



Basic IELTS

Speaking

Zhang Juan – Alison Wong

- Consolidating Your English Ability
- Improving Your English Speaking Skill
- Providing General Knowledge
- Developing Your Test-Taking Skill



NHÀ XUẤT BẢN TỔNG HỢP
THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH

NTV

Công ty TNHH
Nhân Trí Việt

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FOREWORD

Exam preparation is a vital period for candidates who wish to obtain an internationally recognised certificate, specifically the IELTS one. Such candidates will find it less stressful if they can have relevant and beneficial materials in hand. **Basic IELTS – Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing** have, consequently, been designed to meet your demand.

Basic IELTS series aim at

- providing IELTS candidates with a basic English language ability,
- enlarging candidates' stock of vocabulary, and
- giving candidates insight into the social life and culture of the English-speaking communities.

Basic IELTS series are suitable for those who want to achieve a band score of 4 – 5+ in the IELTS test. They are also practical materials for high school students, students of pre-intermediate level, and for those who want to build up a solid foundation in their English language competence.

The main features of this series of books are as follows:

- ✓ Designed in accordance with the content, format and objectives of the IELTS test
- ✓ Reflecting the updated IELTS question types
- ✓ Meeting the demand and expectations of the focused candidates
- ✓ Containing authentic, interesting, and rewarding materials

As far as **Basic IELTS Speaking** is concerned, it is arranged into three parts with a total of five chapters whose themes centre upon different kinds of questions in each part of the IELTS Speaking test. Especially, varied and well-designed tasks which are typical in the IELTS Speaking test are provided so as to facilitate actual tests in the most effective way. Moreover, lists of Useful Words and Expressions provided with their phonetic symbols added below Dialogue Study aim at helping you not only to improve your pronunciation but to give you a chance to check their meanings as well. It is said that the more time you spend on looking up new words, the better you can understand and use them. In addition, Useful Sentence Structures enable you to accurately express yourself in English. Last but not least, a table of key to the exercises is presented so that you can use them to check your work and see your progress day by day.

Basic IELTS Speaking certainly meets the need of candidates who will sit the Academic Module, but General Training Module candidates can also find it very beneficial.

On completion of **Basic IELTS Speaking**, you will be able to

- do typical tasks in the IELTS Speaking test,
- apply useful tips and techniques in answering questions of the IELTS test,
- be well prepared for gaining a higher score in your actual exam, and
- achieve your desired band score in the near future.

Hopefully, you will find **Basic IELTS Speaking** truly helpful and rewarding, and you can eventually achieve your desired goal.

Zhang Juan – Alison Wong

IELTS OVERVIEW

I. The IELTS Test

IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, was introduced in 1989. It is an English language proficiency test that is required to be taken by non-native students for studying in countries where the medium of instruction is English. It is now used for this purpose around the globe.

The IELTS is managed by three main institutions: the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL). This is important to understand in order to prepare for what is essentially an examination of British and not American English.

Depending on the course of study that is planned to take, candidates must select to sit either the Academic IELTS test or the General Training IELTS test. This choice must be made when applying to sit the test.

Academic Module

The Academic IELTS test is necessary for candidates who **plan to study at universities** (undergraduate or postgraduate courses), and will test the candidates' ability both to understand and to use complex academic language.

General Training Module

The General Training Module of IELTS is for students **seeking entry to a secondary school or to vocational training courses**, and also for those who wish to **apply for immigration** to countries such as Canada, Australia, or New Zealand.

IELTS is not recommended for candidates under the age of 16.

II. The IELTS Test Format

There are four sub-tests to the IELTS test: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Candidates must sit all four sub-tests. While all candidates take the same Listening and Speaking tests, they sit different Reading and Writing tests, depending on whether they have selected the Academic IELTS test or the General Training IELTS test. These two do not carry the same weight and are not interchangeable.

The first three sub-tests – Listening, Reading, and Writing – must be completed in one day. There is no break between the sub-tests. The Speaking test may be taken, at the discretion of the test centre, in the period of seven days before or after the other sub-tests of the IELTS test.

This table helps you to understand more clearly about the format and timing of the two IELTS modules:

	ACADEMIC	GENERAL TRAINING
Listening	4 sections; 40 questions 30 minutes	4 sections; 40 questions 30 minutes
Reading	3 sections; 40 questions 3 long texts 1 hour	3 sections; 40 questions 3 long texts 1 hour
Writing	2 tasks 1 hour	2 tasks 1 hour
Speaking	3 sections 11 - 14 minutes	3 sections 11 - 14 minutes

What can you bring into the test room?

Only pens, pencils and erasers. You must bring the passport/national identity card you used on the IELTS Application Form to the test. You must leave everything else outside the examination room, including mobile phones and pagers which must be switched off and placed with personal belongings in the area designated by the supervisor. If you do not switch off your phone/pager or keep it on you, you will be disqualified.

Will there be more than one examiner?

No, the Speaking test will take the form of a conversation between the candidate and one certified IELTS examiner.

Will the Speaking test be recorded?

Yes, it is recorded onto an audiocassette or a digital recorder.

What do you need for the Speaking test?

You must bring the same identification documents you supplied on your IELTS Application Form and used for the rest of the test. Your ID will be checked before you enter the test room.

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Chapter 1

The IELTS Speaking Test

Unit 1 An Overview of the IELTS Speaking Test

1. The IELTS Speaking Format

The IELTS Speaking Test is the same for both the Academic and General Training modules. It is different from the other parts of the IELTS test because it is a one-to-one interaction between a candidate and an examiner. The three parts in the test give the candidate the opportunity to use a range of different speaking skills. The Speaking test is recorded.

The following table is the format of the IELTS Speaking test:

Task	Task Description	Time
Part 1 Introduction and Interview	The examiner introduces himself/herself and confirms candidate's identity by asking questions about the candidate. Next, the examiner asks the candidate about familiar topic frames.	4-5 minutes
Part 2 Individual Long Turn	The examiner asks the candidate to speak for 1-2 minutes on a particular topic. Information is given on a card and the candidate has 1 minute to prepare before he/she starts. The examiner asks one or two questions after the candidate's presentation.	3-4 minutes
Part 3 Two-way Discussion	The examiner invites the candidate to participate in a discussion of a more abstract topic related to the topic on the card in Part 2.	4-5 minutes

The IELTS Speaking test has been designed to test your ability to engage in a conversation, and to test how well you can communicate your thoughts and opinions.

The IELTS Speaking test is the shortest of the components of the IELTS test – only 11 to 14 minutes. In this short time, you have to convince the examiner who will be speaking with you of your level of English.

As you have seen in the table above, the Speaking test is divided into 3 parts:

Part 1: The first part involves general introduction. Here, the examiner checks that he/she has the right person by checking the candidate's name, origin and identification. This part is also designed to help the candidate relax and takes only a few seconds. Then, the examiner asks the candidate about familiar topics in life such as his/her country, home town, family, studies/jobs, free-time activities, future plans, etc. This part takes about 4 or 5 minutes.

Part 2: Part 2 is the long turn or individual talk. It provides an opportunity for the candidate to deliver a long, uninterrupted response. The examiner will give the candidate a cue card with a subject such as education, family, work, interests and lifestyle and some cues or a few guiding questions on the card. These questions are short, and the structure of the questions is simple. The candidate must talk for 1 to 2 minutes on this subject. He/She is expected to demonstrate an ability to construct a long sample of English. The examiner will assess the candidate's fluency, coherence, range of structures, pronunciation and vocabulary.

The candidate has an optional 1 minute in order to prepare for his/her talk, and is provided with some paper and a pencil in order to make some brief notes. After the candidate's talk, the examiner will ask 1 or 2 brief questions in order to finish off this part which takes about 3 - 4 minutes.

Part 3: Part 3 is the most complex part of the IELTS Speaking test. Here, the examiner will prompt and lead the candidate with a series of questions on the topic spoken about in Part 2. For example, in Part 2 you may have to describe *a favourite teacher*, and in Part 3, you may have to discuss *education* in your country. These questions will be more demanding and require some critical analysis on the part of the candidate. The examiner is still in control, but must allow the candidate to produce longer utterances or discuss the questions. The candidate will be scored on how effectively he/she can develop the abstract ideas on the IELTS test. These questions and discussions may take 4 or 5 minutes.

Note that in Part 1 of the Speaking test, questions cannot be changed or reworded. In Part 3, there is more flexibility. If the candidate does not understand a word in the question, or the question itself, it is possible to ask for repetition or clarification.

Overall, try to stick to the topic on this specific part of the IELTS test. This is the section where the examiner will really want to get an understanding of your knowledge. Be sure to use proper grammar and accents when appropriate.

2. Examiners and the Test Room

① The examiner

The examiner interviewing you during the IELTS test is trained to assess your spoken English against IELTS criteria. Examiners can come from any country where English is spoken as a native language. They are all professional teachers with advanced degrees. They have received specific IELTS training to make sure they judge you fairly and honestly.

② The test date

The IELTS Speaking test might not even be held on the same day as the other parts of the test. This is because there will usually be a large number of candidates sitting the test, and there is not enough time for everyone to have their individual speaking test on the same day. Whether or not your IELTS Speaking test will be held on the same day will depend on when and where you are sitting your IELTS test. You can find out more information about the dates when you book your test with the IELTS test centre. You will be informed of the time and place of your Speaking test by the test centre at least 72 hours prior to the test date.

③ The test room

You are not allowed to take anything into the test room – everything you need will be provided – except that you must remember to take your identification. It has to be the same means of identification that you registered with. Unfortunately, some candidates have been refused

admission to the test room because they registered with their national ID card, but did not have it with them on the test day!

The IELTS Speaking test is in fact an interview in which each candidate is interviewed individually. In the test room, on the examiner's desk are test materials, score-recorded sheets of paper, pens, an audiocassette or a digital recorder and tapes or CDs. The IELTS Speaking interview will be recorded. Recording the interview has a number of benefits. This is done so that, if necessary, the Speaking test can be remarked. If the bands for a candidate's Writing and Speaking tests, for instance, are very different, then the candidate's test is re-checked. If the oral interview was not recorded, then this could not be done. This does not happen very often.

Sample recordings are also sent to the IELTS administration to be monitored to make sure that examiners are doing a good job and assigning the correct bands. So, try to forget that the recorder is there and get on with answering the questions.

3. Marking Criteria

When marking the speaking category, examiners use detailed performance descriptors which describe spoken performance at each of the 9 IELTS bands. Examiners award a band score for each of the following four criterion areas:

1. Fluency and Coherence
2. Lexical Resource
3. Grammatical Range and Accuracy
4. Pronunciation

Fluency refers to speaking continuously without stopping, and Coherence means organising speech in a logical way. Lexical Resource refers to using words which are varied and appropriate for the subject. Grammatical Range and Accuracy refers to the use of correct grammar and variation of grammatical usage. Pronunciation refers to speaking in a manner which is easily understood.

These four criteria are weighed equally. The examiner gives you a whole-number sub-score for each of these, and then calculates the average of the four.

4. Band Score

The IELTS Speaking test is marked on a scale of 1 – 9. Most universities require a score of 6.0 – 6.5 for entrance; however, this varies according to country and university.

You do not need to be an absolutely fluent speaker of English to get a reasonable IELTS speaking score. The examiner will be looking for your ability to use a range of vocabulary and grammar in a way that is clear and understandable. Both whole and half band scores, such as 6.5, are given for the Speaking test. If the average score is not a whole number or a half number, it is rounded to the nearest whole number or half number.

A band score for each of the four criterion areas is as follows:

Band 9 – Expert user

Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.

Band 8 – Very good user

Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriateness. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

Band 7 – Good user

Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriateness and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

Band 6 – Competent user

Has generally effective command of the language despite some occasional inaccuracies, inappropriateness and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Band 5 – Modest user

Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

Band 4 – Limited user

Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.

Band 3 – Extremely limited user

Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

Band 2 – Intermittent user

No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty in understanding spoken and written English.

Band 1 – Non user

Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

Band 0 – Did not attempt the test

Unit 2 How to Prepare for the IELTS Speaking Test

1. Enhance Your English Communication Skills

Expose yourself to everyday topics as often discussed in newspapers or on radio and TV programmes. Make it your habit to read newspaper and magazine articles, particularly those that discuss issues and contain arguments and opinions. Also, listen to radio discussions and watch TV interview programmes on current affairs. Not only does this give you some excellent listening practice, but it will build your background knowledge for the issues that may come up in both the Speaking and the Writing tests. Choose an issue and record all the vocabulary you will need to discuss that issue – note words raised in the news articles or programmes on TV, radio, newspapers. Try to do one of these every day. When you consider an issue, decide what would be your position on the issue, especially the steps you will need to take to reach your desired position, and how you would overcome any possible problems in discussing it.

Be prepared to use descriptive and comparative language. Practise using conditional sentences to discuss, for instance, hypothetical issues from a broad or world view: *“If the world economy becomes more global, all nations will lose their cultural independence.”* or *“If the leaders of the world were to spend more money on the poor, many of the problems of global conflict would be resolved.”*

Be ready to use a good range of tenses and a variety of grammatical structures, for instance, to speculate on what may be possible in the future:

Examiner: **What future role do you see for music in society?**

Candidate: Well, I'd (or I've) always hoped that all the peoples of the world could benefit by sharing their common experience of music. In the past, there have been many examples of musicians joining forces to raise awareness of global issues that result from famine or human rights abuses.

Or: If different cultures could see the common features of music in other countries, they may be less fearful of each other and understand one another's cultures better.

2. Prepare yourself

① Look your best

Although people are not supposed to 'judge the book by its cover', some people unconsciously tend to do that. If you do not look credible enough, they may not even start listening to what you have to say. You do not need to wear gowns or tuxedos, but simply wear clothes fit for the occasion. Your clothes should be neat and free of wrinkles, not too loud that people would rather stare at it than you. You should be pleasant-looking, not only paying attention to your clothes but your faces and gestures as well.

② Be humble

You should admit your mistakes during your talk, and apologise for those mistakes. There are times you may forget a certain term. Instead of pausing for a long time or using a word you are not sure of, it is better to ask your examiner. The examiner would appreciate your humility, and even relate to you more because they know you are just like them – a human capable of making mistakes and forgetting things.

③ Be self-confident

It is understandable that you will be under considerable tension created by the examination situation. Almost everyone is nervous when they speak in public or in testing situations. High levels of anxiety can, in fact, affect a candidate's performance. However, much of this anxiety can be overcome by good preparation, familiarity with test details and a positive attitude.

You should believe in what you are saying. If you do not sound convinced by what you say, you cannot expect anyone to believe it. It is important that you are relaxed when taking this test. Nevertheless, take a deep breath, and try to look self-assured. The examiner is trying to assess your language communication capabilities. He/She will not be able to assess you unless you speak up.

3. Commonly-Seen Problems in the IELTS Speaking Test

① Giving short answers

If you just give answers with only “Yes” or “No”, which are too short, you cannot convince the examiner of your ability of English. Here, you should demonstrate your skills in providing extended answers rather than just an outright YES/NO, or other similar one-word answers. For example:

E: What do you find most difficult in your studies?

C: English.

E: Have you done much travelling in your life?

C: Yes, I travelled a lot.

Answer in complete sentences! Develop your answers as much as possible. Speak more than the examiner. For example:

E: What do you find most difficult in your studies?

C: I would say, English. It is very hard for me to memorise new words and I am too shy to speak out in class. It has always been difficult for me to communicate in English while my classmates are doing a lot better.

Keep talking until the examiner interrupts you or goes to the next question. If you need time to think, say something like “*That’s an interesting question.*” or just repeat the question in a form like “*You’d like me to tell you about (topic).*”

② Using broad generalisations

Some candidates give too many broad generalisations when giving answers. In addition, some others frequently use the expression *such as* when listing, which both takes time and expresses nonsense. Avoid trying to create an impression on the examiner with big words that you may use incorrectly. Instead, use simple words to discuss complex ideas; try to present your viewpoint and then explain it; or you can give some specific examples, arguments, or causes and effects. In brief, you should make use of the time to show your oral ability of English. Speak with simplicity and sincerity!

This is an example of a broad generalisation:

E: **Are you busy with your work?**

C: Yes, I am very busy. Every day I have to work in the office for about 13 hours. Sometimes, I even have to work during public holidays such as the Spring Festival, National Day, May Day, and so on.

To answer this question satisfactorily, you ought to give specific examples and explain how busy you are, for example:

E: **Are you busy with your work?**

C: Yes, I am quite busy with my work. Every day I have to complete a few tasks like checking the daily work of our department, writing reports and planning for the market. No one knows how much time all these tasks take and what else will come up. Most of the time, I have to work around 13 hours a day.

Use examples from your own life. These you can speak about more easily than stories you have made up or read somewhere else. Try to relax and enjoy the experience of telling the interviewer as much interesting information about yourself as you can.

③ Mentioning complex subjects

When giving answers, you should not try in vain to express ideas or concepts that you do not really understand. For example, as far as your *hobbies* are concerned, you may avoid talking about *belly dance* – a new form of exercise – even though it is what you actually do in your free time. The test is designed to give you an ample chance to answer a variety of questions. It does not matter if all the things that you say are not true. In brief, focus on what you know rather than on what you do not know while you are doing the test.

④ Getting stuck on vocabulary

If you get stuck on vocabulary, try to describe what you mean. Do not sit there knitting your brow and allowing the tension to rise. “*Oh, the word I’m looking for has slipped my mind.*” is a good phrase to introduce a description if you cannot remember it. If you get utterly lost, say something like, “*I’m afraid I’ve talked myself into a corner. Let me start over.*”, or better “*I don’t think I should continue with this. Let me say it in a different way.*”, and start answering the question in another way. Sometimes, you can use some fillers like *Well, Mm, Let me see, Give me one moment*, etc. You can also use a phrase or a sentence to express yourself if you cannot find out the right word at the

right time. For instance, concerning *the safety of eating vegetables*, if possible, you can talk like this:

C: We eat different vegetables every day. I don't think that some vegetables are safe because of the insecticide on them.

Insecticide means *a chemical for killing insects, especially those that damage plants or crops*. If you do not know this accurate term, you can express yourself as follows:

C: We eat different vegetables every day. But sometimes they are not safe because of the chemical stuff farmers spray on them to kill the insects.

⑤ Giving rote answers

Remember that this is not a test of knowledge, and there is no single answer. Do not memorise set responses! If you do, it will sound false and come across as if you are making a speech! You need to sound natural all through the test.

Therefore, do not learn chunks of answers. The examiner is trained to spot this and will change the questions. Try to give your opinion by developing your answers as much as possible and speak more than the examiner.

⑥ Using incorrect tenses or personal pronouns

Incorrect tenses or confusing personal pronouns are often used by candidates in the Speaking test. You might be asked to describe past situations; you, therefore, have to make sure you are using the right past forms of verbs. Look at this example:

E: Can you tell me something about your mother?

C: My mother is very kind to me. When I was a child, she take good care... sorry... took good care of me. At that time, he worked... she worked in a hospital.

These mistakes can be overcome by practising at home, recording your answers onto a recorder and listen again to self-correct them. It is important to speak English as much and as often as you can while preparing for the IELTS test.

⑦ Paying too much attention to grammar and pronunciation

Many non-native speakers about to attend an IELTS interview are understandably worried about making mistakes in their grammar and pronunciation; they, thus, cannot communicate effectively. The examiner will expect some mistakes – after all, English is a foreign language for you, and people make mistakes in speaking foreign languages. Therefore, do not worry about occasional mistakes. Get on with the talking and concentrate on your communication.

⑧ Showing off knowledge

As with the Writing test, do not show off. Some candidates consider the interview as a way of showing the examiner what they know. Remember that this is not a test of knowledge. In the Speaking test, IELTS candidates are assessed on their performance in an interview; that is, you will be assessed on your ability to communicate effectively, and to take the initiative in a conversation. Hence, concentrate on what you are saying rather than trying to show off your

knowledge: focus on the common ideas and themes of what you are saying to the examiner. For example, for the following question on *how to solve the problem of pollution*, it neither is of a technical nature nor requires any specialist knowledge. You might, in this case, respond by organising your personal thoughts and points to give your opinion on what is asked:

E: What can the government do to solve the problem of pollution?

C: First of all, I think that the law and regulations should be clearly stipulated and followed strictly. Next, it is better to demolish small factories along the rivers unless they guarantee that no waste will be dumped into the water without first being purified. Then, more environmentally friendly products should be encouraged. For example, the government should find a way to encourage people to use fewer disposable plastic bags. People can be educated to be fully aware of the importance of protecting the environment. On the whole, I think that there is a lot the government can do. This is what I can think of right now.

Chapter 2

**Part 1 of the IELTS
Speaking Test**

Unit 1

How to Prepare for Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test

1. An Overview of Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test

The IELTS Speaking test consists of three sections involving one candidate with one examiner and an audio recorder to “capture” your performance. Part 1 is known as Introduction and Interview. In this section, the examiner asks the candidate for an introduction. This first section of the IELTS Speaking exam lasts about 4 - 5 minutes and gives the examiner the chance to find out a little about you through some simple ‘getting-to-know-you’ questions.

