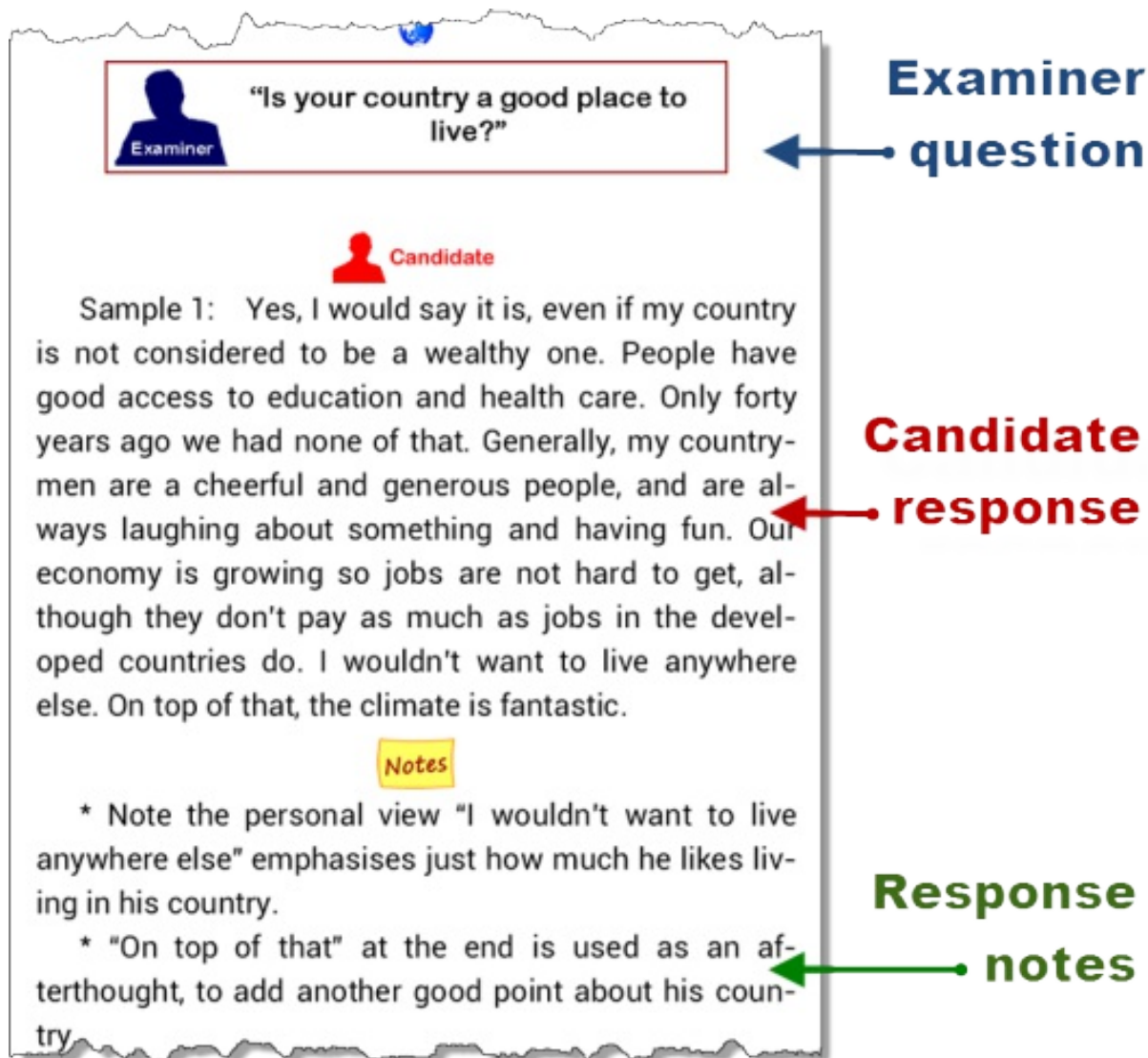
- * Book or Article
- * Holiday
- * Leisure

Section Three presents seven Part Three candidate responses and accompanying notes for examiner questions based on the Part 2 topic "Leisure".

Section 4 provides a combination of Part One and Part Three questions with candidate responses and comments. Each question in this section is followed by two sample responses. The 16 questions in this section cover the areas:

- * Your Country
- * Cinema
- * Family
- * Cooking

Below is an example of the eBook's layout. Note how the "Examiner question", "Candidate response" and the ""Response notes" are clearly indicated by the symbols before them.



Examiner question

Examiner: "Is your country a good place to live?"

Candidate response

Sample 1: Yes, I would say it is, even if my country is not considered to be a wealthy one. People have good access to education and health care. Only forty years ago we had none of that. Generally, my countrymen are a cheerful and generous people, and are always laughing about something and having fun. Our economy is growing so jobs are not hard to get, although they don't pay as much as jobs in the developed countries do. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. On top of that, the climate is fantastic.

Response notes

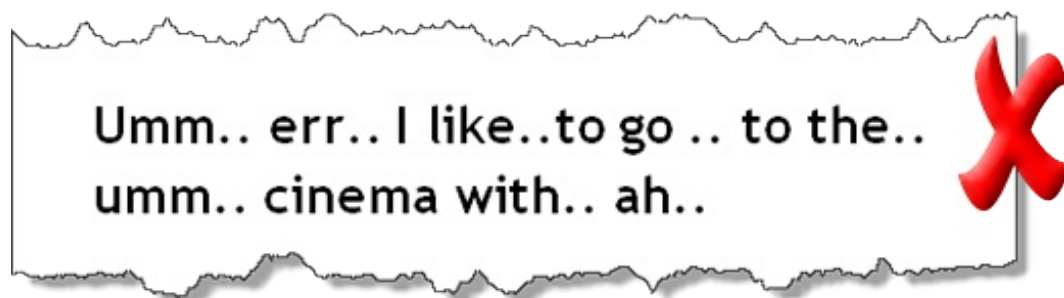
Notes

- * Note the personal view "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else" emphasises just how much he likes living in his country.
- * "On top of that" at the end is used as an afterthought, to add another good point about his country

Things you need to be aware of in the Speaking Exam


You should not speak too quickly or too slowly. It is also important to have good intonation and stress.

You will not get a high score if you are too hesitant and have too many pauses when you speak, although a few pauses to collect your thoughts are fine.



Try not to speak too quickly, either. Rapid speech often indicates a lack of cohesion in what you are saying and severely affects the rhythm and flow of your speech.


*"Iliketogotothecinemawithmyfriend.
Heisagoodfriend. Helikesmoviestoo.
Lastweekwewenttoamovie.."*



Some features of spoken English are acceptable in the Speaking Exam.


The use of contractions in the Speaking Exam is fine - for example, "I'll for "I will" and "I'd" for "I would".

Isn't	=	Is not	Wouldn't	=	Would not
It's	=	It is	Can't	=	Cannot
I'd	=	I would	They're	=	They are
He'll	=	He will	Doesn't	=	Does not



Conversation markers - such as "Well", "Let me see" or "To be honest" - are useful in the exam if you are trying to think what you will say next, and could improve your score if used well.

So..	Well..	I mean..
Actually..	OK..	Now..
Oh..	You know..	Let me see..



Always try to use a wide variety of vocabulary when you speak.

Argues > claims > contends > maintains ..etc.

Enjoy > fond > like > keen ..etc.

Decline > recede > ebb > retreat .. etc.



Overview of the Parts of the Speaking Exam

Part One of the exam can have up to three groups of questions and last for 4 to 5 minutes overall.

The topics are always about something familiar to you, such as "what you do" "accommodation" or "transport".

Let's talk about your **accommodation**.

- Do you live in a house or an apartment?
- How long have you lived there?
- Do many people live in your house/apartment with you?
- How would you improve the building you live in?

7. Let's turn to **transport**

- How do you usually travel to work or school/college?
- Are public transport services good where you live (why/why not)?
- How could transport be improved?

The examiner will introduce the topic before asking specific questions.

Always try to give a full answer, and don't change the topic or ask questions when responding to the examiner in Part One, unless it is important.

In **Part Two** of the exam you are required to speak for up to 2 minutes, but not less than 1 minute, on a topic the examiner provides on a task card.

Before you speak you are given exactly 1 minute to think about what you want to say and make some notes on a piece of paper.

You can refer to the task card while speaking, so there is no need to write the questions down in full in the writing time.

You must address all the requirements on the task card. Here is an example of notes made that focus on what, who, where and why, with key points for each.

What: Swimming - Sept to March / water warm - Serious swimmer / not professional

Who: Swim with wife / Sometimes alone

Where: Beach / 15 minutes drive / Don't like pools

Why: Relax / Exercise / Lose weight

Describe an activity you do in your leisure time.

You should say:

- What kind of activity this is
- Who you do this activity with
- Where you do this activity

Explain why you enjoy this activity.

Unlike Part One, the questions in **Part Three**, which lasts 4 to 5 minutes and are generally related to the topic in Part Two, are more discussion focused and requires you to suggest reasons for something or think about what might happen in the future, for example.

The examiner might also ask follow up questions to try to get you to justify or expand on a comment you made previously.



About the authors

J.P. Williams is part of a highly qualified team with many years' experience in IELTS Exam preparation instruction and resource development. All members of the Onlearn team have Master Degrees in English Language Teaching. Our popular IELTS and ESL websites include: "MyEnglishExam.com", "esl4free.com", "youtube.com/esl4free" & "marktask.com".



SECTION ONE

This tutorial will provide an example of Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test. It includes:

- * 12 sample questions and candidate responses.
- * some responses that are good (**G**) and some that have problems (**P**).
- * notes/comments on candidate responses

Topics covered are:

- * Local Shops
- * Going Out
- * Secondary School



Group 1: Local Shops



“Let’s talk about shopping. Are there a lot of shops near where you live?”



Candidate

"No, not a lot. However, there is a small shopping centre close to my house." (**G**)



* This is an acceptable response. This type of question could have been answered with a simple "Yes" or "No", but the candidate has provided more details. However, the candidate, Joe, could have added approximately how many shops and how far they are from his home.



“Do you use the local shops often?”



Candidate

"No." (**P**)



“Why not?”



Candidate

"I only go to the local shops if I need something quickly. They are too expensive. Mostly I do my shopping at a large shopping centre further away, because it is cheaper and has more variety of things to buy." (G)

Notes

* Note that at first Joe did not explain why he didn't use the local shops often - only answering "No" - so the examiner asks "Why not"*. Joe's second response is very good. *The examiner may also ask "Why" to get more information.



“When do you prefer to go shopping?”



Candidate

"I went shopping on Friday night with my brother, but only bought some food" (P)

Notes

* Joe has not answered the question that Tom asked. He only says that he went shopping on Friday night. He should have said something like: "Fridays nights are best because they are more lively." or "I like shopping during the weekday mornings, because it is not so busy then." or "I have no preference when I go shopping. I love shopping all the time."





"Is there any new type of shop you would like to see in your area?"



Candidate

"A large supermarket would be convenient. I have to travel a long way to do supermarket shopping at the moment, so it would save me a lot of time and money spent on petrol for my car." (G)

Notes

* This is a good response. Joe also says why a local supermarket would be useful for him. Note that Joe uses the word "convenient", rather than "good" or "useful" - the examiner is looking for a wide range of vocabulary in the candidate's responses.



Group 2: Going Out



"We'll talk about going out now. What types of places do you go for entertainment or enjoyment?"



Candidate

"Usually I go to the cinema. Sometimes I go to parties." (P)

Notes

* This response is OK. The examiner only asked "what types of places". He did not ask for specific details. His following questions might do that.



"Do you go out often?"



Candidate

"I go to the cinema one or two times a week, because I like movies. Next week I will go to a party at my friend's house" (*P*)

Notes

* The first part of the response is OK, but the second part does not directly answer the question. Joe would have needed to say something like: "Next week I will go to a party at my friend's house, but that will be my first party for a long time. I usually only go to three or four parties a year."



Examiner

"Is there anywhere different you would like to go in the future?"



Candidate

"I watch football on the television. I like watching football. In the future I will watch football in a stadium." (*P*)

Notes

* Although Joe answers the question, his use of repetitive language would have lost him marks - "I watch football", "I like watching football" and "I will watch football". A better response would be: "I enjoy watching football on the television, but have never been to a game. One day I would like to go to see it played at the football stadium."