Firstly, the examiner will talk onto the audio recorder: *“This is the Speaking module for the International English Language Testing System conducted on X (day/month/year) at X (name of the test centre). The candidate is X. Candidate number is X and the interviewer is X.”* He/She then introduces himself/herself, and next, asks you basic questions about yourself and asks to see your identification, which will help the examiner find out a little about you and help put you at ease:

- My name is John. Can you tell me your full name, please?
- Thank you. What can I call you?
- Where are you from?
- May I see your identification, please?
- Well, first of all, I’d like to ask you some questions about yourself.

Next, the examiner will pose a series of questions about your life such as your home town, your studies, your likes and dislikes, your hobbies or family, etc. For example:

- What subject do you study?
- What are you going to do after your studies?
- Have you travelled a lot in your life?
- What kind of places would you like to visit?
- How much time do you spend with friends?
- What kind of friends do you prefer?
- Is friendship very important in your life and why?

2. Preparing for Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test

When entering the test room, you should greet the examiner. Below is a list of typical expressions of greeting:

Hi. Hello. Good morning. Good afternoon. Nice to meet you. Pleased to meet you.
--

This is also your chance to get off to a good start! So, remember to display your best ability.

What is being tested is your ability to

- provide full and relevant answers to all questions. Avoid giving short, uncommunicative replies to closed questions. (These are questions beginning with 'Have you ...', 'Do you ...', 'Is it ...', etc. which can be answered by a single word, a yes or no, or a couple-of-words answer.)
- give longer responses to some open-ended questions (an open-ended question beginning with a Wh-word asks the candidate to give an extended answer); hence, you have the opportunity to show how good your English is, and give information by describing and explaining.

3. A Sample of Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test

E: Examiner C: Candidate

(The examiner has been well prepared, and the candidate has just come in.)

E: Good morning.

C: Good morning.

E: I'm John. Can you tell me your full name, please?

C: My name is Li Juan.

E: Thank you. How shall I call you?

C: You can just call me Juan.

E: May I see your identification, please?

C: Here you are.

E: Thank you. Now, first of all, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself.

C: OK.

E: What part of the country are you from?

C: I am from Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. It is located in southwest China, famous for many historical sites.

E: What do you like most about Chengdu?

C: Well, there is so much I like about my home town. What I like the most, probably, is the food, I think. As you might know, food there is cheap and delicious.

E: Let's move on to talk about travelling. Do you travel a lot in your life?

C: Well, not a lot although I like travelling very much. Since I just graduated from university a couple of years ago, I do not make enough money to visit as many places as I wish. Normally I probably travel once every two years, usually in the summer.

E: What kind of places would you like to visit?

C: I always prefer nature more to historical places. The most exciting thing for me in travelling is to be close to nature. So, the places I like the most are usually mountains, beaches, forests, etc.

E: OK. We will talk about friends now. How much time do you spend with friends?

C: I love friends. I don't have much spare time, but I normally meet once or twice a week with friends for meals or sometimes at weekends for small trips. I feel so relaxed with my friends.

E: What kind of friends do you prefer?

C: I like friends who share the same interests with me and who can listen and discuss with me about the problems I have with my work. We can spend time together having fun, and during difficult times, we can also turn to each other for help.

E: Is friendship very important to you and why?

C: Yes, friends are quite important in my life. As the saying goes, "A friend in need is a friend indeed.". True friends are really treasures. You will know how important friends are, especially when you have difficult moments in life. The comfort brought by friends is very essential. At the same time, you will also realise how important friends are during times of joy and success.

4. Frequently-Asked Questions for Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking

Test  01.MP3

Cities and Countries

Which part of your country do most people live in?

Can you tell me about the main industries in your country?

Is it easy to travel around your country?

Do you think your country has changed a lot since you were a child?

Do you know something about the history of your home town?

Are there any interesting places I can visit?

What do you like the most about living in your home town?

Can you compare your home town with big modern cities like Beijing?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in your home town?

Can you describe the city where you live now?

Are there any things you dislike about the city?

How would you improve the city where you live?

Jobs

What do you do?

Why did you choose this job?

What is your routine work?

Tell me about a typical working day.

What do you like or dislike about your job?

Do you like your job? If you don't, what kind of job would you prefer?

Do you have any plans to change your job in the future?

Studies

What subject do you study?
Why did you choose this subject?
What do you like most about your studies?
Are there any things you dislike about your studies?
What do you find most difficult in your studies?
What kind of qualifications or certificates do you hope to get?
What do you hope to do after graduation?

Childhood

Where did you grow up?
What is a good place for children to grow up?
Where did you usually play?
Who is the most important person in your childhood?
Is childhood now different from the time when you were a child?

Films

Do you enjoy watching films?
How often do you watch films?
What kind of films do you like to watch?
Do people generally prefer watching films at home or in the cinema?
Would you like to be in a film?

Public Transport

What kind of public transport is available where you live?
What kind of public transport do you use most often?
What problems are there with public transport where you live?
How would you improve public transport where you live?
Do you prefer to use public or private transport?

Animals

Tell me about some of the animals in your country.
Which animals do you like?
Tell me some of the ways animals are used in your country (e.g. agriculture).
How do people in your country usually feel about animals?

Shopping

- Who does the main food and household shopping in your family?
- What kind of shopping do you usually do?
- What kinds of shops do you prefer?
- What time of day do you prefer to go shopping?
- What is the worst thing about shopping?

Housework

- Who usually does the housework, e.g. cooking and cleaning, where you live?
- How is the housework shared in your family?
- What do you think is the most important household task?
- Do you have any ideas about how housework has changed in recent years in your country?
- Do you enjoy housework and what kind of housework do you like?

Food and Restaurants

- What kinds of food do you like?
- Is there any food you don't like?
- Do you usually cook at home?
- Are there any special occasions when people in your country go to a restaurant?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of eating in restaurants?

Free Time

- When do you have free time?
- What do you like doing in your free time?
- What activities are most popular in the place where you live?
- Do you think that free time is important in people's lives?
- Would you like to spend your free time with friends or with family?

Schools

- Which middle school did you study in?
- Is it close to your home? How did you get to school every day?
- What did you like the best about that school?
- Is there anything you didn't like about your school?
- If you were the president of the school, what changes would you like to make?
- What did you think of the teachers there?

Hobbies/Entertainment

- Do you have any hobbies?
- How did you become interested in that?
- How much time do you spend on that?
- Do you prefer relaxing at home or going out in the evening?
- When you go out for the evening, what would you like to do?
- Is there any kind of entertainment you dislike?
- Why do you think that people have hobbies?

Travels

- Do you like travelling?
- How often do you travel and why?
- What kinds of places are you most interested in and why?
- What places have you enjoyed visiting and why?
- What do you normally do when you are in a new place?
- Which do you prefer: travelling by yourself or with friends, and why?
- What does travelling mean to you?

Festivals

- What are the special days celebrated in your country?
- What do you think is the most important festival in your country?
- In what way do people celebrate the festival?
- Do people prepare any special food for the occasion?
- Which do people prefer, to spend it with family or with friends?
- How did people celebrate the festival in the past?
- How has the way been changed and why?
- Do you think that it is important to have festivals?

Friends

- What kind of people can be your friends?
- How do you make friends?
- How much time do you spend with friends?
- What do you normally do with your friends?
- Do you prefer to spend more time with friends or with family?
- Would you rather have one close friend or many common friends?
- How important is friendship to you?
- When you have trouble, do you turn to friends or family?

Unit 2 Conversation Practice for Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test

Talking about Home Towns and Jobs

1. Talking about Home Towns 02.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- Where do you come from?
- Can you describe your home town?
- Do you know something about the history of your home town?
- What is the weather like there?
- Are there any interesting places I can visit?
- What do you miss the most about your home town?
- Can you compare your home town with big modern cities like Beijing?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; **L:** Li Chen

(Wang Xiao and Li Chen meet each other at a university library.)

W: Hi! I think you're a friend of my friend, Zhang Juan.

L: Yes, I know Zhang Juan. How do you know her?

W: I work with her. How about you?

L: I met her at the swimming pool. We both love swimming.

W: *Where do you come from?* I mean, *where is your home town?*

L: I'm from the northeastern part of China, Changchun, the capital of Jilin Province. And you?

W: Well, I was born in a small village outside of Hangzhou, but I also grew up in Hangzhou. It's a couple of hours away from Shanghai.

L: Yes, I've heard of it before. It's quite famous. Definitely a place on my "to visit" list! *What is the weather like there?*

W: It's probably not as cold in the winter as Changchun is, and hotter in the summer time. We don't get a lot of snow, but there is a rainy season. *How's the weather in Changchun?*

L: Well, cold, of course, in the winter. Many people think it's cold in Changchun all year round, but it's really not. The summers are really beautiful. Not too hot, about 32 or 33 degrees.

W: Wow! I didn't think it would get that warm there! Maybe I should go and see Changchun next summer! *Are there any interesting places I can visit in Changchun?*

L: Yes, there are a couple of places I would highly suggest that you visit, but the best time to come is in the winter time! There's skiing on the Changbai Mountains, skating along the Songhua River and a special ice lantern sculpture festival too! Did you also know that Jilin is known for its deer antlers – you know, for medicinal purposes. Anyway, I could go on and on about my home town! What about Hangzhou? *What are the interesting places to visit?* I bet there are a lot of tourists each year.

W: Yes, Hangzhou is usually full of tourists. Everybody knows that the area around the West Lake is really beautiful, and there are a lot of famous sites there, too. You should see the West Lake during the moonlight! It's so beautiful! Especially during the Autumn Moon Festival! I really miss my home town.

L: Me, too. There's really no place like home! *What do you miss the most about your home town?*

W: You mean besides my mother's cooking? Well, I suppose it would be walking along the West Lake during a misty morning or a beautiful sunset. *What do you miss about Changchun?*

L: My family! I have a lot of aunts and uncles and cousins living in Changchun. I'm the only one who lives outside of Changchun.

W: Wow! I can't even imagine being on my own like that! That must have been really hard at first.

L: Yes, it really was. When I first moved to Beijing, my cousins were really envious. They thought that Beijing was obviously better than Changchun, because it is the capital of China. In fact, I thought so too at first, but now I don't think that as much.

W: What do you mean?

L: I mean that there are definitely some similarities, like both are modern capital cities. But as the centre of education, culture and politics, Beijing is definitely more exciting. There are many opportunities to grow and learn. Living in Beijing, you can easily watch a variety of international standard performances and you will be better informed.

W: But it sounds like you think Beijing is better than Changchun.

L: Let me finish. There are definitely more opportunities in Beijing, but I still think that Changchun is a much friendlier place. People are not so busy and their lives are not so hectic. Anyway, that's just my opinion. *Do you think Beijing is a better place to live in than Hangzhou?*

W: No, not really. I think that Hangzhou is much more beautiful than Beijing. In my opinion, Beijing is developing too rapidly, so pollution has become a big problem. You know how everyone complains about all the cars on the road, too. Traffic jams are so common that if you don't meet one when you're travelling, you feel that something must be wrong! Another thing about Beijing is that there are many modern buildings, but the city has lost some beauty. Much of the history of Beijing is hidden now, after lots of the old houses were demolished, except for some of the tourist sites.

L: That's a shame. What about Hangzhou? *What kind of history does Hangzhou have?*

W: Hangzhou was founded about 2,200 years ago in the Qin Dynasty. It was also the capital city for the Song Dynasty, and it has always been famous for its natural beauty. Now Hangzhou is known as a place for silk and for longjing tea.

L: You've convinced me to go! I'll have to visit Hangzhou someday soon! Say, I've got to go. I'm sorry, we didn't even introduce ourselves to each other. I'm Li Chen.

W: I'm Wang Xiao. I've enjoyed chatting with you.

L: Thanks, me too. We'll have to get together another time.

W: Yes, definitely! Take care!

L: Bye!

Useful Words and Expressions

Location

close to /'kləʊs tə/ *exp* not far in position

next to /'nekst tə/ *exp* beside

northeast /,nɔ:'θi:st/ *n* [U] the direction which is between north and east

northwest /,nɔ:'θwest/ *n* [U] the direction which is between north and west

southeast /,saʊθ'i:st/ *n* [U] the direction which is between south and east

southwest /,saʊθwest/ *n* [U] the direction which is between south and west

Weather

clear /kliə/ *adj* (skies) not cloudy

cloudy /'klaʊ.di/ *adj* with clouds

fair /feə/ *adj* (weather) pleasant and dry

foggy /'fɒg.i/ *adj* with fog

humid /'hju:.mɪd/ *adj* (air and weather conditions) containing extremely small drops of water in the air

rainy /'reɪ.ni/ *adj* raining a lot

shower /'ʃaʊə/ *n* [C] a short period of rain or snow

stormy /'stɔ:.mi/ *adj* with strong wind, heavy rain or snow and often thunder and lightning

sunny /'sʌn.i/ *adj* bright because of light from the sun

windy /'wɪn.di/ *adj* with a lot of wind

People

ambitious /æm'bɪʃ.əs/ *adj* having a strong wish to be successful, powerful or rich

average height /'æv.ərɪdʒ haɪt/ *n* typical or normal tallness

build /bɪld/ *n* [C] the size and shape of a person's body

energetic /en.ə'dʒet.ɪk/ *adj* having a lot of energy

friendly /'frend.li/ *adj* behaving in a pleasant, kind way towards someone

helpful /'help.fəl/ *adj* willing to help, or useful

kind-hearted /,kaɪnd'hɑ:.tɪd/ *adj* kind and generous

open-minded /,əʊ.pən'maɪn.dɪd/ *adj* willing to consider new ideas

reserved /rɪ'zɜ:v.d/ *adj* not talking about or showing feelings

Facilities

club /klʌb/ *n* [C + singular or plural verb] a group of people who do something together; the place where they meet

convenient /kən'vi:.ni.ənt/ *adj* near or easy to get to or use

service /'sɜ:.vɪs/ *n* [C] a system or organisation that provides for a basic public need

transportation /,træn.spɔ:'teɪ.ʃən/ *n* [U] the activity of moving people or things from one place to another, or the system used for doing this

well-equipped /,wel'kwɪpt/ *adj* with the necessary equipment

Useful Sentence Structures

My home town, (name of a city/province), is located in/on (location, e.g. central Vietnam / the north/south of Vietnam, etc.).

My home town, Nha Trang, is located on the east coast of Vietnam.

(name of a city/province) is a beautiful place with (special features, e.g. a long shore/a lot of paddy fields/a high mountain to the north/a flowing river to the south, etc.).

Nha Trang is a beautiful place with a long shore and a lot of scenic spots.

The weather in (name of a city/province) is usually (cold/hot/warm/windy/rainy, etc. in spring/summer/autumn/winter/all the year round).

The weather in Da Lat is usually cool all the year round.

(name of a city/province) is famous for ...

Nha Trang is famous for seafoods.

Da Lat is famous for scenic spots.

(name of a city/province) is (adj)-er/more (adj) than (name of a city/province).

Da Lat is colder than Nha Trang.

Ho Chi Minh City is more crowded than Da Lat.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about home towns.

1. my home town / Hue / located / central Vietnam

2. beautiful place / many famous historical sights

3. the weather / Ha Noi / usually / quite cold / winter

4. Da Nang / famous for / handmade kites and the kite festival

5. Ho Chi Minh City / hotter / Nha Trang

6. my home town / Dong Nai / located in the south of Vietnam

7. Da Lat / beautiful place / lots of hills

8. the weather / Da Lat / usually / most beautiful / spring

9. Ha Dong / famous for / silk

10. Ho Chi Minh City / more modern / Tien Giang province

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: Hi there! I don't think I know you! What's your name? Where are you from?

B:

A: Oh, I've heard of that place! But I think I might be confusing it with another place. Well, if you don't mind, could you tell me a bit about your home town?

B: Well, first of all, my home town is located in

A: What are the people like? Is it true that they are generally quite tall?

B: No, that's not true. In fact, most people in my home town are

A: Oh, that's not what I heard. I wonder where I got that idea! Tell me something about the weather in your home town. If I want to visit, when is the best time to come?

B: The best season for visiting is

A: But, why isn't it that good to visit during the other seasons?

B: People do visit it during the other seasons, but

A: Are there very many places in your home town? What kind of role did your home town play in ancient Vietnam?

B: In ancient times, my home town was famous for

A: That's really interesting. I didn't know that before. Are there any other interesting facts about your home town?

B: Of course! Most people don't know that my home town is

A: What are the special products from your home town? Any special foods or clothes, or arts and crafts?

B:

A: What do you think is the biggest difference between your home town and Ho Chi Minh City?

B:

A: Hey! Thanks for all the information! I think I'll go visit your home town on my next vacation! Would you mind giving me your e-mail address so that I can keep in touch with you?

B: ...

A: Thanks so much! I hope to see you again soon!

3. Look at the following table and think of words to compare your home town to Ho Chi Minh City. Use as many different words as you can.

	Home town	Ho Chi Minh City
Size		
Population		
Location		
Weather		
Transportation system		
People		
Places to visit		
Nightlife		

4. Use the following chart to interview a friend.

	Interviewee
Home town Where are you from? What is your home town?	
Number of years in home town How long have you lived in your home town?	

	Interviewee
<p>Weather</p> <p>What is the weather like?</p>	
<p>Population</p> <p>How many people live in your home town?</p>	
<p>Famous for ...</p> <p>What is your home town famous for?</p>	
<p>One interesting place</p> <p>Describe one interesting place in your home town.</p>	
<p>Comparison to Ho Chi Minh City</p> <p>How would you compare your home town to Ho Chi Minh City?</p>	

5. Think about your answers to the following questions and then discuss your thoughts and opinions with your partner.

1. Why do people love their home town so much?
2. Why do people leave their home town?
3. Why is it easier to get along with someone from your own home town?
4. How does your home town mould your personality? What characteristics do you feel people in your home town generally share?

2. Talking about Jobs 03.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- What do you do?
- Why did you choose this job?
- What is your routine work?
- Tell me about a typical working day.
- What do you like or dislike about your job?
- Do you like your job? If you don't, what kind of job would you prefer?
- What job would you like to be doing in 10 years' time?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; L: Li Chen

(Wang Xiao meets Li Chen, who is waiting to meet with their mutual friend, Zhang Juan. They start chatting while they are waiting.)

W: Hi, Li Chen! How nice to see you here!

L: Hi, Wang Xiao! I'm supposed to meet Zhang Juan at 12 o'clock. Actually, if you have a few minutes, I'd like to ask you about your job.

W: Sure. What do you want to know?

L: Well, I'm thinking of looking for another job, but I want to find out as much information about other jobs before I make a decision.

W: Sure, no problem. But let me ask you first. *What do you do?*

L: I work in a small computer company, mostly doing bookkeeping. It's alright for now, but I don't really see myself working there long term.

W: But, *why did you choose this job?*

L: I guess I chose it because it was in my field, and the salary and benefits were quite good for a new university graduate. I've been working there for almost two years now. But the work is really not very interesting.

W: What do you mean? *What do you do every day?*

L: Well, every day I sit in front of a computer and enter data. Then, I check to make sure everything is accurate. Occasionally, I'll get a chance to work on a special project. It's not exactly what I expected.

W: It sounds to me like you're unhappy in your job. *What job would you like to be doing?*

L: I don't know. Something more interesting, though. I'd prefer to work with other people instead of being all alone in a room in front of a computer. Now let me ask you about your job. *What kind of work do you do?*

W: I work in an import-export company. I'm responsible for making sure the orders are filled properly, and contacting our customers in other countries to make sure they received their orders and are satisfied with them.

L: That sounds interesting. *Tell me about a typical day.*

W: Each day is different from the next. Some days are really great, and everyone will be satisfied. Other days, it seems that everyone is complaining to me. Some days I'll be making phone calls all day, taking orders, explaining our products, and talking with our overseas customers. Other days, I'll be in the warehouse, making sure the orders are being filled.

L: It sounds very exciting to me. But, *how do you like your job?*

W: On the whole, I like it. But, there are some days when it is really tough.

L: *How did you get your job?*

W: I went to a job fair and had an interview with the import-export company. They were interested in hiring me, but I wasn't so sure. I also had an interview with a joint-venture company that seemed more promising.

L: *Why did you choose this job?*

W: It was really hard to choose between the two offers. I think that basically, the job in the import-export company looked more interesting, even though the starting salary was lower. The joint-venture company offered a higher salary, but the chances to move up in the company did not seem very good.

L: It looks like you made the right choice! *Do you think you'll be working in the same job in 10 years' time?*

W: Quite possibly. I enjoy the challenges and feel that I am contributing to the company. I'm satisfied with my job for now, and would not be surprised if I stayed for a long time.

L: That's the kind of job I want to find. Wish me luck!

W: Good luck to you!

Useful Words and Expressions

achieve a goal /ə'tʃi:v ə ɡəʊl/ *exp* to get an aim or a purpose

advertisement /əd'vɜ:z.tɪs.mənt/ *n* [C] a picture, short film, song, etc. which tries to persuade people to buy a product or service

apply /ə'plai/ *v* (for) [I] to request something, usually officially, especially by writing or sending in a form

benefit /'ben.ɪ.fɪt/ *n* [C or U] a helpful or good effect

bonus /'bəʊ.nəs/ *n* [C] an extra amount of money that is given as a present or reward

boring /'bɔ:riŋ/ *adj* not interesting

candidate /'kæn.dɪ.dət/ *n* [C] a person who is competing to get a job

career /kə'riə/ *n* [C] a job or series of related jobs

challenging /'tʃæl.ɪn.dʒɪŋ/ *adj* difficult

colleague /'kɒl.i:ɡ/ *n* [C] a person who works with you

comfortable /'kʌmp.fə.tə.bəl/ *adj* not worried about something

commission /kə'mɪʃn/ *n* [C] a request to do a special piece of work

earn money /ɜ:n 'mʌni/ *exp* to receive money as

payment for work

fixed /fɪkst/ *adj* arranged or decided already and not able to be changed

flexible /'fleks.sɪ.bəl/ *adj* able to change or be changed easily according to the situation

get on *phr v* to have a good relationship

highly-paid /,haɪ.li'peɪd/ *adj* being given much money for something

hire /'haɪə/ *v* [T] (UK) (US rent) to pay to use something for a short period

ideal /aɪ'diəl/ *adj* without fault; perfect

in charge (of) *exp* having control of or being responsible for someone or something

interviewee /,ɪn.tə.vju:'i:/ *n* [C] the person who answers the questions during an interview

interviewer /'ɪn.tə.vju:ə/ *n* [C] the person who asks the questions during an interview

job security /'dʒɒb sɪ,kjuə.rɪ.ti/ *n* [U] the state of having a job which is likely to be permanent

job title /,dʒɒb 'taɪ.tl/ *n* [C] a name that describes a job

letter of recommendation /'let.ə əv 'rek.ə.men'deɪ.ʃn/ *n* a letter to recommend someone for a job or for a particular purpose

make a decision /,meɪk ə dɪ'sɪʒn/ *exp* to decide

obligation /,ɒb.lɪ'geɪ.ʃn/ *n* [C] something that you must do

overtime /'əʊ.və.taɪm/ *n* [U], *adv* extra time at work; after the usual time needed in a job

promotion /prə'məʊ.ʃn/ *n* [C or U] the state of being raised to a higher position or rank

qualification /,kwɒl.ɪ.fɪ'keɪ.ʃn/ *n* [C or U] an ability, a characteristic or experience that makes somebody suitable for a particular job

relax /rɪ'læks/ *v* [I or T] to (cause someone to) become less active and more calm and happy

responsible /rɪ'spɒnt.sɪ.bəl/ *adj*

be responsible for sb/sth/doing sth *exp* to have control over something or someone and the duty of taking care of it or them

retirement /rɪ'taɪə.mənt/ *n* [C or U] the time in a person's life when they stop working, usually because they are old

routine /ru:'ti:n/ *adj* (job) ordinary and boring

salary /'sæl.ər.i/ *n* [C or U] a fixed amount of money that is earned each month or year from a job

self-employed /,self.ɪm'plɔɪd/ *adj* not working for an employer but having one's own business

solve a problem /sɒlv ə 'prɒb.ləm/ *exp* to find an answer to a difficult situation

the Personnel Department /ðə ˌpɜː.sən'el dɪ'pɑːt.mənt/ *n* the section of a company or an organisation that deals with its employees

vacancy /'veɪ.kən.tsi/ *n* [C] a job that no one is doing and is therefore available for someone new to do

working environment /'wɜː.kɪŋ ɪnˌvaɪə.rən.mənt/ *n* [U] the conditions of work and the way that influences how effectively somebody can work

Useful Sentence Structures

I work in a(n) (organisation/institution). I'm responsible for (section/department/office/unit).

I work in a university. I'm responsible for the student admissions.

A typical day for me includes (duties/responsibilities).

A typical day for me includes meetings, interviews with prospective students, and administrative work.

I really (like/enjoy/love) my job. I plan to work there for (time/duration).

I really enjoy my job. I plan to work there for at least five more years.

I feel most satisfied in my job if (clause of condition).

I feel most satisfied in my job if I am well paid, and my colleagues are cooperative.

I think that I (can) make a(n) (job/position) because (clause of reason).

I think that I can make a very good doctor because I am highly reliable and responsible.

My work is usually very (adjective). Every night, I come home really (adjective).

My work is usually very challenging. Every night, I come home really tired.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about jobs.

1. I work/multinational company/I'm responsible/marketing
2. a typical day/includes/meeting with clients, designing advertisements, and talking with consumers
3. I really/dislike my job/I plan to work/ only as long as it takes until I find another job
4. my work is usually/very stressful/every night/ really exhausted
5. I feel most satisfied/I can find new ways to help our company become more efficient
6. I think that I make a good secretary/I am helpful and organised
7. I work/my uncle's company/I'm responsible/selling computers
8. a typical day/includes/ordering supplies and helping customers with problems
9. I really/love my job/I plan to work there for a long time
10. I think that I make a good kindergarten teacher/I really love children

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: If you don't mind, I have a few questions to ask you about your job.

B: No problem. Go ahead.

A: Well, first of all, what kind of job do you do?

B: I'm a

A: Where do you work?

B:

A: How long have you worked there?

B: I've been working at _____ for _____.

A: Could you tell me what your main responsibilities are?

B: Sure. I'm primarily responsible for

A: Wow! That's interesting. I didn't know that was what your job was all about. Can you tell me what a typical day is like?

B: A typical day usually begins with

A: Would you say that your job is rewarding?

B: Actually,

A: If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

B: That's a tough question. I suppose I would change

A: How long do you think you'll continue to work in this job?

B: Probably for another

A: What are your work hours like? How long is your work day? How many days do you work each week?

B:

A: It sounds like a demanding job. How did you find it? I mean, did you get your job through a newspaper advertisement, or what?

B:

A: Oh, I see. Say, if you were to give advice to someone who is just starting out in this field, what would you say?

B: Well, I would definitely tell them to

A: Thanks so much for answering all my questions! I really appreciate it!

B: You're very welcome.

3. Complete the table below by comparing your present job with your ideal job.

	Present job	Ideal job
Main responsibilities What is your job like? What are you responsible for in your job?		
Work hours What hours do you work? How many hours do you work each day/week?		
Positive aspects Describe one positive aspect about your job. What is one thing you enjoy about your job?		
Negative aspects Tell me one negative part of your job. What is something you dislike about your job?		
How to find the job How did you find your job? How did you get your job?		
Reason for choosing the job Why did/will you choose this job?		
Typical day Describe a typical day. What is a typical day like in your job?		

4. Role-play: A job interview

A: Prospective employee/job candidate/applicant

You have been referred to a very good nationally-recognised company by your friend. You have heard many good things about the company, but you don't know any details about the actual job itself. Make sure you ask questions to find out more about the following areas:

- main responsibilities
- work hours
- salary and benefits
- holidays

B: Employer

Choose one of the jobs below without telling your partner.

secretary
manager
journalist
photographer
factory worker
tour guide
accountant
computer programmer
teacher

Prepare a list of questions to find out detailed information about the candidate in the following areas:

- present job
- reason for leaving current job
- previous work experience
- education background
- salary expectations
- interests and hobbies
- health

5. Discussion: Look at the following items and choose the three most important and the three least important characteristics for you. After ranking them on your own, discuss your choices with your partner.

a good boss
a well-known company
being responsible
comfortable working conditions
cooperative colleagues
flexible hours
fringe benefits
good pay
interesting work
job security
making decisions
opportunities to advance
opportunities to travel
regular routine
solving problems

Talking about Studies and Schools

1. Talking about Studies 04.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- What do you major in?
- What subject do you study?
- Why did you choose this subject?
- What do you find most difficult in your studies?
- What do you find most interesting in your studies?
- What would you like to do after graduation?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; **L:** Li Chen

(Wang Xiao and Li Chen meet each other unexpectedly on the bus.)

W: Hello again, Li Chen! I'm glad to see you again! Funny that we should meet on the bus! I've been thinking a lot about what we talked about the last time we met. And, I have a few more questions for you.

L: Hi, Wang Xiao! What do you want to know? I'm all ears.

W: Well, you said that you're working as a bookkeeper right now. But when you were in university, *what did you major in?* Did you study Accounting?

L: Actually, no. That's the funny thing. I studied English and International Trade. So, I did take a course in Accounting, but it wasn't at all the major focus of my studies.

W: I don't quite understand then how you ended up in your current job.

L: It's a long story. I'll tell you about it another time. *What was your major?*

W: I majored in Business Management. My programme covered all aspects of business, so I took Accounting as well. Let's see, there were also Marketing, Finance, Business English, Tax, and Law courses too. I've forgotten quite a lot of the courses we took, but I really enjoyed my major overall.

L: You're really lucky to have chosen the right major for you! My roommate in college really hated studying English and International Trade.

W: *What did he find most difficult about English and International Trade?*

L: To tell you the truth, he just hated studying English. He was so shy, and he barely spoke a word during English class. Anyway, I think it was hard to choose a major when we were just in high school, and I know some people who really ended up in the wrong programme.

W: Did your friend graduate?

L: Yes, eventually. He was put back a year because he didn't pass enough courses, but he managed to fulfil all the requirements, and graduated a year after I did.

W: *What were his plans after graduation?*

L: He wanted to get a job, but felt he deserved a vacation first. So, he planned a big trip to Kunming and Lijiang. Then, he found a job working in an office, which he actually enjoyed, for a change. Last I heard, he was still in the same job.

W: *What did you find interesting in your studies? Accounting?*

L: No, Accounting was just so-so. I really liked Marketing the best. It's so exciting just trying to think of how to draw customers to use your product. If only I could find a job in marketing. Well, I'm still looking for another job, you know.

W: Hang in there! You'll find a good job one of these days.

L: I really hope so! Thanks for the encouragement! Hey, this is my stop! I'd better get off here.

W: It was really great to see you again! Take care!

L: You too! Bye!

Useful Words and Expressions

arts /ɑ:ts/ *n* [plural] subjects that are not scientific subjects

brush up on sth *phr v* to improve one's knowledge of something already learned but partly forgotten

certificate /sə'tɪf.ɪ.kət/ *n* [C] an official document which states that the information on it is true

competitive /kəm'pet.ɪ.tɪv/ *adj* always trying to be more successful than other people

curriculum /kə'ɪk.jʊ.ləm/ *n* [C] (plural **curricula** or **curriculums**) the group of subjects studied in a school, college, etc.

degree /di'ɡri:/ *n* [C] the qualification given to a student who has done a course at university

diligent /'dɪ.lɪ.dʒənt/ *adj* (approving) careful and using a lot of effort

diploma /dɪ'pləʊ.mə/ *n* [C] a document given by a college to show that a student has passed a particular examination

distance learning /'dɪs.tənts ˌlɜ:.nɪŋ/ *n* [U] a way of studying, especially for a degree, where a student studies mostly at home, receiving and sending off work by post

dropout /'drɒp.aʊt/ *n* [C] a person who leaves school, college or university before finishing a course

extracurricular /,ek.strə.kə'ɪk.jʊ.lər/ *adj* (an activity or subject) that is not part of the usual school or college course

finals /'faɪ.nəlz/ *n* [plural] (UK) the examinations taken at the end of a university or college course

grade /ɡreɪd/ *n* [C] a level of quality

headmaster /,hed'mɑ:stər/ *n* [C] (mainly UK) a male headteacher

major /'meɪ.dʒər/ *v*

major in sth *phr v* (US) to study something as a main subject at university

midterm /'mɪd.tɜ:m/ *n* [C] (US) an exam happening in the middle part of a university or school term

perseverance /pɜː.sɪ'vɪə.rənts/ *n* [U] (mainly approving) continued effort and determination

qualification /kwoʊ.lɪ'fɪ.keɪ.ʃn/ *n* [C] a degree or a diploma showing that a student has finished a training course

qualify /'kwɒl.ɪ.fai/ *v* [I or T] to successfully finish a training course so that somebody is able to do a job

quit /kwɪt/ *v* [I or T] (**quitting, quit, quit**) to stop doing something or leave a job or a place

(school) **uniform** /'juː.nɪ.fɔ:m/ *n* [C or U] the special clothes that everybody in the same job, school, etc. wears

science /'saɪənts/ *n* [C or U] a particular subject that is studied using scientific methods

skip /skɪp/ *v* (classes) to avoid going to school

smart /smɑ:t/ *adj* intelligent or clever

thesis /'θiː.sɪs/ *n* [C] (plural **theses** /'θiː.sɪz/) a long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one that is done for a higher college or university degree

Useful Sentence Structures

I studied at (school/college/university) and majored in (subject/area).

I studied at Sydney University and majored in English Language Teaching Methodology.

The best thing about being a student was (gerund phrase/noun).

The best thing about being a student was having a lot of free time.

I will be qualified for/in (gerund phrase/noun) when (clause of time).

I will be qualified for teaching in elementary schools when I get the certificate.

I will be qualified in accounting next year.

I am licensed/certified as a(n) (job).

I am licensed as a corporate lawyer.

For a(n) (certificate/degree), one needs to (infinitive phrase).

For a diploma, one needs to study a minimum of 18 courses and complete 80 credits altogether.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about studies.

1. studied/a small university near Melbourne/majored in Business

2. I am certified/chartered accountant

3. best thing/being a student/making friends with people from all around the country

4. for a degree in Engineering / one needs / take courses in Calculus, Physics, and Maths each year
5. I will be qualified/working as a tour guide/when I complete my last exam in August
6. I studied/the same university my father taught in/majored in Computer
7. best thing/being a student/learning to live on your own
8. I will be qualified/banking and finances/when I graduate next year
9. I am licensed/professional engineer
10. for a certificate in Business English/one needs/study a minimum of 3 years and pass 2 exams each year

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: Hi, Brian! You look so busy! What are you studying?

B: Well, you know, I'm in my last year of high school now. I'm so busy preparing for the university entrance exams in June.

A: Wow! I remember when I took those exams. They were really tough. It took up all my time, just preparing for them.

B: That's exactly how I feel. There's so much to study and so little time.

A: Well, don't give up. Keep it up.

B: What did you study in university?

A: I majored in

B: What kind of courses did you take for that major?

A:

B: That sounds interesting. Why did you choose that major?

A: When I was in high school, I always liked

So, I decided to major in

B: What would you say was the most interesting course you studied in university?

A: That would definitely be
because

B: Is it really true that college life is much freer than middle school life? I mean, if college life is the same as this, I don't think I'm going to make it through all those years of intense studying.

A: College life is

B: Was there anything you disliked about college?

A: Well, yes. One thing I really disliked was

B: And what would you say was the best thing about being a college student?

A: For me, the best thing was

B: Well, college certainly does sound like something to look forward to. I'd better keep on studying if I'm ever going to make it into college. Thanks for the encouragement. I really appreciate it.

A: No problem at all. All the best to you! Study hard!

3. Think back to your high school or university studies. Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with your personal information.

1. Some of the courses I studied in high school were

2. My favourite course was _____ because _____

3. My least favourite course was _____ because _____

4. From the _____ years I spent in high school, I would say that my favourite year was _____ because _____

5. The teacher that influenced me the most in high school was
because

6. My major in university was

7. I chose this major because

8. When I was in university, I participated in

9. One thing I miss about being a university student is

10. The professor that I respected the most was
because

4. Interview for a postgraduate programme: Imagine that you are attending an interview to enter a postgraduate programme (master's degree or doctorate degree).

A: Applicant

Choose an area to major in.

B: Interviewer

Ask questions in the following areas:

- Bachelor's degree / major
- Master's degree / major
- Universities attended
- Interest level in major
- Career plans

5. Discuss the following questions.

1. How does having a university degree help one to have a successful future?
2. What is one thing you think should be changed about university education in Vietnam?
Why?
3. How can universities better help their graduates to find suitable jobs?
4. What are some reasons why students choose the wrong major?

2. Talking about Schools 05.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- Which middle school did you study in?
- Was it close to your home? How did you get to school every day?
- What did you like the best about that school?
- Is there anything you didn't like about your school?
- If you were the president of the school, what changes would you like to make?
- What did you think of the teachers there?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; L: Li Chen

(Wang Xiao and Li Chen meet in a restaurant.)

L: Hey, Wang Xiao, over here!

W: Hi there, Li Chen! Nice restaurant you've chosen!

L: I come here all the time! I'm one of their regulars! The food's good and the price is right!

W: Sounds good to me! Hey, look at those middle school kids over there. I bet that's the first time they're going out to eat in a restaurant all by themselves!

L: Remember when you were a middle school student and you dreamed about changing the world? I had so many big plans back then.

W: Me too! I loved middle school! The best years of my life! Except for the last two years when we really had to buckle down and study hard. Hey, *if you were the president of your middle school, what changes would you like to make?*

L: That's easy! First of all, I'd change the classes to start later in the morning, and then I'd eliminate classes on weekends. I'd make sure there were plenty of clubs and activities for students to join, and I'd set aside one afternoon a week for students to just do activities.

W: You're dreaming! But it sounds great to me!

L: Well, *what did you like best about middle school*, if you can remember that far back?

W: I loved the camaraderie of being with my friends all day and having teachers who knew me and cared about me. I don't know. College life and the working world are really different. People have their own opinions, and it seems that they just aren't willing to agree on even the smallest things. It wasn't like that in middle school.

L: *What middle school did you study in?*

W: You've probably never heard of it. It's not famous at all, but I still loved it. Middle School Number 72, just a couple of blocks from my parents' apartment. I used to bike to school during good weather. When I was really young, my grandmother used to take me to school in a little cart. I had so much fun back then!

L: My parents never let me ride a bike to school. I suppose it was because my middle school was just down the street from our home. I was probably the only middle school student who didn't even own a bike. It wasn't until my last year of middle school that I finally persuaded my parents to buy me one.

W: That must have been embarrassing!

L: Yeah, it was, a little. I think my parents were a bit on the overprotective side. I just remember all the students and teachers staring at me when I first rode my bike to school! They looked like they were in shock!

W: *What did you think of your middle school teachers?*

L: For the most part, they were really good. Conscientious, sincere, and knowledgeable. There was one teacher that everyone avoided like crazy. Unfortunately, I had her as my History teacher, and she made my life miserable. Well, actually, I probably made her life miserable, too.

W: That's why you didn't major in History when you got to college!

L: You got it! Now that I think back, I'm amazed at how much a teacher can influence students. If a teacher can inspire a student, the student might end up majoring in their field. But, if a teacher doesn't believe in a student's ability, and then treats that student badly, the student will likely not ever enjoy that subject again.

W: You're absolutely right. And you know what? We should really pay our teachers better, since they are the ones who are influencing the next generation! Hey, the food's here! Let's eat!

L: Smells great! Let's dig in!

Useful Words and Expressions

conscientious /ˌkɒn.tʃɪ'ent.ʃəs/ *adj* putting a lot of effort into work

cycle /'saɪ.kl/ *v* [I] to ride a bicycle

elementary school /,el.i'men.tər.i, sku:l/ *n* [C] (UK old-fashioned or US) a school which provides the first part of a child's education, usually for children between about 6 and 12 years old

facilities /fə'sɪl.i.tiz/ *n* [plural] the buildings, equipment and services provided for a particular purpose

far /fɑ:r/ *adv* (farther, farthest or further, furthest) at, to or from a great distance in space or time

high school /'haɪ, sku:l/ *n* [C] (informal **high**) a school in the US for children aged from 14 to 18, or from 12 to 18 if there is also a junior high school; a school in Britain for children aged from 11 to 18

kindergarten /'kɪn.də.gɑ:.tən/ *n* [C or U] (mainly US) the first year of school, for children aged 5

language laboratory /'læŋ.gwɪdʒ læ,bɒr.ə.tri/ *n* [C] (also **language lab**) a room in a school or college in which students can use equipment to help them practise listening to and speaking a foreign language

middle school /'mɪd.l̩ ,sku:l/ *n* [C] (in parts of the UK and the US) a school for children between the ages of about 11 and 14; (in Britain) a school for children between the ages of about 9 and 13

nursery school /'nɜː.sə.rɪ ,sku:l/ *n* [C] (US preschool) a school for children between the ages of 2 and 5

patient /'peɪ.ʃənt/ *adj* having patience

preschool /'priː.sku:l/ *n* [C or U] a school for children who are younger than 6 years old

primary /'praɪ.mə.ri/ *adj* [before noun] (UK and Australian English) of or for the teaching of young children, especially those between 6 and 12 years old

secondary /'sek.ən.dri/ *adj* [before noun] relating to the education of children approximately between the ages of 11 and 16 or 18

sense of responsibility /'sents əv rɪ'spɒnt.sɪ'brɪ.lɪ.ti/ *n* [U] having good judgment on something that is somebody's duty to deal with

strict /strikt/ *adj* having definite rules that somebody expects people to obey completely

tube /tjuːb/ *n* train

the tube (often **the Tube**) (UK informal) London's underground train system

station /'steɪ.ʃən/ *n* [C] a building and the surrounding area where buses or trains stop for people to get on or off

station is used for trains

stop or **bus stop** is used for buses

a bus station is a place where many buses start or end their journeys

university entrance exam /juː.nɪ'vɜː.sɪ.ti 'en.trənts ɪg,zæm/ *n* [C] an examination which a student takes to be accepted into a university

Useful Sentence Structures

When I was (age/in + name of school), I used to (infinitive phrase).