Examiner

"Do you think you need to spend a lot of money to have a good time?"



Candidate

"Yes. I need to spend a lot of money to have a good time. Going to the movies is expensive. Playing a sport in the park with my friends is fun, but cost no money." (P)

Notes

* There are a couple of things wrong in this answer. In the first part Joe repeats the words of Tom's question "...need to spend a lot of money to have a good time". In the second part Joe makes no connection with the ideas expressed in the first part. A better response might be: "No, not always. Going to the movies is enjoyable, but can be expensive. On the other hand, playing sport with my friends in the park is also fun, even though it cost me nothing."



Group 3: Secondary School



"Now we'll look at school. What did you like most about secondary or high school?"



Candidate

"I like to play sport, especially football. Sport is my favourite activity at school." (P)

Notes

* The main thing wrong with this response is the wrong tense use. The question was "What did you like...", but Joe answers in the present tense - "I like to..." and "Sport is...". His response should be: "I liked to play sport, especially football. Sport was my favourite activity* at school." *The use of the word "activity" is accurate, though.



"Was there anything you disliked about secondary school?"



Candidate

"I didn't like studying mathematics. I found the subject and the teacher boring. I wish I had been more interested in it now, as I need to know it for my university course." (G)

Notes

* This is good. The first paragraph directly responds to the question, while the second paragraph adds a comment. The comment is useful because it shows the examiner that Joe can connect information about the past to his present situation.



Examiner

"What was your favourite subject at school?"



Candidate

"Geology was my best subject. I liked to learn about all the countries and their cultures." (P)

Notes

* Joe has obviously confused the word "geography" with "geology". The examiner will note a weakness in Joe's vocabulary, and perhaps mark him down because of it.



Examiner

"Do you still have many friends from your school?"



Candidate

"Do you still have many friends from your school?"

"Yes, I still have a lot of friends from my school, but they are back in my country. I see them whenever I go back home for a holiday, and keep in touch with them over the internet." (G)

Notes

* This is a good response to the question. Note that Joe has used the expression "keep in touch", instead of, for example, "communicate". The use of expressions like this is not so common among English language learners, despite being common with native speakers. It shows a flexible vocabulary range. The use of these terms can help achieve a higher band score.



SECTION TWO

This segment will provide three examples of Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test. All sample Part 2 responses in this section are very good.

The candidate has two minutes to talk about the following speaking tasks.

Some Words of Advice

- * Remember these are prompts to guide your thinking so they do not have to be discussed in the order they are given.
- * There are many ideas you could discuss as long as they are very closely related to the prompts.
- * However, you should make sure that you do cover the points that are given to you, which will be more than enough for a talk of only two minutes.



Speaking Exam Part Two: # 1 Book or Article

Describe a book or article you have read recently.

You should say:

- * **What kind of book / article it was**
- * **What was the main theme / storyline**
- * **Where you read it**

Explain why you read it.



Candidate

“An article I have just read was entitled “The Effects of Tourism on a small seaside community in South Vietnam”. It’s the sort of article I have to read for my course in Tourism and this particular article was recommended by my tutor who said that it was a very important article in the field. Usually we are given a collection of articles to read. Some are regarded as “core” reading while others are useful to read for extra information. Anyway, I read it about four or five days ago and made notes on some of the important points the author made. Basically, it’s about the rapid transformation of a sleepy fishing village in South Vietnam into a large seaside resort for foreign tourists. For centuries, the village had lived a hand-to-mouth

existence, earning its income from the sea by selling on its surplus fish to villagers from the hills. The village had quite an old population as most of the young people had decided that earning a living from the sea was not something they wanted and so headed off to the larger towns further south. No one in the village starved but it was quite poor in many ways. All that changed when the village was chosen as the location for a luxury resort that comprised a 350-bed hotel, landscaped gardens and a state-of-the-art fitness centre. The village people simply had no say at all in the development as the government bought up the land and sold it on to the company that had been chosen to build the resort. After that background, the article explains in some detail the effects this development had on the village. Both positive and negative aspects are dealt with. It explains how some of the younger villagers were trained to work in parts of the resort, offering them an opportunity to support their families who could no longer live from the sea. However, it does deal with some “dark” issues like the damage done to traditional ways of living, the loss of ancient skills and the sudden desire to make as much money from foreign visitors as possible. I read this article as I do most articles while sitting in my garden and using my tablet computer. I tend to do a lot of written work inside at a desk but reading I prefer to do outside, unless, of course, it is raining. Although I had to read this article, I enjoyed it because it was well-written and offered some interesting insights into how modern life is damaging ways of living that had existed for centuries.”



Segment 1

An article *I have just read* was **entitled** “The Effects of Tourism on a small seaside community in South Vietnam”. It’s the sort of article I have to read for my course in Tourism and this particular article *was recommended* by my tutor who said that it was a very important article in the field. Usually we are given a collection of articles to read. Some *are regarded* as “core” reading while others are useful to read for extra information. Anyway, I read it about four or five days ago and *made notes* on some of the important points the author made.

Notes

* Although the language is not complex, you should note that the speaker has a good range of vocabulary and uses words that are more formal in nature eg: “entitled” (instead of “called”).

* The speaker handles tenses well, both active and passive (“was recommended”, “are regarded”, “have just read”, “made notes”)

* Addresses bullet-point 1 & explains why



Segment 2

Basically, it’s about the rapid transformation of a sleepy fishing village in South Vietnam into a large seaside resort for foreign tourists. For centuries, the village had lived a hand-to-mouth existence, earning its income from the sea by selling on its surplus fish to villagers from the hills. The village had quite an old population as most of the young people had decided that earning a living from the sea was not something they wanted and so headed off to the larger towns further south. No one in the village starved but it was quite poor in many ways.

Notes

* Once again note the range of vocabulary which is exactly what the examiner is looking for (“transformation”, “seaside resort”, “surplus fish”, “starved”) and some suitable collocations (“a hand-to-mouth existence”, “earning a living”) and examples of expressive verbs (“headed off to”) = Note also the conversational marker “basically”.