When I was in middle school, I used to study until 10 p.m. every night.

My favourite teacher in (school/college/university) was my (school subject) teacher, Mr./Mrs. (surname).

My favourite teacher in university was my History teacher, Mr. Howard.

I really liked Mr./Mrs. (surname) because (clause of reason).

I really liked Mrs. Ursula Nixon because she was very kind to us.

My (school/college/university) years were (adjective).

My high school years were very busy.

I spent a lot of time (gerund phrase).

I spent a lot of time studying for exams.

(subject/major) was my (least) favourite subject.

Maths was my least favourite subject.

My school is/was located (prepositional phrase/location).

My school is located right behind my house.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about schools.

1. when I was/senior middle school/used to/hate Mathematics class
2. my favourite teacher/high school/my Chemistry teacher/Mr. Turner
3. I really liked/Mr. Turner/he made classes interesting
4. my elementary school years/very carefree
5. I spent a lot of time/doing homework and helping my classmates with their questions
6. Physics/least favourite subject
7. my school/located/two blocks away from my parents' house
8. my high school years/especially the last year/very difficult and busy
9. when I was/late for class/used to/get a stern warning from my teacher
10. favourite teacher/elementary school/second grade teacher/Mr. Ross

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: Can you tell me something about your years in school? I'm interested in learning what people think about their years as students.

B: Sure, no problem. What do you want to know?

A: Well, first of all, when did you start attending school?

B: When I was _____ years old, I began attending _____.

A: What are some of your happiest memories about your early years in school?

B: I remember

A: Where did you go to elementary school? Where was it located?

B: My elementary school was

A: Tell me about one of your elementary teachers. Do you still remember them?

B: Of course! There was one teacher named

A: That's interesting! How about your middle school teachers? What were they like?

B: Most of the middle school teachers were

A: What was your favourite subject in middle school?

B: My favourite subject was _____ because

A: What kinds of activities did you do after school?

B: When I was in middle school, I used to

A: Did you continue doing the same activities when you got to high school?

B:

A: What did you spend most of your time on when you were in high school?

B: I remember that I spent a lot of time

A: I have heard that high school students have very little time to enjoy life. They have to study so hard to prepare for the university entrance exam.

B: That's right. My high school years were

A: Thanks for taking the time to answer all my questions.

B: You're welcome.

3. Think back to your years of schooling. Complete the following table with descriptive words and describe the schools you have attended.

	Preschool (under 6)	Elementary school (age 6-12)	Middle school (age 12-14)	High school (age 14-18)
School name				
Location				
Number of hours per day				
Number of hours per week				
Number of hours per day of homework and study				
Method of transportation				
Favourite teacher				
Favourite activities				

4. **Pair Work:** Look at the list below of possible goals of education. Read each statement and indicate whether you think the goal is very important, important or not important. Explain your reasons.

	Very important	Important	Not important
Teaching knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing one's personality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching how to think	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching about right and wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching how to get along with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping to get a good job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making parents happy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping one out of trouble	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Read the following questions and think about your feelings and opinions. Then, talk about your ideas with your partner.

1. Do Vietnam's schools do a good job of preparing students for future careers? For life?
2. How can Vietnam's education system become more accessible to the poor?
3. What can be done to encourage more university graduates to teach in Vietnam's elementary and middle schools, especially in rural areas?
4. How can teachers/schools and parents work together to improve their children's education?
5. Think of one thing you disliked about your elementary and middle school years. Brain-storm ways to solve the problems you have identified.

Talking about Holidays/Festivals and Travels

1. Talking about Holidays/Festivals 06.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- What are the special days celebrated in your country?
- Which is your favourite and why?
- What do you think is the most important festival in your country?
- In what way do people celebrate the festival?
- Do people prepare any special food for the occasion?
- Which do people prefer, to spend it with family or with friends?
- How did people celebrate the festival in the past?
- How has the way been changed and why?
- Do you think that it is important to have festivals?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; **L:** Li Chen; **R:** Frank Roberts

(Wang Xiao introduces Li Chen to a foreign friend, Frank Roberts.)

- W:** Hi, Li Chen! I'd like you to meet my friend, Frank Roberts. He's from Canada, and he's visiting Beijing for a few days.
- L:** Hi, Mr. Roberts. Nice to meet you.
- R:** Please call me Frank. It's nice to meet you, too. What was your name again?
- L:** Li Chen. Li is my family name and Chen is my given name.
- R:** Wang Xiao has told me a lot about you. It's nice to finally meet you in person!
- L:** Same here! Say, how do you know Wang Xiao?
- R:** We do some import-export trade together. I am a purchaser for a large Canadian department store, and we buy quite a few goods from Wang Xiao's company.
- W:** They're one of our biggest customers in Canada! Anyway, I've invited Frank to come to Beijing many times, and now he's finally been able to find time in his busy schedule! Hey, Li Chen, what do you think we should do for lunch? It's almost lunch time.
- L:** Why don't we go to the dumpling restaurant around the corner? It's delicious, cheap, and fast! And, we can also introduce Frank to some of our favourite Chinese foods!
- R:** Sounds good to me!
- W:** Okay, let's go.

L: You know, Frank, dumplings are also very special, too. During the Spring Festival, most Chinese families will make dumplings.

R: *What's the Spring Festival?*

L: That's probably the most important festival in our country. Some people call it the Chinese New Year. It's a celebration marking the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year, according to the lunar calendar.

W: It's usually held sometime between mid January to mid February, depending on the lunar calendar.

R: So, in addition to dumplings, *what else is special about the Chinese New Year?*

W: Most people clean their houses from top to bottom, put decorations, usually red ones, on their doors and in the homes, and eat a lot of good foods.

L: During the Chinese New Year, it's also important to be with your family and friends, so many people will travel to their parents' home, even if they live very far away.

W: Yes, and they also pay a lot of visits to their close friends.

R: It sounds a lot like Christmas! We decorate our homes with Christmas trees, stockings, and coloured lights. We eat a lot of good food, and most people spend Christmas time with their families or good friends. Oh, and we also buy Christmas presents for each other.

L: Chinese families will give red envelopes, or "hong bao", to their children or friends' children. The red envelopes contain money, so it's like giving a present to the children. Also, people buy new clothes and shoes to wear for the New Year, so it's also another kind of a present. Many people also light firecrackers and fireworks to celebrate!

R: Wow! Spring Festival sounds really great! Whoever thought of the idea, sure had a good one!

W: Hmm, *how long has China been celebrating the Spring Festival?*

L: It must be for at least a few centuries.

R: *What was it like in the earlier days? Is it celebrated in a similar way these days?*

W: There are many similarities still, but over time, some traditions have disappeared. I think that dumplings have always been a big part of the Spring Festival.

L: As well as giving money to children and buying new clothes.

W: And also things like decorating one's home and going back to your parents' home. All of these things have been around for a long time.

R: So, *have there been any changes at all?*

L: Well, nowadays, firecrackers are illegal in most of the cities. So this tradition has changed. And, people don't have as much time to stay at home as before, usually because they are too busy with their work.

W: Some people even prefer to take a holiday instead of going back to their parents' home to spend the Spring Festival. And, for some rich families, buying new clothes for the New Year isn't very exciting, because they buy new clothes all year round.

R: But many of the main traditions are still kept, right?

L: Yes, for the majority of Chinese families, they still follow the traditions.

W: Hey, our dumplings are here! Let's eat! I'm starved!

R: They smell great! But how can we eat so many of them?

L: You'd be surprised at how many we can eat!

Useful Words and Expressions

Important Chinese Traditional Festivals

the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) (the 1st day of the 1st lunar month)

the Dragon Boat Festival (the 5th day of the 5th lunar month)

the Double Ninth Festival (the 9th day of the 9th lunar month)

the Mid-Autumn Festival (the 15th day of the 8th lunar month)

the Lantern Festival (the 15th day of the 1st lunar month)

a sign of good luck *exp* something showing that good things might happen by chance

sign /saɪn/ *n* [C] something that tells you that something may happen in the future

luck /lʌk/ *n* [U] things that happen to you that you cannot control

(as a) symbol (of) /'sɪm.bəl/ *n* [C] a sign, shape or object which is used to represent something else

ban /bæn/ *v* [T, usually passive] (-nn-) to forbid

behave oneself /bɪ'heɪv ,wʌn'self/ *v* [I or T] to be good by acting in a way which has society's approval

celebrate /'sel.i.breɪt/ *v* [I or T] to do something enjoyable in order to show that an occasion or event is special

chat /tʃæt/ *v* [I] (-tt-) to talk to someone in a friendly informal way

Chinese character /,tʃaɪ.'ni:z 'kæɪ.ɪk.tər/ *n* [C] the system of writing of China

cultural /'kʌl.tʃər.əl/ *adj* relating to the habits, traditions and beliefs of a society

date back to *phr v* to have existed for a particular length of time or since a particular time in the past

decorate /'dek.ə.reɪt/ *v* (with) [T] to add something to an object or place, especially in order to make it more attractive

delicious /dɪ'lɪ.əs/ *adj* having a very pleasant taste or smell

dress /dres/ *v* [I + adv/prep] to wear a particular type of clothes

exchange gifts *exp*

exchange /ɪks'tʃeɪndʒ/ *v* [T] to give something to someone and receive something from them
gift /gɪft/ *n* [C] a present

(family) reunion /,ri:'ju:.ni.ən/ *n* [C] a social event for a group of people who have not seen each other for a long time

favourite dish *n* [C]

favourite (UK) (US favorite) /'feɪ.vər.ɪt/ *adj* [before noun] best liked or most enjoyed

dish /dɪʃ/ *n* [C] food prepared in a particular way as part of a meal

firecracker /'faɪə,kræk.ər/ *n* [C] a firework that makes a loud noise when it explodes

firework /'faɪə.wɜ:k/ *n* [C] a small container filled with explosive chemicals which produce bright coloured patterns or loud noises when they explode

full moon /'fʊl 'mu:n/ *n* [sing] the moon when it is shaped like a complete disc

lunar calendar *n* [C]

lunar /'lu:.nər/ *adj* of or relating to the moon

calendar /'kæl.m.dər/ *n* [C] a printed table showing all the days, weeks and months of the year

minority /maɪ'nɔr.i.ti/ *n* [C] any small group in society that is different from the rest because of their race, religion or political beliefs

moon cake /'mu:n ,keɪk/ *n* [C] a typical sweet food in mid-autumn festivals in China or Vietnam

round /raʊnd/ *adj* shaped like a ball or circle, or curved

shape /ʃeɪp/ *n* [C or U] the particular physical form or appearance of something

share the joy with sb *exp*

share /ʃeər/ *v* [I or T] to tell someone else about your feelings, thoughts, ideas, etc.

joy /dʒɔɪ/ *n* [U] great happiness

smoked meat *n* [U]

smoke /smʊk/ *v* [T] to preserve meat, fish or cheese using smoke from burning wood

meat /mi:t/ *n* [U] the flesh of an animal when it is used for food

social custom *n* [C or U]

social /'səʊ.ʃəl/ *adj* [before noun] relating to society and living together in an organised way

custom /'kʌs.təm/ *n* [C or U] a way of behaving or a belief which has been established for a long time

special costume *n* [C]

special /'speʃ.əl/ *adj* particularly great or important

costume /'kɒs.tju:m/ *n* [C or U] the set of clothes typical of a particular country or period of history

symbolize (UK usually **symbolise**) /'sɪm.bəl.aɪz/ *v* [T] to represent something

table manners /'teɪ.bəl ,mæn.ənz/ *n* [plural] the way people eat food, or the socially acceptable way to eat food, especially when eating a meal with others

traditionally /trə'dɪʃ.ən.əl.i/ *adv* according to tradition; in a traditional way

performance /pə'fɔ:.mənts/ *n* [C] the action of entertaining other people by dancing, singing, acting or playing music

wrap /ræp/ *v* [T] (-pp-) to cover or surround something with paper, cloth or other material

wrapping /'ræp.ɪŋ/ *n* [C or U] paper or plastic which covers or protects something

Useful Sentence Structures

During (noun phrase), most Vietnamese families (verb phrase).

During the Mid-Autumn Festival, most Vietnamese families eat moon cakes.

(noun phrase) is a very important holiday because (clause of reason).

The Spring Festival is a very important holiday because it's usually the only time the whole family can get together.

What I enjoy the most about (noun phrase) is (noun/gerund phrase).

What I enjoy the most about the Spring Festival is being together with my family.

The tradition of (gerund phrase / event / festival) comes from the ancient times when (clause of time).

The tradition of setting off firecrackers comes from the ancient times when village people wanted to scare away the evil spirits.

Special food like (noun / particular food / drink) is served (time phrase).

Special food like square cakes is served on the New Year's Eve.

People used to (infinitive phrase) to celebrate (noun phrase).

People used to set off firecrackers at midnight to celebrate the New Year.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about holidays and festivals.

1. during the Spring Festival / most Vietnamese families gather (get together) to eat, drink, and entertain themselves

2. Spring Festival is a very important holiday / it's the start of a new year and the Vietnamese feel that having a good start is essential to having a good year

3. what I enjoy the most about the Spring Festival / seeing my cousins again

4. the tradition / having many red things during the Spring Festival / ancient times when people believed that evil spirits were afraid of the colour red

5. special food / square cakes (glutinous rice cakes) / served during the Spring Festival

6. people used to / serve a very expensive meal / celebrate the Spring Festival

7. during / the Spring Festival / most Vietnamese families / eat square cakes, a kind of glutinous rice cake wrapped in banana leaves / in order to honour our ancestor King Hung, who himself made them to present to his respected father

8. what I enjoy the most about the Spring Festival / seeing the beautiful flower displays in the city centre

9. Liberation Day/a very important holiday/Vietnamese people generally celebrate the unification of the nation

10. people used to/eat moon cakes under the full moon/celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: I can't believe our exams are almost over.

B: Yes! We'll soon be heading home to spend the winter holidays with our families.

A: I suppose this is true for almost everyone, but I just love the Spring Festival.

B: I think it's similar to Christmas in Western countries. Don't you think so?

A: Yes, in many ways it is very similar. Yesterday, my friend from Canada was asking me questions about the Spring Festival.

B: What did he want to know?

A: He asked me what people do during the Spring Festival, so I told him that most Vietnamese families

B: In my family, we celebrate the Spring Festival a bit differently. We

A: Yes, I did tell my friend that there were some differences in tradition depending on where you were, and also depending on each family. Then, he wanted to know where the traditions came from. For example, why we clean our homes before the new year, and set off firecrackers on New Year's Day.

B: So, you told him that the tradition of cleaning our homes came from the ancient times when

firecrackers came from _____, and the tradition of lighting

A: Yes, I told him the history of those traditions. He also asked me what I liked the most about the Spring Festival. So, I said that I enjoy

What about you? What do you enjoy most about the Spring Festival?

B: For me, the best part about the Spring Festival is

A: Oh yes, I enjoy that, too. Actually, there are so many fun things about the Spring Festival that it's hard to choose just one. The last question my friend asked was about why the Spring Festival was so important in Vietnam.

B: Did you tell him that it was because

A: Yes, and also because

B: Well, I'm excited to go home and celebrate the Spring Festival. Hope you have a good holiday! I'll see you next semester!

A: Thanks. Take care!

3. Use descriptive words and phrases to complete the chart below. Try to use as many different words as you can, and then, talk about how you spend the Spring Festival. Compare between the Spring Festival and Christmas.

	Spring Festival	Christmas
Date of holiday		Christmas is always held on December 25 th . Students usually get two weeks' holiday during Christmas and the New Year.
Importance		It is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus, to give presents to family and friends, and to spend time with loved ones.
Food		Most families eat a big Christmas dinner. Children love to eat Christmas cookies and candy canes, too. Everyone usually eats a lot!
Family and friends		Many families spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day together. Close friends buy gifts for each other. Acquaintances give Christmas cards to each other.
Favourite memories		My favourite memories of Christmas are spending time with my family and friends, and opening Christmas presents as a child.

	Spring Festival	Christmas
Old traditions		A long time ago, people would go around their neighbourhood and sing Christmas carols. Now, people don't have time to do that any more.
New traditions		Some people send Christmas cards using the Internet, instead of writing them out by hand. That's the only new tradition I can think of.

4. Discussion: Nowadays, people tend to spend their Spring Festival in one of the following three ways:

- staying at home with family
- going out to spend time with friends
- taking a trip or a holiday

Think about the following questions and explain the reasons:

1. Which way do you generally prefer to spend your Spring Festival?
2. Which way is best?
3. Does how people spend the Spring Festival have any relation to their age? Education level? Income?

2. Talking about Travels 07.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

Do you like travelling?

How often do you travel and why?

When do you usually travel?

What kind of places are you more interested in and why?

What places have you enjoyed visiting and why?

What do you normally do when you are in a new place?

Which do you prefer: travelling by yourself or with friends, and why?

What does travelling mean to you?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; **L:** Li Chen

(Li Chen is waiting for Wang Xiao. They plan to visit a bookstore and spend some time together.)

L: What time is it? Why is Wang Xiao taking so long to get here?

- W: Li Chen! Sorry I'm so late. I lost track of time and then I got stuck in traffic. Thanks for waiting.
- L: I was just beginning to wonder if you would show up. Anyway, now that you're here, I can stop wondering.
- W: I'm really sorry.
- L: It's alright. Forget about it! Hey, where was that bookstore you wanted to show me?
- W: Follow me! It's just around the corner. I want to look at the travel books, if you don't mind. I'm planning a holiday, but I haven't exactly decided where to go. Any suggestions?
- L: *What kinds of places have you been to already?*
- W: I've almost been to all of the famous mountains in China, except for Emei Shan, and of course Mount Everest. You know me. I much prefer climbing a mountain to seeing historic sites. What about you? *Do you like travelling?*
- L: Well, it depends. I've had some really bad experiences, so I'm really cautious about travelling. On my last trip, I went to Guilin, and it rained the whole time.
- W: That's too bad. *When do you usually travel?* You've got to remember to try and avoid the rainy season, especially in the south of China.
- L: Yeah, I think that was the problem. Maybe that's why the holiday was advertised at such a low price! I'm not really planning another trip in the near future. I still need to recover from the last one! *How often do you travel?*
- W: I try to go somewhere new at least once a year. It depends on my finances and my time, of course. And, it's really hard to get tickets during the government holidays, but those are the only times I can travel. Anyway, I've been fortunate so far.
- L: Besides the mountain climbing, *what places have you enjoyed visiting the most?*
- W: I loved Inner Mongolia and the Three Gorges. China has an amazing range of geographical features, not to mention local cultures, dialects and foods. I just love soaking in the local culture!
- L: Do you always get this excited about going to somewhere new? *What do you normally do when you're in a new place?*
- W: First of all, I walk along the streets and poke my nose into different markets and busy places. Then, I buy a few fruits and try some of the local specialty foods. And, if I'm lucky, I'll start a conversation with some of the vendors to try to find out what are the best places to go and visit during my time there. You can get a lot of information that way! And then finally, I will go back to my hotel room and start planning my itinerary.
- L: *Do you usually travel by yourself or with friends?*
- W: I prefer to travel alone, or just with one friend. I really dislike going on package tours. You miss out on so much by being in a tour group. Look, here's a book on Emei Shan. Maybe I should go there next. Do you want to come along?

L: No offence, but count me out! I am beginning to realise that I'm much more of a homebody than I thought I was.

Useful Words and Expressions

accommodation /ə,kəm.ə'dei.ʃən/ *n* [U] (mainly UK) a place to live, work, or stay in

admission ticket *n* [C]

admission /əd'mɪʃ.ən/ *n* [C or U] permission to enter a place

ticket /'tɪk.ɪt/ *n* [C] a piece of paper that shows somebody has paid to travel or to go into a cinema, theatre, etc.

book /bʊk/ *v* [I or T] to arrange to have a seat, room, performer, etc. at a particular time in the future

business trip /'bɪz.nɪs ,trɪp/ *n* a travel/journey caused by business necessities

business /'bɪz.nɪs/ *n* the work that you do as your job

trip /trɪp/ *n* a journey to a place and back again

check in /'tʃek ɪn/ *phr v* to show tickets at an airport so that you can be told where you will be sitting and so that your bags can be put on the aircraft

check in/check into sth *phr v* to say who you are when you arrive at a hotel so that you can be given a key for your room

commercialized (disapproving), (UK usually commercialised) /kə'mɜːʃəl.aɪzɪd/ *adj*

commercialize, (UK usually commercialise) /kə'mɜːʃəl.aɪz/ *v* [T, usually passive] to organise something to make a profit

departure /dɪ'pɑː.tʃər/ *n* [C or U] when a person or vehicle, etc. leaves somewhere

departure time *n* the time at which a public conveyance is scheduled to depart from a given point of origin

discount /'dɪs.kɑʊnt/ *n* [C] a reduction in the usual price

ecological tour *n* [C]

ecological /,i:kə'lɒdʒɪ.kəl/ *adj* relating to ecology or the environment

tour /tʊər/ *n* [C] a visit to a place or area
ecotourism /'i:kəʊ,tʊə.rɪ.zəm/ *n* [U] the business of organising holidays to places that people do not usually visit in a way which helps local people and does not damage the environment

go hiking /,gəʊ 'haɪ.kɪŋ/ *exp* to go for long walks in the countryside

group leader /'gru:p ,liː.dər/ *n* [C] a person in control of a group, country or situation

in peak season *exp* at the time of year when many people want to travel or have a holiday

peak /pi:k/ *adj* [before noun] when something is highest, biggest

season /'siː.zən/ *n* [C] one of the four parts of a year

journey /'dʒɜː.ni/ *n* [C] the act of travelling from one place to another

jungle /'dʒʌŋ.ɡl/ *n* [C or U] a tropical forest in which trees and plants grow very closely together

local restaurant *n* [C]

local /'ləʊ.kəl/ *adj* from a small area, especially of a country

restaurant /'res.trɒnt/ *n* [C] a place where meals are prepared and served to customers

luxury hotel *n* [C]

luxury /'lʌk.jər.i/ *n* [U] great comfort, especially as provided by expensive and beautiful things

hotel /həʊ'tel/ *n* [C] a building where somebody pays to have a room to sleep in

miracle /'mɪr.ɪ.kl/ *n* [C] an unusual and mysterious event or any very surprising and unexpected event

motorway /'məʊ.tə.weɪ/ *n* [C] (UK) (US **freeway**) a wide road built for fast moving traffic travelling long distances

natural beauty/wonder *n*

natural /'nætʃ.ər.əl/ *adj* found in nature and not involving anything made or done by people

beauty /'bju:ti/ *n* [C or U] the quality of being pleasing, or someone or something that gives great pleasure

wonder /'wʌn.dər/ *n* [C, usually plural] an object that causes a feeling of great surprise and admiration

package tour /'pæk.idʒ ,tʊər/ *n* [C] (UK also **package holiday**, Australian also **holiday package**) a holiday at a fixed price in which the travel company arranges travel, hotels and sometimes meals for tourists

packed /pækt/ *adj* (with) completely full

tourist /'tʊə.rɪst/ *n* [C] someone who visits a place for pleasure and interest

punctual /'pʌŋk.tju.əl/ *adj* not late

remote /rɪ'məʊt/ *adj* distant, far away

reservation /,rez.ə'veɪ.jən/ *n* [C or U] an arrangement for a seat on an aircraft or a table at a restaurant kept for you

scenic spot *n* [C]

scenic /'si:.nɪk/ *adj* (natural sights) beautiful
spot /spɒt/ *n* [C] a particular place

sightseeing /'saɪt.si:.ɪŋ/ *n* [U] the visiting of interesting places, especially by people on holiday

spoil the (good) mood *exp*

spoil /spɔɪl/ *v* [T] (spoiled, spoiled or spoilt, spoilt) to destroy

mood /mu:d/ *n* [C] the way somebody feels at a particular time

summer resort/vacation *n* [C]

summer /'sʌm.ər/ *n* [C or U] the season of the year between spring and autumn

resort /rɪ'zɔ:t/ *n* [C] a place where many people go for rest

vacation /veɪ'keɪ.jən/ *n* [C or U] (US) a holiday

sunbathe /'sʌn.beɪð/ *v* [I] to sit or lie in the sun in order to make skin darker

tour guide /'tʊə ,gaɪd/ *n* [C] a person whose job is to show tourists around a place and explain its history, architecture, etc.

travel agency /'træv.əl ,eɪ.dʒənt.si/ *n* [C] a company or shop that makes travel arrangements for people

Useful Sentence Structures

I enjoy/dislike travelling because (clause of reason).

I dislike travelling because I usually get sick.

The best thing about travelling is (noun/gerund phrase).

The best thing about travelling is learning new things.

My favourite thing to do when I go on a trip is (to-infinitive phrase).

My favourite thing to do when I go on a trip is to visit the local market.

One thing I enjoy/dislike about travelling is (noun/gerund phrase).

One thing I enjoy about travelling is meeting new people and making new friends.

The places I am always attracted to are those that are (adjectives).

The places I am always attracted to are those that are natural, like beaches, forests, and mountains.

I am not so keen on (noun phrase).

I am not so keen on places with lots of people.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about travels.

1. I enjoy travelling/I can see a lot of new and interesting things
2. the best thing about travelling/meeting people and making new friends
3. my favourite thing to do/go out in the evening and walk around the streets
4. one thing I dislike about travelling/getting lost
5. the places I am always attracted to/busy and hectic
6. I am not so keen/beaches and lying under the sun
7. I dislike travelling/I find it very tiring
8. one thing I enjoy about travelling/trying out new foods
9. the places I am always attracted to/not full of tourists
10. I am not so keen/visiting historic sights

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: I'm planning to take a trip, and I'm looking for a partner to come with me. Are you interested?

B: I'm not sure. Where are you planning to go?

A: Well, I'm not exactly sure yet. Do you have any ideas?

B: I would like to go

A: That's an interesting place to visit, but I've already been there. How about
Have you been there before?

B: No, I haven't. What can we see there? What's there to do?

A: I heard that the famous sites are

B: We could do that. How long do you think we should stay?

A: I think we should stay for at least

B: That sounds good to me. You know, for me, my favourite thing to do on a trip is

A: Me too! I also like to

B: There are also some things that I dislike about travelling. One thing I dislike is

A: Really? How can you dislike that? What I dislike about travelling is

B: It seems that we have some differences of opinion. Do you think we could really be good travel partners?

A:

B: Well, let's find out how much the trip will cost, and think about when we can go. Then, we can both decide if we want to go.

A: Okay. That's fine with me. But don't forget that one of the best things about travelling is

B: Yes, you're right. I almost forgot. Maybe we should go ahead, and plan to take a trip together. What do you think?

A: There's an old saying "Nothing ventured, nothing gained" which means that if we don't take a chance, we will not gain anything at all. We should go for it.

B: Okay! I'm with you.

3. Write words and phrases in the table below to talk about what makes an exciting holiday and a boring holiday.

	Exciting holiday	Boring holiday
Location		
Scenery		
Food		

	Exciting holiday	Boring holiday
Hotel		
Travelling		
People		
Weather		

4. You are planning a two-week holiday, and you consult with a travel agent to find out which holiday would suit you best.

A: Customer

Choose who you are:

- a single person, aged 24
- a newly-wed couple
- a married couple with a young child
- a retired couple

Without looking at B's part, first, think about what holiday you would like to take. Then, think about the following areas:

- location
- length of holiday
- type of holiday
- goal of holiday
- travelling to/from destination
- food, etc.

B: Travel agent

First, find out what kind of holiday your customer would like to take. Then, offer your client some of the holiday options listed below.

- A one-week trip to the beach – relax on the beautiful beach and get a nice suntan
- A two-week driving holiday – explore the countryside and enjoy the beautiful scenery
- A one-week trip to Europe – visit famous sites and learn more about their historical significance
- A ten-day cycling trip – ride your bicycle around the countryside and experience real country life

5. Discussion: Think about the following questions and make a list of points to talk about with your partner.

1. Why do people take holidays?
2. What do people want from a holiday?
3. How restful and relaxing are holidays?
4. Why can some holidays be quite tiring?

Talking about Interests/Hobbies and Friends

1. Talking about Interests/Hobbies 08.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- How do you normally arrange your weekends?
- How do you spend your spare time?
- Do you have any hobbies?
- How did you become interested in that?
- How much time do you spend on that?
- Do you prefer relaxing at home or going out in the evening?
- When you go out for the evening, what do you like to do?
- Is there any kind of entertainment you dislike?
- Why do you think that people have hobbies?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; L: Li Chen

(Wang Xiao and Li Chen finish their meal in the restaurant.)

W: That has got to be the best meal I've ever eaten!

L: That was certainly one meal I won't forget! I'm stuffed! I can't eat another bite!

W: You did well! Hey, do you want to go out after dinner?

L: I can't. I wish I could, but I can't.

W: Why not?

L: I can't even move! Why? What were you thinking of doing? *What kind of entertainment do you like?*

W: I love karaoke, but I'm not a very good singer. I love going to see movies too. What else... I've seen a few concerts and plays, but those are a bit beyond my budget. *How do you spend your spare time?*

L: I usually go for walks in parks and things like that. I'm really into nature and I love being around trees and water and mountains as much as possible.

W: You were born in Jilin, right? Is that why you like nature so much?

L: It could be. But most of my family prefer to stay at home instead of going out to walk in the parks. And, I grew up in the city, not the countryside.

W: Then, *how did you become interested in nature?*

- L: I don't really know. But ever since I was young, I've always been fascinated by plants and animals. I remember taking great care to water the plants in my home, and I was only four at the time! I also had a bird and a rabbit at home, and played with them all the time.
- W: That's funny. Because I grew up in the countryside when I was small, nature doesn't excite me at all. I always liked being in the city – feeling the hustle and bustle of city life.
- L: When you were a kid, *what were your hobbies?*
- W: I enjoyed stamp collecting and coin collecting, though I don't do any of that now. I read a lot of books and listened to music constantly. I also played a lot of badminton and ping-pong with my neighbourhood friends. In fact, I still do.
- L: Are you good at sports?
- W: I'm not bad at ping-pong, but I haven't played badminton for years.
- L: *How much time do you spend playing ping-pong?*
- W: About two to three hours a week, if I can. It's hard to find a good partner to play with. Do you play?
- L: Yes, but badly. Don't look at me! I won't be able to keep up with you! Listen, all this talk about ping-pong is making me hungry again. Let's finish up these dishes and then head home.
- W: Good idea. It's getting late.

Useful Words and Expressions

amateur /'æm.ə.tər/ *n* [C] a person who takes part in an activity for pleasure, not as a job

bestseller /'best'sel.ər/ *n* [C] a book which is extremely popular and has sold in very large numbers

chat /tʃæt/ *v* [I] (-tt-) to talk to someone in a friendly informal way

collect stamps *exp*

collect /kə'lekt/ *v* [T] to get and keep things of one type such as stamps or coins as a hobby

stamp /stæmp/ *n* [C] a small official piece of paper that is bought and stuck on an envelope to pay for the cost of posting a letter or a parcel

creative /kri'eɪ.tɪv/ *adj* producing original and unusual ideas

educational /,ed.ju'keɪ.jən.əl/ *adj* providing education or relating to education

entertainment /en.tə'teɪn.mənt/ *n* [C or U] shows, films, television, or other performances or activities that entertain people

every now and again/then *exp* sometimes but not often

every so often *exp* sometimes but not often

every other day/week/month *exp* the first, third, fifth etc. day/week/month

exercise the brain *exp*

exercise /'ek.sə.saɪz/ *v* [I or T] to do physical activities to make one's body strong and healthy

brain /breɪn/ *n* [C] the organ inside the head that controls thought, memory, feeling and activity

frequently /'fri:kwənt.li/ *adv* often

fun /fʌn/ *n* [U] pleasure, enjoyment, entertainment

hectic /'hek.tɪk/ *adj* (life) full of activity; very busy and fast

indulge /m'dʌldʒ/ *v* (in) [I or T] to allow yourself or another person to have something enjoyable, esp. more than is good for you

keep-fit /ki:p'fit/ *n* [U] (UK) physical exercises to keep one's body healthy, often done regularly with other people
to keep fit/to stay healthy *exp*
to keep in shape *exp*

kill time/an hour *exp* to do something that keeps somebody busy while waiting for something else to happen

(**make**) **handicrafts** /'hæn.di.kra:fts/ *n* [plural] beautiful objects made by people using their hands

musical instrument /,mju:zi.kəl 'ɪn.strə.mənt/ *n* [C] an object, such as a piano, guitar or drum, which is played to produce musical sounds

occasionally /ə'keɪ.zən.əl.i/ *adv* sometimes but not often

professional /prə'feʃ.ən.əl/ *adj* played or done as a job rather than for enjoyment

R and R /,ɑ:r ən 'ɑ:r/ *exp* rest and relaxation

recreation /,rek.rɪ'eɪ.ʃən/ *n* [C or U] (a way of) enjoying oneself when not working

sports fan *n* [C]

sports /spɔ:ts/ *adj* [before noun] relating to sport

fan /fæn/ *n* [C] someone who admires and supports a person, sport, sports team, etc.

stress /stres/ *n* [C or U] great worry caused by a difficult situation

take a risk *exp.* to do something that might be dangerous

teamwork /'ti:m.wɜ:k/ *n* [U] the activity of working well together as a group

time-consuming /'taɪm.kən.sju:ɪŋ/ *adj* taking a lot of time

Useful Sentence Structures

I enjoy (hobby / noun phrase) because (clause of reason).

I enjoy reading because it makes me relaxed.

I love to (verb phrase) because it's so (adjective).

I love to work in the garden because it's so peaceful.

(hobby / noun phrase) is my favourite hobby because (clause of reason).

Cooking is my favourite hobby because I also love eating.

Whenever I am (present participle), I feel (adjective).

Whenever I am dancing, I feel so happy.

I started (gerund phrase) at the age of (number) when I was (with somebody / prepositional phrase).

I started collecting stamps at the age of seven when I was with my grandma.

I think I'd rather (bare infinitive).

I think I'd rather have a hobby that is active rather than passive.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about interests and hobbies.

1. I enjoy watching TV/helps me to unwind after a hectic day

2. I love to paint/so relaxing
3. jogging/favourite hobby/keeps me healthy
4. whenever I am working on my stamp collection/feel so excited
5. I started/dancing/age of 4/when I was in kindergarten
6. I think/'d rather spend time listening /music / watching TV
7. whenever I am singing/feel so happy and peaceful
8. I enjoy/play/computer games/they are fun and challenging
9. travelling/favourite hobby/helps me get some R and R
10. I started playing chess /age of 6/when I was just starting elementary school

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: Hi there, Katie! We're going swimming. Do you want to join us?

B: Sure, I'd love to. Swimming is one of my favourite things to do.

A: I didn't know you were so interested in swimming. What other things are you interested in?

B: I enjoy

A: Really? I enjoy that, too. Whenever I _____, it makes me
feel _____

B: Me too! I first started to _____ when I was _____

A: What else do you like to do in your spare time?

B: I'm also very fond of _____

A: You have a lot of hobbies! Which one is your favourite?

B: My favourite hobby is _____ because _____

How about you? What are your hobbies?

A: I like _____

B: And which one is your favourite hobby?

A: I suppose I enjoy _____ the best because _____

B: I think hobbies are really important. If I didn't have any of these things to do after working and studying, my life would be so boring.

A: I couldn't agree with you more. Whenever I am _____
I feel very _____

B: Yes! That's how I feel, too!

A: We'd better get going to the swimming pool. Do you have everything?

B: No. I'll just run home first to get my swimming stuff. I'll meet you at the pool.

A: Okay! See you soon.

B: I'll see you.

3. What do you look for in a hobby? Look at the characteristics below and identify which are the most important to you in your hobbies.

the chance to become an expert

a challenge

competition

expressing creativity

excitement

exercise

fun

learning a new skill

relaxation

spending time with friends

4. Read through the list of hobbies below. Select one hobby, and without telling your partner the name of the hobby, begin to describe the hobby by telling how it makes you feel, and why you enjoy it. Your partner should guess what hobby you have chosen.

collecting coins	playing a musical instrument
collecting antiques	playing chess
cooking	reading
drawing	sports
exercising	collecting stamps
listening to music	surfing the Internet
climbing mountains	travelling
painting	

5. Discuss the following ideas with your partner.

1. People who have hobbies are more likely to live longer than those who have no hobbies. Why?
2. Why do some people prefer to keep an activity as a hobby and not want to do it as their main job?
3. Your hobby reflects who you are more than your job does. Give examples to prove whether this statement is true.
4. Hobbies these days are very different from hobbies in previous generations. Why?

2. Talking about Friends 09.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

Do you like friends?
 What kind of people can be your friends?
 How do you make friends?
 How much time do you spend with friends?
 What do you normally do with your friends?
 Do you prefer to spend more time with friends or with family?
 Would you rather have one close friend or many common friends?
 How important is friendship to you?
 When you have trouble, do you turn to friends or family?
 What is a true friend to you?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; **L:** Li Chen; **R:** Frank Roberts

(Li Chen, Wang Xiao and Frank Roberts are just finishing their lunch of Chinese dumplings.)

- W: I'm stuffed! I can't believe I ate 28 dumplings!
- R: I'm so full I could burst! I can't believe you ate 28 dumplings too! How did you manage to fit them all in your stomach? I think I only ate about 23!
- L: Oh, I ate at least 28! I just stopped counting after I got to 25!
- W: I just love this! Good food! Good friends! It doesn't get any better than this!
- R: Thanks so much for lunch! It was really great, but I have to go now.
- L: Wow! So soon? We'll have to have another meal together sometime soon.
- W: Yes, definitely!
- R: Okay! I'll give you a call! Thanks again!
- L: Hey, Wang Xiao, I was just thinking how good it is to have friends like you and Frank.
- W: You can't live without friends, can you? I'm really fortunate to have some very close friends.
- L: Me too! Actually, my friends are all a bit different from each other. Some of them I like to study with. Others are great for going out to have a good time. I have a few groups of friends, and I do different things with each group. Why? *What are your friends like? What do you normally do with them?*
- W: My friends are more like one big group. We like to go out together and have a good time. We eat good food together and laugh together. If any one of us has a problem, we help each other out.
- L: *Do you prefer to spend time with a group of friends or with just one close friend?*
- W: It doesn't really matter to me. I like both types of friendship.
- L: Hmm, I think I prefer to spend time with just one friend at a time. Perhaps that's why my friends don't even know each other.
- W: Most of my friends have been friends since middle school!
- L: That's amazing! How did you manage to keep such close ties with your middle school friends? *How much time do you spend with your friends?*
- W: Well, some friends I see once a month or so. My closer friends, I probably see them every other week, if I can.
- L: Friends are never too busy for friends. If my friend comes to visit me, then I usually drop everything and spend time with my friend.
- W: Yes, I do that too, but I usually like to plan ahead and make sure my friends are free before I go to visit them.
- L: My parents tell me that in the old days, they didn't have to call ahead to ask their friends if it was okay to visit them. It was always okay to visit your friend. You didn't even have to make an appointment.
- W: I heard that too. But things have changed a bit these days. Though if the person was my very close friend, I would be glad if they visited me, even without calling me first.
- L: Well, that makes you a true friend to them too. *What else do you think a true friend is?*

W: I think my true friends are people who understand me and care about me. I can be totally honest with my true friends and they accept me and are honest with me too. *What is a true friend to you?*

L: For me, a true friend is someone who will help me no matter what.

W: You're right, Li Chen! That's another very important characteristic of a true friend for me too!

L: Hey, we'd better get going if we want to get to the volleyball game on time!

W: Okay! I definitely need to do some exercise after eating all those jiaozi!

Useful Words and Expressions

What is a friend?

someone I can talk to

someone I can call on for help

someone whose company I enjoy

someone who is good-natured

someone who is rich

someone who is honest and faithful

someone who is obedient

someone I can count on

someone who likes the same things I do

someone I can trust

someone I can share my leisure time with

admire /əd'maɪə/ *v* [T] to respect and approve of someone or their behaviour

adorable /ə'dɔːrə.bəl/ *adj* (a person or an animal) that is easy to love

acquaintance /ə'kwɛɪn.tənts/ *n* [C] a person that somebody has met but does not know well

bosom friend/buddy/pal /'bʊz.əm 'frend/'bʌd.i/pæl/ *n* [C] a friend that somebody likes a lot and has a very close relationship with

companion /kəm'pæn.jən/ *n* [C] someone who travels or spends a lot of time with you

constructive suggestion *n* [C]

constructive /kən'strʌk.tɪv/ *adj* useful to help or improve something

suggestion /sə'dʒes.tʃən/ *n* [C or U] an idea, plan, or action that is mentioned to think about

someone I like the best

someone who is well-intentioned

someone who is generous and hospitable

someone who is famous

someone who is beautiful and smart

someone who is a good listener

someone I can argue with

someone whom I can be silent with

someone who is warm-hearted

someone I can relax with

someone who is always in a good mood

intimate /'ɪn.tɪ.mət/ *adj* (friendship) very close

grateful /'ɡreɪt.fəl/ *adj* showing thanks, especially to another person

depend /dɪ'pend/ *on/upon sb/sth phr v* to trust someone or something and know that they will help

difficult moment *n* [C]

difficult /'dɪf.ɪ.kəlt/ *adj* not easy

moment /'məʊ.mənt/ *n* [C] a particular time or occasion

easy-going /iː.zi'gəʊ.ɪŋ/ *adj* (approving) relaxed and not easily upset or worried

keep in touch *exp* to communicate with someone by using a telephone or writing to them

drift out of touch *exp* (relationship) to gradually end a relation

kindred spirit /ˌkɪn.drəd 'spɪr.ɪt/ *n* [C] (old-fashioned) a person who has the same opinions, feelings and interests as someone

loyal /'lɔɪ.əl/ *adj* firm and not changing in your friendship with a person or an organisation

offer help *exp.*

offer /'ɒf.ər/ *v* [T] to say that you are willing to do something for someone

help /help/ *n* [U] the process of helping someone or what you do to help someone

rely /rɪ'laɪ/ **on sb/sth** *phr v* to trust someone or something or to expect them to behave in a particular way

relieve the pain *exp*

relieve /rɪ'li:v/ *v* [T] to make an unpleasant feeling, such as pain or worry, less strong

pain /peɪn/ *n* [C or U] emotional or mental suffering

share the joy *exp*

share /ʃeə/ *v* [T] to tell someone else about your thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.

joy /dʒɔɪ/ *n* [U] great happiness

Useful Sentence Structures

I prefer friends who are (adjectives).