* Addresses bullet-point 2



Segment 3

All that changed when the village was chosen as the location for a luxury resort that comprised a 350-bed hotel, landscaped gardens and a state-of-the-art fitness centre. The village people simply had no say at all in the development as the government bought up the land and sold it on to the company that had been chosen to build the resort.

Notes

* The Speaker adds further details which add to the length of the talk and allow further opportunity for relevant vocabulary (“landscaped gardens”, “state-of-the-art fitness centre”)

* Addresses bullet-point 2



Segment 4

After that background, the article explains in some detail the effects this development had on the village. Both positive and negative aspects are dealt with. It explains how some of the younger villagers were trained to work in parts of the resort, offering them an opportunity to support their families who could no longer live from the sea. However, it does deal with some “dark” issues like the damage done to traditional ways of living, the loss of ancient skills and the sudden desire to make as much money from foreign visitors as possible.

Notes

- * The speaker is producing a strong description of the article which shows that he/she knows the article well. It is, therefore, wise to choose a book/article that you know you can talk about for a couple of minutes by relating the theme/storyline.
- * Addresses bullet-point 2



Segment 5

I read this article as I do most articles while sitting in my garden and using my tablet computer. I tend to do a lot of written work inside at a desk but reading I prefer to do outside, unless, of course, it is raining.

Although I had to read this article, I enjoyed it because it was well-written and offered some interesting insights into how modern life is damaging ways of living that had existed for centuries.

Notes

- * The speaker is wise enough to cover the remaining prompts (the where & the why) and not get carried away with simply describing the article.
- * It is clear that the speaker is a very good speaker of English: a range of vocabulary is used & sentences are complex.
- * Addresses bullet-point 3 & explains why



Speaking Exam Part Two: # 2 Holiday

Describe your most memorable holiday.

You should say:

- * What kind of holiday it was**
- * Who was with you on holiday**
- * Where the holiday took place**

Explain why you enjoyed the holiday so much.



Candidate

"My most memorable holiday was many years ago when I was 18 or 19, I think. I had just finished my school studies and had a gap of about three months before I was due to go off to university to study pharmacy. Finishing my school life was a tremendous relief after many months of pressure and not a little stress in the final year so I was determined to "let my hair down" and plan for a really exciting holiday. The result was that I spent two months in Sabah which is part of East Malaysia, tramping around rainforests, climbing high mountains, eating tropical fruit, swimming in the deep blue sea and generally forgetting about school life and thinking grand thoughts about my chosen career as a pharmacist. So the holiday was a strange mix of activity followed by periods of relaxation and doing nothing in particular. I wasn't alone as a group of us went, all friends and all school-leavers, just looking for the same thing: relaxation and a bit of fun. There were two girls and three blokes, including myself. In fact, it was planned that there would be eight of us but three dropped out at the last minute. I forget why – maybe lack of money or they decided they would do some work experience before going off to college. In the end, five seemed about right because getting more than five people into a rented car would have been impossible as would getting rooms in the same hotel have been. I had been to Malaysia before and I think I had shopped in Kuala Lumpur once or twice but East Malaysia was totally new to me. Anyway, I went for the wildlife and the natural environment, not to see the skyscrapers and fashion shops. We moved around Sabah quite a lot, went up into the highlands and climbed Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Asia, if I remember correctly. I think I enjoyed it so much because it came at the right time in life and I was single then! It was the company I think that made it as we all got on extremely well

together and enjoyed doing the same things. Also I met a large number of interesting travelers that I still keep in contact with – and that was ten years ago. We exchange emails and send photos – that sort of thing. The animals I saw were fascinating and the trees & plants in the rainforests were species that I had never seen before. All in all, it was a great vacation and I'd love to go back to Sabah. Maybe I will."



Segment 1

"My most memorable holiday was many years ago when I was 18 or 19, I think. I had just finished my school studies and had a gap of about three months before I was due to go off to university to study pharmacy. Finishing my school life was a tremendous relief after many months of pressure and not a little stress in the final year so I was determined to "let my hair down" and plan for a really exciting holiday. The result was that I spent two months in Sabah which is part of East Malaysia, **tramping** around rainforests, **climbing** high mountains, **eating** tropical fruit, **swimming** in the deep blue sea and generally **forgetting** about school life and **thinking grand thoughts** about my chosen career as a pharmacist. So the holiday was a strange mix of activity followed by periods of relaxation and doing nothing in particular."



* Note the attempt to use idiomatic expressions "let my hair down" and well-used phrases like "grand thoughts", "a tremendous relief", "a strange mix of activity" & "the deep blue sea". This attempt at using language will be noted by the Examiner and rewarded.

* It's always useful to add some color to the description. See how it is done using the same grammatical construction: tramping / climbing / eating / swimming / forgetting / thinking.

* Addresses bullet-points 1 & 3.



Segment 2

"I wasn't alone as a group of us went, all friends and all school-leavers, just looking for the same thing: relaxation and a bit of fun. There were two girls and three blokes, including myself. In fact, it was planned that there would be eight of us but three dropped out at the last minute. I forget

why – maybe lack of money or they decided they would do some work experience before going off to college. In the end, five seemed about right because getting more than five people into a rented car would have been impossible as would getting rooms in the same hotel have been."

Notes

- * Note that the speaker tries to add some interesting details about who went on this holiday and their reasons for doing so. Remember, then, to avoid simple statements ("Five friends went") and make your description a bit more detailed.
- * One more point, your talk does not have to be totally true!
- * Addresses bullet-point 2



Segment 3

"I had been to Malaysia before and I think I had shopped in Kuala Lumpur once or twice but East Malaysia was totally new to me. **Anyway**, I went for the wildlife and the natural environment, not to see the skyscrapers and fashion shops. We moved around Sabah quite a lot, went up into the highlands and climbed Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Asia, if I remember correctly.

I think I enjoyed it so much because it came at the right time in life and I was single then! It was the company I think that made it as we all got on extremely well together and enjoyed doing the same things. Also I met a large number of interesting travelers that I still keep in contact with – and that was ten years ago. We exchange emails and send photos – that sort of thing. The animals I saw were fascinating and the trees & plants in the rainforests were species that I had never seen before. **All in all**, it was a great vacation and I'd love to go back to Sabah. Maybe I will."