I prefer friends who are loyal and honest.

My ideal friend is someone who is (adjective / adjective phrase).

My ideal friend is someone who is fun to be with.

She is much admired for her (characteristics / noun).

She is much admired for her generosity.

I can (verb / verb phrase) with him when I (verb / verb phrase).

I can argue with him when I disagree.

As everybody says, (clause).

As everybody says, a friend in need is a friend indeed.

When I was (adjective / in a certain situation), my friends helped me to (verb / verb phrase).

When I was very upset about my boyfriend, my friends helped me to feel better.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about friends.

1. I prefer friends / funny and entertaining

2. my ideal friend / someone / easy-going and laid-back

3. he is much admired for / good looks and modesty

4. I can talk with him/I am upset about things at work
5. as everybody says/there's no friend like an old friend
6. when I was going through a rough time/ my friends helped/keep going and not give up
7. I prefer friends/good at keeping secrets
8. my ideal friend/someone I can talk to without/be/afraid of being criticised
9. I can ask her for advice/I'm not sure what I should do
10. when I was almost going to fail my exam/ my friends helped/study harder

2. Complete the following conversation with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: Today, we will talk about our friendship. Please think about your friends for a moment, and each student can tell the class something about the kind of friend they like best. Who would like to start?

B: I'll begin. I have a lot of friends from middle school and university. I like friends who are

Some of my friends I enjoy because they are

But my closest friends are the kind of people who

A: Thank you for sharing that with the class. Who will speak next?

C: I will. Most of my closest friends are from

I say that they are my closest friends because they are

When I make a new friend, I always look for someone who is

A: Thank you. Who's next?

D: I'll be next. My ideal friend is someone who is

I don't have a lot of friends, but I do have some very close friends. I like friends who are

A: Thank you for sharing with us. Next?

E: It's my turn to say something. I have thought about what makes an ideal friend and for me, an ideal friend would be someone who is

Unfortunately, I haven't yet found my ideal friend. But I have found friends who are

I have to admit that I'm still looking for a close friend who is

and I hope that I will find one soon.

A: Thank you for sharing that. We all hope that you will find a close friend soon, and especially a friend who is

That's all for today, class. We'll talk more on this topic tomorrow.

3. Read the following descriptions about friends. In the first column, check the characteristics which you feel you would like to have in a friend. In the second column, check the characteristics which you feel you have as a friend. Explain the reasons with examples.

Someone ...	I look for a friend ...	I am a friend ...
who is active		
who is ambitious		
who is beautiful		
who is considerate		
who is easy-going		
who is fun to be with		
who is generous		

Someone ...	I look for a friend ...	I am a friend ...
who is happy		
who is helpful		
who is honest		
who is loving		
who is loyal		
who is nice		
who is patient		
who is rich		
who is smart		
who is a good listener		

4. Read the following sets of characteristics. With your partner, identify the advantages and disadvantages of having a friend with these sets of characteristics. Of the following types of friends, which friend would you most like to have?

Jennifer IS helpful, kind, easy-going, patient
 IS NOT ambitious, honest

Joe IS active, fun to be with, happy
 IS NOT generous, helpful

Jane IS smart, beautiful, ambitious, rich
 IS NOT happy, patient, easy-going

Jerry IS honest, a good listener, happy
 IS NOT loving, loyal

5. Discussion: Read through the following quotation, saying, and proverbs about friends, and talk to your partner about what they mean to you.

1. You can't choose your relatives, but you can choose your friends. (Oscar Wilde)
2. A friend in need is a friend indeed. (proverb)
3. Opposites attract. (common saying)
4. There's no friend like an old friend. (proverb)

Talking about Transportation and My Home

1. Talking about Transportation 10.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- How often do you ride a bicycle?
- How popular is a bicycle in your home town? Why?
- What kind of transportation do most people use?
- How often do you take a taxi?
- How do you usually get to work/school?
- Why do you use this means of transportation instead of another?
- How much time does it usually take (you) to get to work?
- How far do you travel to and from work each day?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of driving a car?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; R: Frank Roberts

(Wang Xiao and Frank Roberts chat before a morning meeting at work.)

W: Good morning, Frank.

R: Hi, Wang Xiao. How are you today?

W: Not bad, except that the traffic was really bad this morning. It took me over an hour to get to work.

R: Really? *How much time does it usually take you to get to work?*

W: It depends. If there's no traffic, I can get here in 20 minutes. But, if there's an accident or a traffic jam, like this morning, it can take over an hour.

R: *How far do you travel to and from work each day?*

W: Approximately 8 kilometres one way.

R: That's not far at all! In Canada, my work is 35 kilometres away from my home. It takes me about 45 minutes to drive to work. *How do you usually get to work, Wang Xiao?*

W: Well, I usually ride my electric bike, but if the weather's bad, I take the public bus.

R: You have an electric bike?

W: Yes. I bought it last year.

R: *What are the advantages of riding an electric bike compared to a regular bike?*

W: The biggest advantage is that an electric bike is faster than a regular bike, and it's easier than pedalling a bicycle. Compared to a car, an electric bike is cheaper and easier to park.

R: *What are the disadvantages of electric bikes?*

W: For one thing, I'm always worried that someone might steal it. Also, I need to recharge the battery often.

R: *How often do you take a taxi to work?*

W: Rarely. A taxi is too expensive to take every day. *What kind of transportation do people use in Canada, Frank?*

R: Most people prefer to drive their own car to work. Some people save gas and carpool. And, there are also some people who take public transportation every day.

W: It's my dream to buy a car one day, Frank.

R: Really? Why?

W: Why? Well, driving a car is much more convenient than taking the bus or subway, or riding a bike.

R: Yes, that's true most of the time.

W: What do you mean?

R: Sometimes driving a car is more tiring than taking a bus. If you're driving during rush hour, it can be stressful. And, if there's an accident, then there's usually a big traffic jam too. It's also much more expensive to have a car. You have to pay for gas, parking, regular maintenance, insurance, and repairs.

W: Hmm... I haven't thought that much about the disadvantages of owning a car.

R: It's good to think about both the advantages and disadvantages.

W: You're right, Frank. Hey! It looks like the meeting is about to begin.

R: Yes, let's find some good seats.

Useful Words and Expressions

accident /'æk.sɪ.dənt/ *n* [C] something bad which happens that is not expected or intended, and which often damages something or injures someone

avenue /'æv.ə.nju:/ *n* [C] a wide road, with trees or tall buildings on both sides

car pool /'kɑː puːl/ *n* [C + sing/pl verb]

1. a group of people who travel together, especially to work or school, usually in a different member's car each day

2. a group of cars owned by a company or an organisation which can be used by any of its employees

car-pooling /'kɑː puː.lɪŋ/ *n* [U]

carpool /'kɑː puːl/ *v* [I]

crowded bus *n* [C]

crowded /'kraʊ.dɪd/ *adj* containing too many people

bus /bʌs/ *n* [C] (plural **buses** or US also **busses**) a large vehicle in which people are driven from one place to another

empty bus *n* [C]

empty /'emp.ti/ *adj* nothing in

full bus *n* [C]

full /fʊl/ *adj* filled

convenient /kən'vi:.ni.ənt/ *adj* near or easy to get to or use

economical /,i:.kə'hɒm.i.kəl/ *adj* not using a lot of fuel, money, etc.

electric/folding bicycle *n* [C]

electric /ɪ'lek.trɪk/ *adj* using electricity for power

bicycle /'baɪ.sɪ.kl/ *n* [C] a two-wheeled vehicle moved by turning the two pedals (= flat parts you press with your feet)

folding /'fəʊl.dɪŋ/ *adj* [before noun] (a bicycle, a chair, bed) that can be folded into a smaller size to make it easier to store or carry

fast lane /'fɑ:st ,leɪn/ *n* [C] the part of a main road, such as a motorway, where vehicles travel at the fastest speed

bus lane /'bʌs ,leɪn/ *n* [C] a part of a wide road that only buses are allowed to travel on, especially during busy times of the day

slow lane /'sləʊ ,leɪn/ *n* [C] the part of a motorway for vehicles that are moving more slowly than other vehicles

highway /'haɪ.weɪ/ *n* [C] (US or UK formal) a public road, especially an important road that joins cities or towns together

light railway /,laɪt 'reɪl.weɪ/ *n* [C] a railway system for transporting people around a city

motorcycle /'məʊ.tə,sɑɪ.kl/ *n* [C] (also **motor-bike**) a vehicle with two wheels and an engine

main road /,meɪn 'rəʊd/ *n* [C] a large road which goes from one town to another

public transport /,pʌb.lɪk 'træn.spɔ:t/ *n* [U] (UK) (US **public transportation**) a system of vehicles such as buses and trains which operate at regular times on fixed routes and are used by the public

rental car *n* [C]

rental /'ren.təl/ *n* [C or U] an arrangement to rent something; the amount of money that you pay to rent something

car /kɑ:r/ *n* [C] a road vehicle with an engine, four wheels, and seats for a small number of people

traffic light /'træf.ɪk ,laɪt/ *n* [C, usually plural] one of a set of red, yellow and green lights which control the movement of vehicles at a point where two or more roads join

parking lot /'pɑ:.kɪŋ ,lɒt/ *n* [C] (US) an outside car park (= area of ground for parking cars)

scooter /'sku:tər/ *n* [C] a very light motorcycle with small wheels

side road /'saɪd ,rəʊd/ *n* a small road that is connected to a major road

traffic jam /'træf.ɪk ,dʒæm/ *n* [C] a large number of vehicles close together and unable to move or moving very slowly

heavy traffic /,hev.i 'træf.ɪk/ *n* [U] used for saying that there is a lot of vehicles in the street

light traffic /,laɪt 'træf.ɪk/ *n* [U] used for saying that there is not a lot of vehicles in the street

Useful Sentence Structures

(time expression), the traffic is/was very (adjective).

This morning, the traffic was very light.

If there's (event/accident/traffic jam/noun), it can take (duration/time).

If there's an accident, it can take more than an hour.

I usually (verb/verb phrase) if the weather is (adjective).

I usually ride my bike if the weather is nice.

One / The advantage / disadvantage of (noun / gerund phrase) is (clause / phrase).

One advantage of riding a bike is it doesn't pollute the environment.

The biggest disadvantage of owning a car is the cost.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about transportation.

1. yesterday / the traffic / extremely bad

2. if / no traffic / can take / as little as / 15 minutes

3. if / heavy traffic / can take / longer than the bus

4. usually take the subway / if / weather / bad

5. biggest / advantage / driving a car / convenience

6. today / traffic / pretty good

7. if / car accident / can take / twice as long to get to work

8. one disadvantage / riding a bike / takes more time to travel long distances

9. usually ride my bike if / weather / good

10. one / advantage / taking the bus / very cheap

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: It's already after 9 a.m.! Why are you so late?

B: _____

A: Why was the traffic so heavy?

B: There was

A: It took me longer than usual to get to work, too! How far do you travel to work each day?

B:

A: That's far! How do you usually get to work?

B: I usually . If the weather is very bad,
How about you? How much time does it usually take you to get to work?

A: If there's no traffic,
But if the traffic is bad,

B: How do you usually get to work?

A: If the weather is good,

B: If you ride your bike, how long does it take to get to work?

A: . One advantage of riding a bike to
work is

B: You're right! Even if the traffic is heavy, or there's an accident, you can

A: Yes. That's the main reason why I ride my bike to work each day.

B: What if there's gridlock? Can you still ride your bike through traffic?

A: What's gridlock?

B: Gridlock is

It usually looks like there's no way for anyone to move.

A: If there's gridlock, then, I usually wait for a traffic policeman to come, and clear up the
tangle.

B: Gridlock usually looks impossible to untangle, but sometimes it just takes one or two cars to
move back a little, and then, the rest of the traffic can flow smoothly again.

A: Well, let's hope that traffic tomorrow will be

B: Yes, I hope so, too.

3. Look at the following table, and write down two advantages and two disadvantages for each means of transportation.

Two advantages	Means of transportation	Two disadvantages
	bus & subway	
	bicycle	
	motorcycle	
	taxi	
	car	

4. Prepare your own answers to the following questions, and then take turns to interview your partner.

1. How do you usually get to work?
2. Why do you use this means of transportation rather than another?
3. How much time does it take to get to work?
4. How far do you travel to and from work?
5. How often do you take a taxi?
6. What kind of transportation do most people use in your home town?

5. Think about your answers to the following questions, and then discuss your thoughts and opinions with your partner.

1. If you could choose any means of transportation to get to work, what would you choose? Why?
2. What would traffic be like if everyone also chose the same means of transportation?
3. Think of two or three good solutions to solve the traffic problems you encounter each day.

2. Talking about My Home 11.MP3

Frequently-Asked Questions

- Where is it located?
- What kind of place do you have?
- Why did you choose this place to be your home?
- What do you like about your home?
- How large is your home?
- How many appliances do you have?
- Describe some of your neighbours.
- Could you tell me about your neighbourhood?
- What is one drawback about the place where you live?
- What is your ideal home?

Dialogue Study

W: Wang Xiao; L: Li Chen; S: Susan Roberts

(Wang Xiao has invited Susan Roberts and Li Chen to his house for a farewell dinner before Susan returns to Canada.)

W: Li Chen, Susan, glad you could make it. Please come in. Welcome to my home!

L: You have a beautiful place, Wang Xiao!

S: It's very nice! *How large is your apartment?*

W: 150 square metres. There are 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen – say, why don't I just give you a tour?

L: That's a great idea!

W: Follow me. On the right is the living room, and the dining room is on the left. There are two bedrooms on this floor, and another bedroom on the second floor.

S: Very nice, very nice.

W: The master bedroom has a private bathroom.

L: It's quite large!

S: You have a nice bathtub!

W: Yes. There's a full-size bathtub, which is getting more and more popular among Chinese families.

L: You're right, Wang Xiao. My parents' place doesn't have a bathtub, but my friends all plan to have a bathtub when they buy an apartment.

W: Over here is another bedroom and bathroom. And the kitchen and a small enclosed balcony are back here.

L: Wow! You have an oven too!

S: *How many appliances do you have?*

W: Three – a washing machine, refrigerator and stove. Chinese apartments usually have three appliances, isn't that right, Li Chen?

L: Yes, that's true. We don't have a dishwasher and clothes drier like most apartments do in Canada.

W: Now, let me show you the second floor. This way, please. The second floor has a bedroom and another room which I call the music room.

S: I can see why. There's a piano, guitar, violin, and drums. I didn't know you were a musician, Wang Xiao!

L: Me either! Wang Xiao, you've been hiding your musical talents from us. Would you play something for us?

W: Maybe another time. It's almost time for dinner. Let's go downstairs.

S: This is a very spacious apartment, Wang Xiao, and you're still a bachelor. *Why did you choose this place as your home?*

W: Well, there are two main reasons. One reason why I bought this apartment is to provide my parents with a place to stay when they visit.

L: How often do your parents visit you?

W: About two to three times a year. They usually stay for about a month each time.

S: And the second reason?

W: Well, Susan, it's true that I'm still a bachelor, but I hope to marry some day and have a family. This apartment is big enough for a small family, and the neighbourhood is really friendly and safe.

L: So, you're planning ahead.

W: That's right, Li Chen.

S: Good thinking, Wang Xiao. You never know when you'll meet that special someone.

W: Well, I definitely know it's time for dinner. Let's sit down at the dining table and eat a special dinner in honour of Susan.

Useful Words and Expressions

apartment /ə'pɑ:t.mənt/ *n* [C] (mainly US) (UK usually flat) a set of rooms for living in, especially on one floor of a building

bookshelf /'bʊk.ʃelf/ *n* [C] (plural **bookshelves**) a shelf in a bookcase

central heating /,sen.trəl 'hi:.tɪŋ/ *n* [U] a system of heating buildings by warming air or water at one place and then sending it to different rooms in pipes

carpet /'kɑ:.pɪt/ *n* [C or U] (a shaped piece of) thick woven material used for covering floors

closet /'klɒz.ɪt/ *n* [C] (mainly US) a cupboard or a small room with a door, used for storing things, especially clothes

condominium /,kɒn.də'mɪn.i.əm/ *n* [C] (US) an apartment building in which each apartment is owned separately by the people living in it, but also containing shared areas

cosy /'kəʊ.zi/ *adj* (UK) (US cozy) comfortable and pleasant

beautifully decorated *exp*

decorate /'dek.ə.reɪt/ *v* [T] to add something to an object or place to make it more attractive

detached /dɪ'tætʃt/ *adj* (a house) not connected to any other building

semi-detached /,sem.i.dɪ'tætʃt/ *adj* (UK) (a house) joined to another similar house on only one side

dining room /'daɪnɪŋ ,ru:m/ *n* [C] a room in which meals are eaten

dining table /'daɪnɪŋ ,teɪ.bəl/ *n* [C] a table at which meals are eaten

dishwasher /'dɪʃ,wɒʃ.ər/ *n* [C] a machine for washing plates, cups, forks, etc.

dormitory /'dɔ:.mɪ.tər.i/ *n* [C] (informal **dorm**) (UK) a large room containing many beds, especially in a boarding school or university

down payment /,daʊn 'peɪ.mənt/ *n* [C] a first payment that you make when you are buying something and are going to pay the rest later

- downtown** /ˈdaʊnˈtaʊn/ *adj* [before noun], *adv* (US) in or to the central part of a city
- electric heater** /ɪˈlek.trɪk ˈhiː.tər/ *n* [C] (UK also **electric fire**) a device which uses electricity to produce heat
- enclosed balcony** *n* [C]
enclosed /ɪnˈkləʊzd/ *adj* surrounded by walls
balcony /ˈbæl.kə.ni/ *n* [C] an area with a wall or bars around it that is joined to the outside wall of a building on an upper level
- furnished** /ˈfɜː.nɪʃt/ *adj* containing furniture
- unfurnished** /ʌnˈfɜː.nɪʃt/ *adj* (a room, house or building) without furniture in
- garage** /ˈgær.ɑːʒ/ *n* [C] a building where a car is kept, which is built next to or as part of a house
- kitchen** /ˈkɪtʃ.ən/ *n* [C] a room where food is kept, prepared and cooked and where the dishes are washed
- lease** /liːs/ *v* [T] to make a legal agreement by which money is paid in order to use land, a building, a vehicle, etc. for an agreed period of time
- lease** /liːs/ *n* [C] a legal agreement in which you pay money in order to use a building, piece of land, etc. for a period of time
- living room** /ˈlɪv.ɪŋ ˈruːm/ *n* [C] (UK also **sitting room**, Australian also **lounge room**) the room in a house or apartment that is used for relaxing, and entertaining guests, but not usually for eating
- master bedroom** /ˈmɑː.stər ˌbed.ruːm/ *n* [C] the largest bedroom in a house
- modern** /ˈmɒd.ən/ *adj* most recent
- monthly payment** *n* [C or U]
monthly /ˈmʌnt.θli/ *adj, adv* happening once a month
payment /ˈpeɪ.mənt/ *n* [C or U] an amount of money paid
- mortgage** /ˈmɔː.gɪdʒ/ *n* [C] an agreement which allows you to borrow money from a bank, especially in order to buy a house or apartment; the amount of money itself
- mortgage** /ˈmɔː.gɪdʒ/ *v* [T] to borrow money to buy a house or apartment
- oven** /ˈʌv.ən/ *n* [C] the part of a cooker with a door, which is used to cook food
- refrigerator** /rɪˈfrɪdʒ.ər.eɪ.tər/ *n* [C] (US) (UK **fridge**) a piece of equipment, using electric, which keeps food cold, but not frozen
- newly renovated** *exp*
renovate /ˈren.ə.veɪt/ *v* [T] to repair and improve something, especially a building
- rent** /rent/ *n* [C or U] a fixed amount of money that you pay regularly for the use of a room, house, car, television, etc. that someone else owns
- the suburbs** *n* the outer area of a town, rather than the shopping and business centre in the middle
- suburb** /ˈsʌb.ɜːb/ *n* [C] an area on the edge of a large town or city where people who work in the town or city often live
- verbal agreement** *n* [C]
verbal /ˈvɜː.bəl/ *adj* spoken rather than written
agreement /əˈɡriː.mənt/ *n* [C] a decision or arrangement, often formal and written, between two or more groups or people
- sofa** /ˈsəʊ.fə/ *n* [C] (UK also **settee**) a long soft seat with a back and usually arms, on which more than one person can sit at the same time
- spacious** /ˈspeɪ.ʃəs/ *adj* (approving) large and with a lot of space
- stove** /stəʊv/ *n* [C] a piece of equipment which burns fuel or uses electricity in order to heat food
- study** /ˈstʌd.i/ *n* [C] a room, especially in a house, used for quiet work such as reading or writing
- villa** /ˈvɪl.ə/ *n* [C] a house, usually in the countryside or near the sea, which people can rent for a holiday
- washing machine** /ˈwɒʃ.ɪŋ məːʃiːn/ *n* [C] a machine for washing clothes, sheets and other things made of cloth

Useful Sentence Structures

You have a(n) (adjectives) home.