Notes

- * Based on the notes that the speaker made (a very important point to note!), the 'where' and the 'why' points are covered in some detail.
- * Note the conversational expressions: "anyway" & "all in all" which indicate attempts to link ideas and the phrases "if I remember correctly" & "that sort of thing".

* Addresses bullet-point 3 & explains why



Speaking Exam Part Two: # 3 Leisure

Describe an activity you do in your leisure time.

You should say:

- * What kind of activity this is**
- * Who you do this activity with**
- * Where you do this activity**

Explain why you enjoy this activity.



Candidate

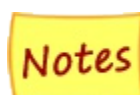
"The activity I spend most of my time doing is swimming, although, to be honest, this is only for about six months of the year because for the rest of the time the water is too cold. I swim from about mid-September to the middle of March in open water about 5 kilometers from our home. The sea temperature during this period never falls below 27 degrees but from April onwards most swimmers find it too cold to continue. I have tried swimming in a wetsuit but I have never found it comfortable. When I say swimming, I don't mean that I am a professional swimmer but I do take my swimming seriously and try to swim vigorously instead of just lazing and floating on the water. My wife usually swims with me. In fact, she is a better swimmer than myself and usually seems to be the first in the water and gets out after me. When our daughter is free, she also joins us but that is becoming increasingly rare nowadays as she has too much studying to do. If for any reason, my wife can't make it, I do go alone but I don't enjoy it so much. Occasionally we invite friends along but more often we just meet up with people on the beach and chat a little before swimming. As I said, the beach is about 15 minutes' drive from our house. Roads around where we live are quiet so 15 minutes is the maximum amount of time it would take to get to the sea. I can't stand swimming in swimming pools or things like that, so if I don't swim in the sea, I don't bother swimming at all. I think I have just got used to swimming in salt water. The sea is usually calm during the

swimming season but even if it is windy or slightly rainy, we still swim. That's far better than being in a swimming pool. I do enjoy swimming for many reasons. It's always a good excuse for getting out of the house but, more importantly, I feel refreshed after I have been swimming. It helps me relax and forget about all things I need to do. In some strange way, after I have swum, I seem to focus better on my work and get things done quicker. I think the real reason why I enjoy it is that it makes me feel that I am doing some real exercise and, hopefully, losing weight."



Segment 1

"The activity I spend most of my time doing is swimming, although, to be honest, this is only for about six months of the year because for the rest of the time the water is too cold. I swim from about mid-September to the middle of March in open water about 5 kilometers from our home. The sea temperature during this period never falls below 27 degrees but from April onwards most swimmers find it too cold to continue. I have tried swimming in a wetsuit but I have never found it **comfortable**. When I say swimming, I don't mean that I am a **professional** swimmer but I do take my swimming seriously and try to swim **vigorously** instead of just **lazing** and **floating** on the water."



- * Note the conversational phrase: "to be honest" / "When I say"
- * A range of vocabulary is used: "comfortable" / "professional" / "vigorously" / "lazing" / "floating" – which makes the talk more interesting than using simple words.
- * Addresses bullet-point 1



Segment 2

"My wife usually swims with me. In fact, she is a better swimmer than myself and usually seems to be the first in the water and gets out after me. **When** our daughter is free, she also joins us but that is becoming increasingly rare nowadays **as** she has too much studying to do. **If** for any reason, my wife can't make it, I do go alone but I don't enjoy it so much. Occasionally we invite friends along **but** more often we just meet up with people on the beach and chat a little before swimming."

Notes

* Note that the speaker tries to add some details to the simple prompt “Who do you do this activity with?”, and that the sentences use linkers "when", "but" and "as" to develop complex sentences.

* Addresses bullet-point 2



Segment 3

"As I said, the beach is about 15 minutes' drive from our house. Roads around where we live are quiet **so** 15 minutes is the maximum amount of time it would take to get to the sea. I can't stand swimming in swimming pools or things like that, **so if** I don't swim in the sea, I don't bother swimming at all. I think I have just got used to swimming in salt water. The sea is usually calm during the swimming season **but even if** it is windy or slightly rainy, we still swim. That's far better than being in a swimming pool."

Notes

* Note the conversational linking phrase “as I said” and the attempt to go beyond simple sentences with linkers like “so”, “so if”, “but even if”.

* Addresses bullet-point 3



Segment 4

"I do enjoy swimming for many reasons. It's always a good excuse for getting out of the house but, more importantly, I feel refreshed after I have been swimming. It helps me relax and forget about all things I need to do. In some strange way, after I have swum, I seem to focus better on my work and get things done quicker. I think the real reason why I enjoy it is that it makes me feel that I am doing some real exercise and, hopefully, losing weight."

Notes

* Once again, the speaker makes an effort to provide a variety of details about why he/she enjoys swimming so that it seems like a FULL answer.

* Phrases like “in some strange way” and “the real reason why I ...” show that the speaker handles chunks of language well.

* Explains why




SECTION THREE

Speaking Exam Part Three - Leisure

Part 3 in the IELTS Speaking Exam is an open-ended discussion of themes related to the topic that was given in Part 2. Part 3 will last about 4-5 minutes. The IELTS Examiner still asks questions but there is an opportunity on the part of the candidate to provide a wide range of opinions and give detailed explanations. The previous Part 2 example (#3 Leisure) showed a possible answer to Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Exam. This video now shows the follow-up discussion in Part 3 based on the topic of Leisure Time.



Group 1




Examiner

“What are the most popular leisure activities in your country?”



Candidate

“To be honest, in my country most people do not make good use of their leisure time as all they seem to do is sit around watching the television or relaxing indoors. I think this is mostly because of the weather as most of the year it is hot and sticky. Of course, some people, a minority, play some sports. The kids play football and cricket while some of the adults play tennis and squash, although a far greater number watch sport on television. Most just seem to relax with their families at home or visit shopping malls.”



Examiner

“Do you feel that people in your country have enough leisure time?”



Candidate

“Yes, I think they do. Most people who are employees only work a five-day week and so have the weekend to get involved in some sort of activity. It’s a bit different for people who have their own businesses, especially small shopkeepers who seem to have very little time away from their shops.”