You have a spacious and beautiful home.

There are (number) bedroom(s), (number) bathroom(s), a living room, a dining room ...

There are 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and an enclosed balcony.

(gerund phrase) is/are becoming more and more (adjective).

Buying an apartment is becoming more and more common.

I hope to (bare infinitive phrase) some day.

I hope to buy my own apartment some day.

One reason why (clause) is/was (clause of reason).

One reason why I rented this apartment is because it's very close to work.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements about homes.

1. he/modern/beautiful/home

2. there/2 bedrooms/2 bathrooms/an open-concept living and dining room/a kitchen

3. owning a dishwasher/more and more popular

4. hope to buy/big fridge/in/next two years

5. one reason/I like this home/because/safe neighbourhood

6. you/beautifully-decorated home

7. there/1 bedroom/1 bathroom/1 living room/1 kitchen/no balcony

8. modern style homes/become/more and more in demand

9. hope to move / three-bedroom apartment / some day

10. one reason / this apartment / not too expensive / because / far from downtown

2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate sentences or phrases.

A: Hi Richard! I heard you are looking for a place to live.

B: Yes. My lease finishes next month and I'd like to find a new apartment. I'm interested in a place like yours. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

A: Not at all.

B: Thanks. How large is your apartment? And how many bedrooms?

A:

B: Why did you choose this place to be your home?

A: One reason why

Another reason is

B: What is one drawback about the place where you live?

A:

B: Could you tell me about the neighbourhood?

A:

B: That sounds great! Could you describe some of your neighbours?

A:

B: I have just one more question, if you don't mind.

A: Go ahead.

B: What do you like best about your home?

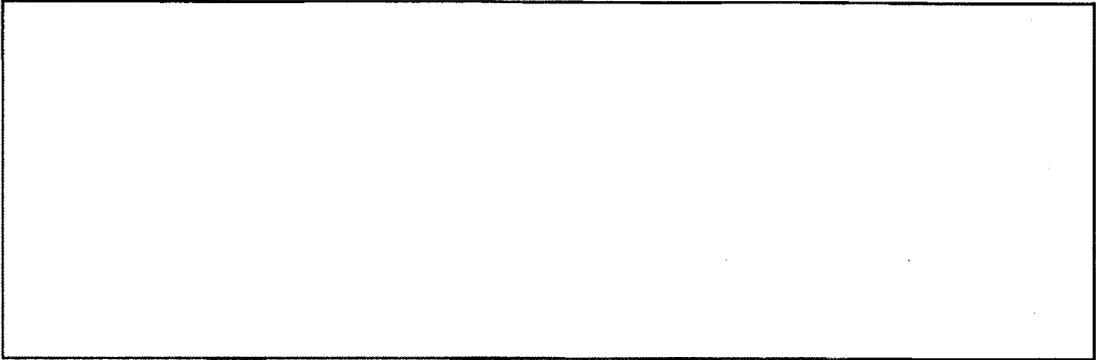
A:

B: Thanks so much for your time. You've been very helpful.

A: You're very welcome.

3. Describing your own home.

1. In the space below, draw the floor plan of your home. Label each room.



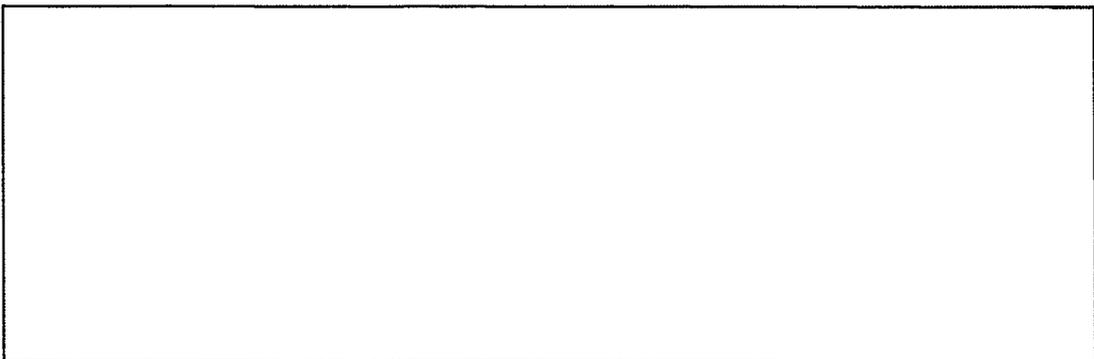
2. Complete the following table about your home.

	My home
size (square metres)	
bedrooms	
bathrooms	
other rooms	
neighbourhood	
neighbours	
one advantage	
one disadvantage	

3. Show your partner the floor plan of your home. Pretend you are walking him/her through your home as you describe where you live.

4. Repeat Exercise 3 with your *dream* home in mind.

1. In the space below, draw the floor plan of your dream home. Label each room.



2. Complete the following table about your dream home.

	My dream home
size (square metres)	
bedrooms	
bathrooms	
other rooms	
neighbourhood	
neighbours	
one advantage	
one disadvantage	

3. Show your partner the floor plan of your dream home. Pretend you are walking him/her through your dream home as you describe where you live.

5. Discussion: Look at the following items and choose the three most important, and the three least important characteristics for you about choosing a home. After ranking them on your own, discuss your choices with your partner.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| beautifully decorated | new |
| close to shopping | old style |
| close to work | open-concept |
| conveniently located | price |
| downtown | safe neighbourhood |
| friendly neighbours | size |
| in the suburbs | spacious |
| modern | well-designed |

Chapter 3

**Part 2 of the IELTS
Speaking Test**

Unit 1

How to Prepare for Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test

1. An Overview of Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test

The second part of the test is sometimes known as the Individual Long Turn. In this stage, the examiner interviewing you will give you a card with a topic and some prompts about what you should say. You must talk for between 2 minutes. Again, the topics are very general, and related to your personal experience. For example:

Describe your favourite food.

You should say:

what it tastes like
when people eat it
how it is made

and explain why you like it.

When handing you the card, the examiner will say:

You will have to talk about the topic for 1 to 2 minutes.

You will have 1 minute to think about what you're going to talk about.

You can make some notes if you wish.

Before you start answering, the examiner will give some paper, a pencil, and allow you 1 minute to write notes on what you are going to say. One minute is not very long. Therefore, make good use of it. You do not need to worry too much about timing yourself as your interviewer will tell you when the time is up. However, you may wish to do so in order to ensure you speak for at least a minute. If you speak for less than one minute, your examiner will indicate that you should continue, or he/she can prompt you with one or two simple questions like:

Do you often make the food yourself?

Is it also your parents' favourite food?

The Individual Long Turn is a monologue, not a discussion; therefore, do not ask your interviewer questions. Try to speak fluently and coherently. If you run out of things to say, it is better to stop than to try to keep going. As long as you have been speaking for more than 1 minute, you will not be penalised. However, if you force yourself to keep going and lose fluency or coherence, it is likely that your score will suffer. On the contrary, if you speak for more than 2 minutes, the examiner may stop you with a polite question; then, you should end your talk in a nice way.

Unit 2 Presentation Practice for Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test

Describing People



Candidate Card 1

Describe a child you know well.

You should say:

- where you met him/her
- what he/she looks like
- what personality he/she has

and explain how you feel about him/her.

Sample Study 1

The child I'd like to describe is my neighbour's son. I first met him when he moved into our neighbourhood to live with his parents. Previously, he had been living with his grandparents in another city.

I guess he looks like a typical Chinese boy. He has short black hair and dark brown eyes. He's a bit overweight, and of average height for a seven-year-old boy. I think he's a cute kid, especially when he laughs and smiles.

As for his personality, I'd say that he's very outgoing, friendly, happy and active. He knows all the neighbours and greets them with a loud voice whenever he sees them. He loves to play all kinds of games, and I often see him with his friends running all around our compound, or playing soccer, or just having a good time.

I think that this little boy is really inspiring. Every time I see him, I feel really happy because he's so happy to say hello to me. It makes me think that whatever I'm worrying about is not really that important, and it encourages me to be friendly to others as well. I love the way children are so free from problems and stresses, and especially this little boy. He just loves life and enjoys each day fully.

Candidate Card 2

Describe a close friend of yours.

You should say:

who he/she is
 how you got to know each other
 what activities you do together

and explain why you feel close to him/her.

Sample Study 2

One of my close friends is Jenny. Jenny is two years older than I and is now studying Computer Science at university. She gives the impression of being pretty simple, but she's really smart and always does very well in school.

We met through a mutual friend who introduced us to each other. This mutual friend is my classmate and also Jenny's cousin. One time when I was at my friend's home, Jenny came to visit her, so she introduced me to her.

Jenny and I both like going to a park and just walking around. We talk quite a lot about everything, and enjoy the peaceful environment of the park. I think that's what we like to do most. Another thing that we often do is go shopping together. We have similar tastes in clothes and music, so we like to go shopping with each other too.

I really like Jenny because she's so easy to be around. She's not demanding and pushy, like some people I know. We don't have to plan everything in detail when we get together. We just do whatever comes to mind. I think that Jenny understands me the most, even more than her cousin, who is my classmate. Jenny and I can share anything. She tells me about what she's going through and I tell her about my problems. I've never had such a close friend who really cared about me and wasn't trying to get something from me. I guess the best thing is that our friendship is not selfish. We both want the very best for each other.

Useful Words and Expressions

Describing People

Hair: wavy, curly, straight, dyed, shaved head, crew cut, bald, long, short, medium-length, black, blonde, brown, red, grey, white, a ponytail, pigtails, a beard, a moustache, clean-shaven, thick eyebrows, thin eyebrows

Face: round, oval, broad, long, high cheekbones, pointed chin, double chin, wrinkles, dimple(s), freckles, fair-skinned, pale complexion, suntanned, high/low/broad forehead

Eyes: brown, blue, green, dark, grey, big, small, round, slanted, cross-eyed, long eyelashes, bags under the eyes

2. Preparing for Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test

First, read the task on the card. Do not waste time reading anything outside this card as it is the information only repeating what you have already been told by the examiner when giving you the card.

Once you have read and understood the task, you can start thinking about what you are going to say. Some candidates prefer not to make notes, but we would recommend you do. Do not write long sentences as you will not have time; just write brief notes or phrases to help remind you of what to talk about. These notes do not have to be in English, and they will not be used for assessment. Some candidates draw mind maps, and these seem to be very effective. If you feel you do not want to make notes, and do not need the full minute to think about it, tell your interviewer who will let you start talking.

3. A Sample of Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test

E: Examiner C: Candidate

E: Now, I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before that, you will have one minute to think about what you want to say. You can make some notes if you wish. Do you understand?

C: Yes, I understand.

E: Here's some paper and a pencil and you can make notes if you wish. I'd like you to describe your favourite food.

(Candidate takes one minute for preparation.)

E: Are you ready?

(or C: **Should I begin?**)

C: There are many foods I like, but my favourite one, I think, is dumplings. Dumplings not only look nice, they are delicious too. Normally they are salty, with meat, vegetables and spices inside. People can eat dumplings whenever they want, but the most popular time to have dumplings in China is the Spring Festival, on New Year's Eve. Since my childhood I have learned how to make dumplings. First of all, you need to make the dough by mixing water into the flour. Next, mince the meat and vegetables you like and add some spices to it. The third step is to make the wrappings by rolling the dough. After that, put the filling in the middle of each wrapping and press it tight. The last step is to boil them and then they are ready to serve! I like dumplings very much for two reasons, I suppose. First, they are so much fun to make. Making dumplings can bring people together and provide people, especially family and friends, an opportunity to chat in a relaxed way. Secondly, of course, as I mentioned before, they are quite tasty. You can put whatever meat or vegetables you like as fillings.

E: Well, do you often make the food yourself?

C: Not really. Most of the time I eat fast food because I am too busy.

Nose: big/small/hooked/flat nose

Teeth: straight, crooked, even, white, yellowish, buck-toothed

Mouth: big, small, wide, thin/thick lips, full lips, red lips, wears lipstick

Ears: big, small, ears that stick out

Build: heavy, overweight, plump, large, muscular, thin, slender, slim, skinny, small, broad shoulders

Height: medium, average, tall, short, below average, above average

Age: young, middle-aged, old, elderly, in one's early/late teens, in one's mid-twenties/forties

General appearance: plain looking, good looking, stunning, beautiful, gorgeous, handsome, well-dressed, smartly-dressed, neatly-dressed, casual, formal

Personality: absent-minded, aggressive, brave, broad-minded, calm, cheerful, considerate, courteous, creative, critical, depressed, easy-going, energetic, extroverted, introverted, friendly, generous, gentle, happy-go-lucky, high-spirited, independent, intelligent, nervous, open-minded, outgoing, overbearing, patient, pessimistic, optimistic, proud, quick-tempered, quiet, sensitive, serious, shy, smart, stubborn, talented, warm-hearted

Useful Sentence Structures

Describing Physical Features

He/She's (adjectives).

He's tall and slim.

He/She has (noun phrase) with (noun phrase).

He has a big square head with small ears and a pointed chin.

He/She's got (noun phrase).

She's got shoulder-length hair.

Describing Personality

He/She's very (adjectives).

He's very friendly and kind.

He/She seems to be (adjectives).

She seems to be quite intelligent.

He/She comes across as being (adjectives).

He comes across as being very caring.

He/She gives the impression of being (adjectives).

She gives the impression of being anxious.

He/She is the (adjective of superlative form) that (clause).

He is the funniest person that I have ever met.

He/She resembles (somebody/noun) in (noun clause).

He resembles his uncle so much in the way he laughs.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing people.

1. she / tall and / has long, black hair
2. she / very honest and reliable
3. she / a big nose / glasses
4. he / across / strong and opinionated
5. he / impression / confident and ambitious
6. he / seems / friendly at first
7. she / most honest person / I have ever met
8. he resembles his brother / the way he smiles
9. he / kindest person I have ever known
10. she resembles her father / the way she talks

2. Use the sentence structures, words and expressions you have learned to talk about the following people. Describe both their physical features and their personality characteristics.

Your boss:

Your boyfriend / girlfriend:

Your mother's friend:

Your work colleague:

Your classmate:

Your grandfather:

Your middle school teacher:

3. Describe the appearances and clothes of each person in the picture.



Describing Items and Past Events

1. Describing Items 13.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a toy you once played with.

You should say:

what it is made of
how you got it
what you do with it

and explain whether you like it or not and why.

Sample Study

One of my favourite toys is a remote-control car. It's mostly made of plastic and it takes 4 batteries to operate. It's a miniature version of a sports car, so it has these cool designs on it.

I bought it at a toy store in downtown Beijing. I had saved up some money and had been planning to buy it for a long time. When I had enough money, I went with my friend to the toy store and we stood there for a long time trying to decide which model to buy. Finally, I chose a car that looked like a Porsche.

Basically, there are two parts to it – the remote control and the car. Sometimes, I just play with it by myself. I imagine that I'm a race car driver and I put all the obstacles on the floor and try to drive around them as quickly as possible. But the best way to play is to race against another car. Some of my friends also have a remote-control car, so we make all these race courses and then see whose car is the fastest.

I guess I'm a bit too old to still be playing with toy cars, but a remote-control car is still a lot of fun for me. When I'm racing my car, I try to imagine that I'm actually the driver in a real race, which makes it very exciting. Also, I've made a lot of friends just by racing my car. First, my friend and I started racing cars in front of our building. Then, a few other kids came along and wanted to join in. Even some adults wanted to watch and have a turn. So now, we have a regular group of friends who bring their cars to race each other. I don't know if it sounds silly, but it's really fun. I do hope to own a real car one day, but I doubt I'll be able to afford a race car or a Porsche.

Useful Words and Expressions

affordable /ə'fɔ:..də.b|/ *adj* not expensive

automatic /ɔ:..tə'mæt.ɪk/ *adj* (a machine or device) able to work by itself rather than being operated by people

battery-operated *adj*

battery /'bæt.ər.i/ *n* [C] a device that produces electricity to provide power for radios, cars, etc.

operate /'ɒp.ər.eɪt/ *v* [I or T] to (cause to) work, be in action

brand /brænd/ *n* [C] a type of product made by a particular company

childish /'tʃaɪ.l.dɪʃ/ *adj* typical of a child

cute /kjʊ:t/ *adj* (esp. of something or someone small or young) pleasant and attractive

economical /i:..kə'nɒm.ɪ.kəl/ *adj* not using a lot of fuel, money, etc.

expensive /ɪk'spɛnt.sɪv/ *adj* costing a lot of money

face value /'feɪs 'væl.ju:/ *n* [C, usually singular] the value or price which is shown on a stamp, a coin or a bank note

indispensable /ɪm.dɪ'spɛnt.sə.b|/ *adj* so good or important

install /ɪn'stɔ:l/ *v* [T] (UK also *instal*) to put a new thing in its place so that it is ready to be used

metal /'met.əl/ *n* [C or U] a chemical element, such as iron or gold, or a mixture of such elements, such as steel, which electricity and heat can travel through and which is generally hard and strong

practical /'prækt.ɪ.kəl/ *adj* relating to experience, real situations or actions rather than ideas or imagination

remote control /rɪ..məʊt kən'trəʊl/ *n* [C or U] (also **remote**) a system or piece of equipment for controlling something such as a machine or vehicle from a distance, by using electrical or radio signals

rubber /'rʌb.ər/ *n* [U] an elastic substance (= that stretches) made either from the juice of particular tropical trees or artificially

stick /stɪk/ *v* (**stuck, stuck**) (to) [I or T] to cause something to become fixed with glue or another similar substance

symbol /'sɪm.bəl/ *n* [C] a sign, shape or object which is used to represent something else

waterproof /'wɔ:..tə.pru:f/ *adj* not allowing water to go through

wooden /'wʊd.ən/ *adj* made of wood

Useful Sentence Structures

It is made of (material / nouns).

It is made of metal and plastic.

It is composed of (nouns).

It is composed of a top, a body, wings on both sides, and a tail section.

Last year, I got it as a(n) (noun / noun phrase).

Last year, I got it as a gift from my grandparents.

The best way to play with it is (to-infinitive phrase).

The best way to play with it is to push it around the room.

It looks (adjective) in my eyes.

It looks so cute in my eyes.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing items.

1. it/made of/ wood and plastic
2. it/composed of two pieces: the car and the remote control
3. last year/ got it/a going-away present from my colleagues
4. the best way/play/it/to hit it up in the air
5. it looks very lifelike/ my eyes
6. it/made of a plastic body and a mini computer inside
7. it/composed of a small screen and a keyboard
8. last year/ got it/ gift from my best friend
9. the best way/play/it/place it on a table and watch it move
10. it/look really expensive/ my eyes

2. Look at the birthday gifts on the next page, and pick one for each of the people listed below. Explain why they might like it.