Notes

* The examiner will note that the candidate makes some attempt to provide fuller answers than simply giving a list of activities and explains that it depends on the type of work people do as to whether they have a lot of leisure time. Answering the questions directly and with explanations are a vital part of doing well in this section of the IELTS exam.



Group 2



“Do you think people in your country use their free time in the best way?”



Candidate

“As I said, people seem to lead very inactive lives which I think is a mistake. Even though the weather makes getting outside sometimes difficult, people should try to do more than watch TV or make trips to the malls and supermarkets. I think that people should be a lot more involved in sporting events and cultural activities.”



“Do you think that using free time well can have a positive effect on a person’s study or work?”



Candidate

“I certainly agree with that point of view. If people were a lot more involved in doing sports, they would, of course, benefit physically but I also believe that it would also sharpen their minds. If students at colleges did sports, they would probably sleep better because they would be exhausted and maybe be better focused after a complete break from their studies. Workers also need to do activities in their free time that add value to their lives and help them think about other things apart from work.”


Notes

* Once again, the candidate does attempt longer responses. However, there is a certain amount of repetition (talking about the weather again) and there are no details about what “cultural activities” people in the speaker’s country could be involved in. More could have been added about the “positive effect” of using free time well.

* There are some good phrases which fit well into the topic (e.g.: “benefit physically”, “sharpen their minds”, “better focused” & “add value to”). These will impress the examiner.



Group 3



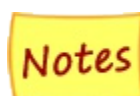
Examiner

“What role do you think employers have in encouraging their staff to make good use of their leisure time?”



Candidate

“I’m not really sure. I know that companies in Japan get involved in offering all sorts of schemes to their employees to make sure they are fit and sometimes finance clubs or activities that are exclusively for staff. That would not work in my country because, first of all, companies simply do not have that kind of mentality. For them, workers do a job, get paid for it and leave their desks or factories at set times – what workers do in their own time is up to them. Even companies offering advice would not be welcome to workers and I’m not sure it would be helpful, anyway.”



* It is always useful to give an example. In this case, it contrasts the attitude of companies in another country with the speaker’s own. Maybe, the speaker could have said more about why companies in his country are not interested in the wider welfare of their employees. However, the answer is adequate.



Group 4



“Do you think governments should be involved in influencing what people do in their leisure time?”



Candidate

“Yes, I think governments can offer advice because it is in the interests of all that citizens of a country use their free time well. They can offer general advice about how to stay active and can make sure that people have easy access to sports facilities and clubs. If a country has the money, it can encourage people to go to concerts and music festivals. Often these events are very expensive so governments can pay part of the costs to make tickets cheaper and pay for the insurance costs of staging big events.”



“Do you think that in the future people will develop new activities to do in their free time?”



Candidate

“I am not really sure. Probably not. I think they will continue to stay at home but just have more electronic gadgets to play games on. Maybe 3D will be all the craze in five years’ time.”



* It is at this point that the speaker talks about leisure time in terms of other activities apart from sports and examples are given (concerts, music festivals).

* The last question is quite difficult because the examiner asks the candidate to make predictions about the future. Although the speaker makes it clear that he/she doesn't know, at least one idea is offered even though it is not explained in detail.



SECTION FOUR

This section provides a mixture of Part 1 and Part 3 questions with candidate responses and comments. Each question in this section is followed by two sample responses. The 16 questions in this section cover the areas:

- * Your Country
- * Cinema
- * Family
- * Cooking



Group 1: Your Country

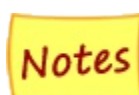


“What type of weather do you have in your country?”



Candidate

Sample 1: As I come from a tropical country, the weather is always warm and humid throughout the year – usually ranging between about 22 degrees at night and 30 degrees in the daytime. We don't have seasons, as such, like they do in Europe. The main difference is that we have a rainy season from about April to September, while the rest of the year receives rain less frequently. November to February are generally the driest months, and also my favourite time of the year.



* "As such" here means in the usual or specific definition of the word. Mostly used in spoken English.

* The speaker adds a personal observation at the end, which is fine. It shows that he can expand on the question that was originally asked.



Candidate

Sample 2: I come from a European country so the winters can be very cold – and snow is common then. The spring is still very cool, but the days are much sunnier than in the winter. The summers are mild to warm, and mostly sunny. We still get a few rainy days in summer, though. The autumn is

generally fine and cool. It is less likely to rain then than in the other seasons, so early autumn is probably the best time for planning outdoor events.

Notes

* Note the speaker also mentions that autumn is the best time for planning outdoor activities. However, while this is not directly related to the question, this is fine as the speaker addresses the question in detail first.



“Is it easy to find work in your country”



Candidate

Sample 1: Overall, it is much harder for people to find work in my country than it was a few years ago when the economy was growing very strongly. Like many countries in our region we have had serious economic problem for the last two or three years. Unemployment is very high for people without the required skills or qualifications, and even workers with qualifications and experience in the building industry are finding it hard to get work. Doctors and nurses seem to be the only people who don't have much trouble getting a job at the moment.

Notes

* The speaker obviously has a good understanding of the employment situation in her country, so does not need to introduce personal experiences on the topic.



Candidate

Sample 2: Personally, I had no problem finding work when I lived in my home country. I had about four jobs after finishing college six years ago and up until I came to this country to study this year, and was only out of work for about two weeks of that period. Maybe I was lucky, I don't know. I do have some friends who have had trouble getting a job back home, though. For me work was easy to get: for others, however, I'm not sure. I guess it


depends on your skills, qualifications and personality, and maybe who you know.

Notes

* This speaker does not seem to know what the overall employment situation in his country is at present, but this is not a problem as he speaks about his own personal experiences and people he knows.

* “Maybe I was lucky, I don’t know” suggests he is thinking aloud while speaking and has not really thought about the topic before. This is not a problem: it is not what you know, but how you say it.





Examiner

“Are there a lot of festivals in your country?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Let me see. Yes, there are a lot of festivals in Singapore as we are made up of many different ethnic groups. As there are many people of Chinese origin in Singapore the Chinese New Year is a very big event which coincides with the famous Chingay Parade – this mostly takes place in February. There is also a significant Indian community where I come from so Diwali is also a major event in October. The main Muslim festival is Hari Raya Haji, which marks the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. As a Christian I always celebrate Christmas and Easter, as well, but I enjoy experiencing the other festivals – they are always lots of fun.

Notes

* Note the use of “Let me see” at the beginning of the response – this is fine in spoken English. Here it allows time for the speaker to think about the variety of festivals in his country.



Candidate

Sample 2: Actually, where I come from we don’t have a lot of festivals throughout the year. I live in a farming community, so our main celebration is after the harvest. This festival, which translates as the “Thank You

Festival”, attracts all the farmers and their families to the villages and usually runs for about three days in September. There is always a lot of food, dancing and games. We have so much fun then, we don’t need any other festivals.

Notes

* “Actually” at the beginning has a similar meaning to “to be honest” or “to tell the truth” but is used in a more positive way than the other expressions – even if there are not many festivals that is not important.





Examiner

“Is your country a good place to live?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Yes, I would say it is, even if my country is not considered to be a wealthy one. People have good access to education and health care. Only forty years ago we had none of that. Generally, my countrymen are a cheerful and generous people, and are always laughing about something and having fun. Our economy is growing so jobs are not hard to get, although they don’t pay as much as jobs in the developed countries do. I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else. On top of that, the climate is fantastic.

Notes

* Note the personal view “I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else” emphasises just how much he likes living in his country.

* “On top of that” at the end is used as an afterthought, to add another good point about his country.



Candidate

Sample 2: To be honest, no it isn’t. It was a good place to live once, but not anymore. Prices have increased enormously over recent years, but wages haven’t. Getting a job is now very difficult, unless you know someone who can help you find one. Some people are getting very rich though, and the country has many billionaires now - mainly because the government is so

corrupt. It seems to me though that some people are getting very rich because others are getting much poorer. My country has become very unjust, that is why I am trying to leave it.

Notes

* “To be honest” is used to prepare the listener for a negative response. The speaker clearly is unhappy about living in his country, and gives detailed reasons why.



Group 2: Cinema



Examiner

“Do you go to the cinema often?”



Candidate

Sample 1: I don't go as often as I used to because I find it pretty expensive. Anyway, to be honest, I just borrow films off friends or we watch stuff together. Nowadays, downloading stuff is very easy so it's better for me to watch films on my own LCD television, stopping when I want to and answering my mobile when it rings. I will go to the cinema, though, if there is something on which is special, like a 3D movie.

Notes

* Expressions like “anyway” & “to be honest” are common markers which are very useful to use in spoken language.

* Your responses do not always have to include sophisticated words, especially in the short responses of Part 1. “If there is something on” is a conversational expression which is very acceptable in this situation.



Candidate

Sample 2: Actually I hate going to the cinema. I used to like going but now, where I live, cinemas tend to be crowded, audiences are noisy and I can't stand mobile phones going off when I am trying to concentrate. I get far more pleasure from watching a film at home with my family or friends. It's

just a hassle finding parking near cinemas and queuing up for tickets. I can't remember the last time I went to the cinema. It was a pretty long time ago.

Notes

- * Try to include some adverbs that add meaning to adjectives eg: "a pretty long time ago".
- * Note the natural use of conversational words like "hassle" and the marker "actually".



Examiner

"What is your favourite type of movie at the cinema or on TV?"



Candidate

Sample 1: I like action movies or any type of movie where there is something dramatic happening. I suppose I like to be entertained and carried along by the quick movement of a film - anything like a car chase or people escaping from a dangerous situation or some sort of dramatic confrontation. That's why I like films like Mission Impossible or war movies.

Notes

- * Note that the response uses common conversational phrases ("I suppose I like") but also demonstrates more sophisticated language ("dramatic confrontation").




Candidate

Sample 2: I like all kinds of movies as long as they have a strong plot and some reasonable acting but my favourite type of film is Thrillers because I like to be scared. I have always looked for that sensation of fear passing over me when something particularly gruesome happens or there's a chilling twist to the story. My wife seems to laugh at Thrillers but I spend my time at the cinema peering through my eyes.

Notes

* Once again, the ideas are simple but the speaker demonstrates a good use of appropriate vocabulary: scared, sensation, gruesome, twist, peering.





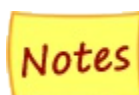
Examiner

“Do you ever watch foreign language movies?”



Candidate

Sample 1: I am fond of watching foreign movies because there are not that many films released in my language every year so our cinemas must show a lot of foreign movies. Recently I’ve seen films from Morocco, Russia and Vietnam. Really, the original language doesn’t matter as long as the film is well-acted and has a good storyline. Some of the best films I have ever seen are not in my language.



* Even a yes/no question should be used as an opportunity to add some detail to your answer. Try to go beyond one or two sentences.



Candidate

Sample 2: I rarely watch foreign language films as I am now used to watching Hollywood stuff. On the TV channels I watch we hardly ever have foreign language films and all the local cinemas only show English-language movies. Maybe I have seen a few foreign language films in the past but I don’t really remember – maybe some French films or some classic Russian ones.



* It is best not to wait for the examiner’s follow-up question Why/Why not? Always offer some explanation or reason for your initial response.





“How do you feel about reading subtitles on foreign films?”



Candidate

Sample 1: It took me a long time to get used to reading subtitles because, for many years, my country dubbed all foreign language films into our language. It is only recently that cinemas have used subtitles a lot more. So now I am used to them and it makes no difference to my enjoyment whether films are dubbed or have subtitles. In the past, some of the dubbing has been poor quality and has destroyed my enjoyment of a film. So now I am quite comfortable with subtitling.

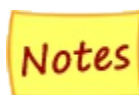


* This response is good because there is some explanation about how the speaker came to like subtitling in films. Always offer reasons and examples, if you can



Candidate

Sample 2: I like subtitles because I can learn useful words and expressions in English by reading the translations in my own language. When I was learning English, I sometimes watched DVDs at home with the subtitles on and wrote down some of the language in a notebook. It was a quick way to pick up new words. However, I realized that some of the words I had learnt were not translated correctly so I made many mistakes but that happens all the time, anyway.



* Although there is not much detail about how the speaker feels about subtitles, the response is good because he tells a short story explaining how useful subtitles can be.



Group 3: Family



“Do you come from a small or large family?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Well, I come from a large family – 3 brothers and 3 sisters so with Mum and Dad that’s nine of us in total. I’m the eldest which always meant that I had extra responsibilities to keep an eye on the younger ones and see that they came to no harm.



* Even in simple questions that could be answered in a few words, try to speak two or three sentences so that the examiner knows you are attempting extended conversation.



Candidate

Sample 2: I come from a small family. I am an only child, my father was an only child and now we have one son so I guess that it must be something that runs in our family. I’m not that worried as there are clear benefits in being the only child in the family when it comes to Christmas and birthday celebrations.



* Note that even in short responses, you can use linking words like “so”, “as” and “when” to produce complex sentences.



“What are the advantages of having a small/large family?”



Candidate

Sample 1: I think there are considerable advantages in having or being part of a large family. The most important thing is that you are never lonely,

never looking to find something to do because you always have brothers and sisters around you. It's, also, very useful to know that there are many people you can turn to for sound advice and support in times of difficulty.

Notes

* Notice that well-chosen adjectives are added to nouns to demonstrate good use of language: “considerable advantages”, “sound advice”.



Candidate

Sample 2: Well, my son is the only child in our family and I can see that he has many advantages. He knows he always has the full attention of my wife and myself and knows that, if he wants something, he is most likely to get it. I suppose, in some ways, that's not always a good thing but it does give him a strong sense of security.

Notes

* Answers can be personalised: “my”, “our”, “I”, “myself” in response to a general question. Note also “I suppose” instead of the more common “I think”.



Examiner

“Is family less important in modern society?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Yes, I totally agree that it's becoming far less important in my society. It's something which has been happening for some time because families have suffered high divorce rates and mothers seem happy to bring up children without marrying their partners. I really think that in coming years the family will be even less important than it is now.

Notes

* It is useful to use expressions when explaining your point of view like: “I totally agree”, “I really think”.



Candidate

Sample 2: My country still has strong family bonds and most people feel that family is very, very important. I know that the family is breaking down in many places but our religion places great importance on the family which is why we have extended families where old grandparents live in the same house as their grandchildren.

Notes

* Questions that could be answered Yes/No need to be explained because the interviewer will certainly follow up your answer with Why/Why not?.



Examiner

“What is the ideal number of children for a husband and wife to have?”



Candidate

Sample 1: It's hard to say what an ideal number is. I think it is a personal choice about how many children you have but, I guess that many people, where I come from, would say that two is a perfect number, one boy and one girl. With the high cost of raising children, I think that two kids is about right but, if you can afford more, then that's okay too.

Notes

* This is spoken language so colloquial expressions like “kids”, “okay” are acceptable, although a range of vocabulary needs to be used. Note that the speaker uses “perfect number” in addition to “ideal number”.



Candidate

Sample 2: I believe that it's good to have lots of children – not too many, but three or four are ideal. In that way, brothers and sisters can look after one another and the house always feels full. When parents get old, they know that they will always have people to care for them, especially when they are sick and unable to move around easily.

Notes

* Always try to go beyond one sentence when answering questions in Part 1. Always look to explain your answer and maybe offer an example.



Group 4: Cooking



“Who usually does the cooking in your family?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Well, because I still live at home, my mother does the cooking. I can cook a little but my mum is a great cook, enjoys cooking and refuses to let anyone help her in the kitchen. Once when I started preparing a meal without her knowledge, she got really angry so since that time I’ve never even offered to help!

Notes

* Try to use about three sentences in answer to these straight-forward questions in Part 1 of the Speaking. Short answers will not impress the examiner!



Candidate

Sample 2: My wife does most of the cooking and regards it as her duty because she doesn’t work at the moment. Sometimes we prepare a meal together but usually my task is just to peel the vegetables or do some cutting. I can cook but my wife says my meals are tasteless. Our daughter is learning to cook so I think I’ll be in the kitchen less and less.

Notes

* Note that even in short responses, you should use linking words like “because”, “but” and “so” to produce complex sentences.





Examiner

“Did you learn how to cook when you were a child?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Not really. I learnt a few things like how to boil up some soup or cut up vegetables to make a salad but that was about it. Since I was the only son in a family with 3 girls, there never was any need to do any cooking. Anyway, where I come from, boys were not supposed to cook as people thought that was an activity only for girls.

Notes

* Questions that could be answered Yes/No need to be explained because the interviewer will certainly follow up your answer with Why/Why not?



Candidate

Sample 2: Yes, I was always helping my mum out in the kitchen, even when I was very young. So I learnt how to prepare many different kinds of food. We moved around too when I was young, so I lived in Spain and Germany for a few years and learned some of the typical dishes from those countries.

Notes

* Note that a good response can involve adding interesting details that go beyond a simple one-sentence response.



Examiner

“Do you think children should learn how to cook in school?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Yes – they should and not only the girls. I don't think it should take up too much school time as students have so many things to do these

days but it should certainly be offered by schools. I guess it could be optional because if you make something compulsory people will hate it.

Notes

* It is useful to use words that clearly express your opinion: “I don’t think it should ...”, “it should certainly” and “I guess it could ...”.



Candidate

Sample 2: No. School children have so many subjects to study and so many projects to complete that there is no time for cooking classes. I think it’s old-fashioned to ask kids to learn how to cook because they can watch how things are done by watching cooking programs on television or downloading video clips from the web.

Notes

* If you disagree with an idea, always make sure you explain your viewpoint and offer an alternative suggestion.



Examiner

“Do you usually eat at home or eat out?”



Candidate

Sample 1: Actually, I rarely eat out nowadays as we have two small children who need constant attention so it’s too much bother to arrange a babysitter. Anyway, we find restaurants expensive so we keep eating out for special occasions like birthdays. Sometimes we get an invitation for dinner but that’s rare.

Notes

* Try to include some conversational markers that are a common feature of spoken language like “actually” and “anyway”.



Candidate

Sample 2: I eat out a lot because, as a single person, it's more trouble to cook for one than to call into a cheap restaurant to have a meal or a snack. I do cook something sometimes but I tend to be very busy at work and work long hours so I don't have time to get to the supermarkets or even remember what ingredients I need.

Notes

* Even in simple questions that could be answered in a few words, try to speak two or three sentences so that the examiner knows you are attempting extended conversation.



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