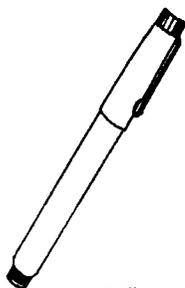
Your father:

Your child:

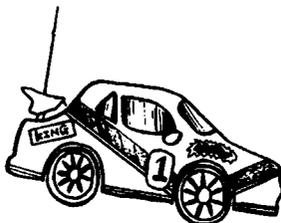
Your best friend:

Your cousin:

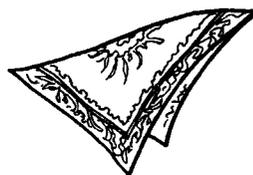
Your English teacher:



pen



model car



silk scarf

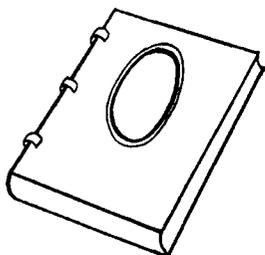
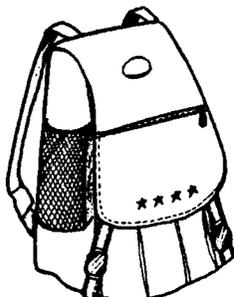


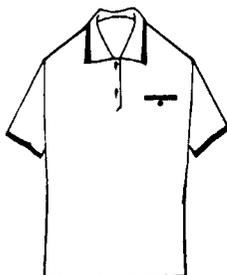
photo album



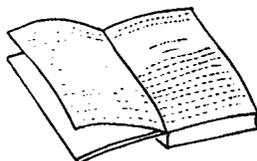
backpack



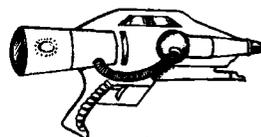
Rollerblades



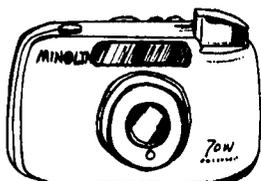
T-shirt



novel



water gun



camera



box of chocolates



flowers

3. Role-play: You have been given an item of clothing for your birthday. Neither the size, style nor colour is suitable. Your partner is the salesperson at the shop where it was bought. Explain why you want to exchange it, or get your money back. You don't have a receipt, and the salesperson is a stickler for rules. You may have some trouble returning it, and getting your money back.

2. Describing Past Events 14.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe an exciting period of your life.

You should say:

when that was
who was with you
what you did

and explain why it was exciting for you.

Sample Study

An exciting period in my life was when I was in elementary and middle school. Actually, it wasn't during school, but during the summer holidays when I was an elementary and middle school student. Every year, for about 7 summers, my parents sent me to see my grandparents who lived by the seaside. I guess I started going when I was about 6 years old until I was 13.

There were a lot of good things about going to see my grandparents, but the best thing was that my cousins also spent the summer with my grandparents. So, every summer, 4 of our cousins would meet at my grandparents' home and spend about 5 weeks together by the seaside. My cousins and I are all pretty close in age. My oldest cousin is about 3 years older than my youngest cousin. I am the second oldest of the cousins. My grandparents were always very happy to have us, even though their apartment was quite crowded and we all had to share a room.

What did we do? We did a lot. Every day we went to the seaside to swim or play in the sand or collect shells. We're all very good swimmers now, even though at first we were scared just like everyone else. Every summer we started a new seashell collection. We'd go up and down the beach looking for interesting or beautiful shells. Most of the time we just found some common-looking shells, but once my cousin found a really pretty shell that was pink, red, yellow, and brown. When we were younger, we would build things in the sand and also bury each other's legs. Sometimes we would pretend to hunt for treasure. There were so many things to do there.

I have so many happy memories about spending summers with my grandparents and cousins. Going to the seaside was a nice break from living in the city and going to school every day. We didn't have to think about homework or school pressure. The other good thing about going to my grandparents' place was seeing my cousins. We all lived far away from each other, so we didn't normally get a chance to spend time together. Now we still live in different cities, but we're very close friends and we call each other all the time. It is great to have cousins to talk to and get advice from.

Useful Words and Expressions

amusing /ə'mju:zɪŋ/ *adj* entertaining

(be) **deeply touched** *exp*

deeply /'di:pli/ *adv* extremely or strongly

touched /tʌtʃt/ *adj* [not before noun] grateful for something kind that someone has done

bygone /'baɪ.gən/ *adj* [before noun] belonging to or happening in a past time

cherish /'tʃer.ɪʃ/ *v* [T] to keep hopes, memories or ideas in one's mind because they are important and bring pleasure

favourite memory *n* [C]

favourite (UK) (US **favorite**) /'feɪ.vər.ɪt/ *adj* [before noun] best liked or most enjoyed

memory /'mem.ər.i/ *n* [C or U] something you remember from the past

hilarious /hɪ'leə.ri.əs/ *adj* extremely funny and causing a lot of laughter

influence /'ɪn.flu.ənts/ *v* [T] to affect or change how someone or something develops, behaves or thinks

memorable childhood *n* [C or U]

memorable /'mem. ə r. ə. b l/ *adj* likely to be remembered or worth remembering

childhood /'tʃaɪld.hʊd/ *n* [C or U] the time when someone is a child

peaceful /'pi:s.fəl/ *adj* quiet and calm

recall /rɪ'kɔ:l/ *v* [I or T] to bring the memory of a past event into one's mind

regretful /rɪ'gret.fəl/ *adj* showing that you feel sorry about something

remind /rɪ'maɪnd/ *v* [T] to make someone think of something they might have forgotten

remind sb of sth/sb *phr v* to make somebody think of something or someone

shocking /'ʃɒk.ɪŋ/ *adj* offensive, upsetting

Useful Sentence Structures

I can still remember the time when I (clause).

I can still remember the time when I stayed with my grandparents.

I'll never forget the time when (clause of time).

I'll never forget the time when I was in elementary school.

I spent my entire (noun) in (noun phrase).

I spent my entire childhood in a town called Cai Lay.

At that time, I was still (noun/noun phrase).

At that time, I was still in my early twenties.

It all started when (clause of time).

It all started when I joined the chess club.

The most exciting time I can recall is when (clause of time).

The most exciting time I can recall is when I attended high school.

What I will always cherish in my heart is the time (clause of time).

What I will always cherish in my heart is the time when she came into my life.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing past events.

1. I can still remember / time / I took my first violin lesson
2. I'll never forget / day / my grandfather died
3. spent / my entire 4 years in university trying to win a scholarship
4. at that time / still / quite young and not very mature
5. it all started / morning / I went to the library to study
6. the most exciting time / I recall / when my friends and I took a trip to Mount Lang Biang
7. I can still remember / time / I realised my parents made mistakes
8. spend / my entire summer working as a salesperson for a juice company
9. it all started / evening / I met a friend at a party
10. most exciting time / recall / when / I was on my own and / have / my own money to spend

2. Think of each of the following time periods of your life. Think back about each period and describe it as fully as you can, using the sentence structures you have learned.

	Exciting activities	Favourite memories
Childhood		
Adolescence		
Young adulthood		

Describing Places and Changes

1. Describing Places 15.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a garden/park you enjoyed visiting.

You should say:

where it is
what it looks like
when you first visited it

and explain how you enjoyed the visit.

Sample Study

I really like to visit this park which is not too far from my home. It's located behind the Rosedale Hotel and just east of the Lido Hotel. It's called the Lido Park. You can either enter the park through the west gate or the east gate.

The park is really beautiful. It's got quite a few different areas and it is very peaceful. There are pathways all around the park and a lot of grass and trees. There are two ponds – a small one where you can try to fish for goldfish in the summer time, and a very large pond where you can go skating in the winter time. Near the large pond is a picnic area where you can sit down and relax. It's nice and shady because there are many tall trees nearby. There's also a play area for small children with games and rides, a restaurant and a snack bar, and an indoor swimming pool.

I first found the park a few years ago after a friend told me about it. I went to see it for myself, but it was actually a bit hard to find the way to get in because the entrances were not very prominently marked. When I first went there, I was pleasantly surprised at how large the park was. There were so many different parts of it – the small pond, the large pond, the children's area, the swimming area, and some other grassy areas where children could play. I just walked along the pathways to get an idea of what the park was like.

My first visit to the Lido Park made me want to return again and again. I even thought about buying a monthly pass instead of buying a single ticket each time. Actually, I didn't buy the monthly pass because I knew I wouldn't be able to visit the park as often as I would like to. I love going to the Lido Park because it makes me feel relaxed and happy. It's so peaceful to walk along the paths or just sit down by the large pond and think. I like to watch the children playing in the children's area, because they are so excited and energetic. It's a nice break from city life. I usually go to the Lido Park whenever I feel like I need some space to unwind and think.

Useful Words and Expressions

attractive /ə'træk.tɪv/ *adj* very pleasing in appearance

brochure /'brɔ:ʃə/ *n* [C] a type of small magazine that contains pictures and information on a product or a company

bustling /'bʌs.lɪŋ/ *adj* full of busy activity

cosy (UK) (US **cozy**) /'kəʊ.zi/ *adj* comfortable and pleasant, especially (of a building) because of being small and warm

destination /,des.tɪ'nei.ʃən/ *n* [C] the place where someone is going to

German-style architecture *n* [U]

German /'dʒɜ:mən/ *adj* of or relating to Germany

style /stɑɪl/ *n* [C] a particular shape or design, especially of a person's hair, clothes, or a piece of furniture

architecture /'ɑ:kɪ.tek.tʃər/ *n* [U] the art and science of designing and making buildings

heart of the city *exp*

heart /hɑ:t/ *n* [C] the central or most important part

city /'sɪ.ti/ *n* [C] a large and important town

homely /'həʊm.li/ *adj* (US **homey**) plain or ordinary, but pleasant

industrial /m'dʌs.tri.əl/ *adj* in or related to industry

lively /'laɪv.li/ *adj* full of people who are busy or who are enjoying themselves

messy /'mes.i/ *adj* untidy and dirty

pace of life *exp*

pace /peɪs/ *n* [U] the speed at which something happens or is done

packed /pækt/ *adj* (with) completely full

peaceful /'pi:s.fəl/ *adj* quiet and calm

scenic /'si:nɪk/ *adj* (natural features) beautiful

shabby /'ʃæb.i/ *adj* old and in bad condition

skyscraper /'skaɪ.skreɪ.pər/ *n* [C] a very tall modern building, usually in a city

spacious /'speɪ.ʃəs/ *adj* (approving) large and with a lot of space

tidy /'taɪ.di/ *adj* ordered and arranged in the right place

warm atmosphere *n* [C or U]

warm /wɔ:m/ *adj* friendly and loving

atmosphere /'æt.mə.sfiər/ *n* [C or U] the character, feeling or mood of a place or situation

Useful Sentence Structures

It looked (adjective) when I first visited it in (time expression).

It looked peaceful when I first visited it in the summer of 2005.

It is the place where I (verb phrase).

It is the place where I first met my boyfriend.

The reason why I am attracted to it so much is because (clause) / because of (phrase of reason).

The reason why I am attracted to it so much is because of the traditional houses along the river.

The place which gives me fond memories is (noun phrase).

The place which gives me fond memories is the garden in front of Jim's house.

I am highly impressed by (noun phrase).

I am highly impressed by the natural beauty of the beaches.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing places.

1. it looked beautiful/first visited/my last year in high school
2. it is the place/I feel the most at peace
3. the reason/I/attracted/it/so much/because it reminds me of my carefree days as a child
4. the place/give/me/fond memories/the hill behind my grandparents' home/I used to play with the children in my neighbourhood
5. it looked/a bit shabby/I/first visited/in autumn of last year
6. it is the place/I/go when I am feeling a lot of pressure from school
7. the reason/I/attracted/it/so much/because it has beautiful gardens
8. the place/give/fond memories/the park where my boyfriend and I used to go on Sundays
9. it is the place/I/used to go when I was a young child
10. the reason/I/attracted/it/so much/because it makes me feel like everything is going to be okay

2. For each of the places listed below, fill in the information as completely as you can, and then describe it.

A famous historical site

Name:

Location:

Description:

Best thing about it:

A beautiful park

Name: _____

Location: _____

Description: _____

Best thing about it: _____

A place for children to play

Name: _____

Location: _____

Description: _____

Best thing about it: _____

A busy and exciting place

Name: _____

Location: _____

Description: _____

Best thing about it: _____

2. Describing Changes  16.MP3**Candidate Card**

Describe a change in the past few years in your city.

You should say:

- what the change was
- what caused the change
- whether it was easy to change

and explain what you think of the change.

Sample Study

I guess one of the biggest changes that has happened in the last few years in my home town has been the increase of parks and trees around the city. Now there are many beautiful parks in every area of the city. There is a lot more grass, trees and flowers.

I'm not entirely sure what caused the change, but I believe it is partly because China is becoming more open to the rest of the world. More and more foreign companies, businesses, and schools are interested in starting up in China. The 2008 Olympics was held in Beijing. China has gained entry into WTO. So, I believe that the Chinese government has been trying to improve the environment of each major city, and making more green spaces has been one of the ways to do this.

At first, everyone thought the government was crazy to turn shops and housing into areas for grass and trees. Frankly, it seemed like a waste of space. I heard that people were not happy with being forced to move out of their homes so that a small park could be built. However, now that the parks have been completed, they are very popular for both the young and the old. Adding parks, grass, trees and flowers has made a big difference in improving the looks of my city, and in making us more proud of our city. I think the change is really great. These small parks have added a great deal of beauty to our city. People enjoy sitting in the park and talking with friends. It's nice to have a quiet and peaceful place to go after a busy day of work.

Useful Words and Expressions

change for the better/worse *exp* to start being better/worse

decrease /dɪ'kri:s/ *v* [I or T] to become less

drop /drɒp/ *v* [I or T] (-pp-) to move to a lower level, or cause something to move to a lower level

(great) **improvement** /ɪm'pru:v.mənt/ *n* [C or U] the state of being better than before

increase /ɪn'kri:s/ *v* [I or T] to (make something) become larger in amount or size

modern /'mɒd.ən/ *adj* most recent

negative /'neg.ə.tɪv/ *adj* not hopeful, or likely to consider only the bad side of a situation

positive /'pɒz.ə.tɪv/ *adj* hopeful and confident

proportion /prə'pɔ:ʃən/ *n* [C + singular or plural verb] a quantity of something that is a part or share of the whole

rapid /'ræp.ɪd/ *adj* fast or sudden

remain the same *exp*

remain /rɪ'meɪn/ *v* [I] (slightly formal) to stay in the same place or in the same condition

sharp drop *exp*

sharp /ʃɑ:p/ *adj* sudden

drop /drɒp/ *n* [C, usually singular] a reduction in the amount or level of something

stable /'steɪ.bəl/ *adj* firmly fixed or not likely to move or change

steady /'sted.i/ *adj* slowly and gradually continuing to change, move, or happen

traditional /trə'dɪʃ.ən.əl/ *adj* typical of the things that people have usually done

Useful Sentence Structures

(noun phrase) has been the biggest change I can (verb).

Convenience in transportation has been the biggest change I can see.

Great changes have taken place in recent years in (noun/noun phrase).

Great changes have taken place in recent years in my home town.

The change I predict for the next 10 years is in (noun phrase).

The change I predict for the next 10 years is in people's attitudes towards leisure.

I am (adjective phrase) what caused the changes.

I am not exactly sure what caused the changes.

To my surprise, it looks (adjective phrase).

To my surprise, it looks so different from what I remembered before.

By the time I returned to (noun) after (time), many things looked so (adjective).

By the time I returned to my home town after 3 years, many things looked so different.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing changes.

1. more parks and trees/biggest change I have noticed

2. great changes/take place/recent years/making this city cleaner

3. the change/I predict/next 10 years/more private cars and fewer bicycles

4. I am still not clear/what/cause/the changes

5. to my surprise/it looks much better than I thought it would

6. by the time I returned/the city where I went to university/only one year's absence/many things/difficult to recognise

7. fewer factories/biggest change I can see

8. the change/predict/next 10 years/there will be more highways between cities and towns

9. to my surprise/it looks completely natural even though I know it is man-made.

10. by the time I returned / my cousin's home town / being away for 4 years / many things looked exactly the same

2. Compare and contrast the changes over the past 20 years in each of the following areas. Discuss with your partner what was important 20 years ago compared with what is important now. What has caused these changes? Have these been changes for the better?

	20 years ago	Present
Family		
Work		
Education		
Standard of living		
Salary		
Globalisation		
Economy		

Describing Programmes and Books

1. Describing Programmes 17.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a popular TV programme in your country.

You should say:

what time it is on
what it is about
who watches it

and explain why it is very popular in your country.

Sample Study

I think that Happy Dictionary is probably one of the most popular TV programmes in China. It is a weekly one-hour quiz show, which is on every Friday at about 10 p.m. and repeated the next day, that is Saturday, at about 11 a.m. Each time they invite about six guests to participate as well as a group of spectators to watch the show. First of all, the participants have to compete on certain questions to see who can be the main examinee. Then the examinee has to answer up to 12 questions and gets a prize according to the number of questions he or she answers correctly. I guess that both young people and elderly people watch this programme, especially those who want to have a relaxing evening.

The show is a very popular one for several reasons. Firstly, it is fun to watch. Some participants are really nervous while some look like they have things under control. Secondly, it is actually a quiz with lots of interesting questions closely related to everyday life. While watching, people can also test themselves on these questions. They can enlarge their range of common knowledge by watching it. Anyway, it is really popular because the programme is not only fun and relaxing to watch but also educational. People learn through the games. And what's more, the host and hostess are quite entertaining, too.

Useful Words and Expressions

cable TV *n* [U]

cable /'keɪ.bəl/ *n* [U] the system of sending television programmes or telephone signals along wires under the ground

cartoon /kɑ:'tu:n/ *n* [C] a film made using moving drawings instead of real people and places

channel /'tʃæn.əl/ *n* [C] a television station

commercial /kə'mɜː.ʃəl/ *adj* paying more attention to making profits than to quality

couch potato /'kaʊtʃ pə'teɪ.təʊ/ *n* [C] (informal, disapproving) a person who watches a lot of television and does not have an active style of life

director /daɪ'rek.tər/ *n* [C] a person who is in charge of a film or play and tells the actors how to play their parts

domestic /də'mes.tɪk/ *adj* (news) relating to a person's own country

episode /'ep.ɪ.səʊd/ *n* [C] a part of a television or radio story that is broadcast separately and forms one of a series

game show /'geɪm ʃəʊ/ *n* [C] a television programme in which people play games or answer questions in order to win prizes

international /,ɪn.tə'næʃ.(ə)n.(ə)l/ *adj* (news) involving more than one country

music video /'mjuː.zɪk vɪd.i.əʊ/ *n* a short film made to advertise a popular song

prime time /'praɪm taɪm/ *n* [U] (in television and radio broadcasting) the time when the largest number of people are watching or listening

producer /prə'djuː.sə(r)/ *n* [C] someone whose job is to organise the work and money involved in making a film, play, television programme, CD, etc.

quiz /kwɪz/ *n* [C] (plural **quizzes**) a game or competition in which you answer questions

situation comedy /,sɪt.ju.eɪ.ʃən 'kɒm.ə.di/ *n* [C or U] (informal **sitcom**) a funny television or radio show in which the same characters appear in each programme about a different story

soap opera /'səʊp ɒp.ə.rə/ *n* [C] (informal **soap**) a television or radio series about the imaginary lives of a group of people.

switch off /'swɪtʃ ɒf/ *phr v* to turn off

switch on /'swɪtʃ ɒn/ *phr v* to turn on

talk show /'tɔːk ʃəʊ/ **chat show** /'tʃæt ʃəʊ/ *n* [C] a radio or television programme on which famous guests are asked questions about themselves and their work

time-consuming /'taɪm.kən.sjuː.mɪŋ/ *adj* taking a lot of time to do

TV guide /'tiːviː 'ɡaɪd/ *n* [C] a book giving the most important information about TV programmes

TV serial /'tiːviː 'sɪə.ri.əl/ *n* [C] a story on television which is broadcast in separate parts

Useful Sentence Structures

Watching TV makes people (bare infinitive phrase).

Watching TV makes people relax and learn at the same time.

My favourite show last year was (noun phrase).

My favourite show last year was Legal Report, which was on at 12:40 p.m.

It is a waste of time to watch TV unless (clause of condition).

It is a waste of time to watch TV unless you can really gain something through the programmes.

What attracts me the most about the programme is (noun phrase).

What attracts me the most about the programme is its music and commentary.

The programme is on TV (time phrase), and then repeated (time phrase).

The programme is on TV every day at 3 p.m., and then repeated the next day at 7 a.m.

Prime time for me is (time).

Prime time for me is not 8 p.m. but 11 p.m.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing TV programmes.

1. watching TV/make/people/fat and lazy
 2. my favourite show/a movie about Emperor Quang Trung
 3. waste of time/watch TV/unless you watch news or documentaries
 4. what attracts me the most/programme is the amazing pictures of animals
 5. the programme is on TV/Sunday at 2 p.m./then repeated/Tuesday at 1 p.m.
 6. prime time for me/when I get off work, which is about 6 p.m.
 7. watching TV/make/children quiet and attentive
 8. what attracts me the most/programme/its interesting plot
 9. the programme is on TV every morning at 6 a.m./then repeated every evening at 10 p.m.
 10. prime time for me/late at night after everyone else has gone to bed
2. Think of your favourite TV programme or movie in each of the following categories. First of all, give details about when the show can/could be seen. Then, discuss the contents of the show and explain why you like it.

Talk show:

Music video:

News report: _____

Situation comedy: _____

Soap opera: _____

Cartoon: _____

Movie: _____

2. Describing Books 18.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a book you enjoyed reading very much.

You should say:

what the name of the book is

when you read it

what the book is about

and explain why you like it.

Sample Study

One of my favourite books is called *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* written by John Gray, who is an American. I read it last year during my summer holidays. A friend of mine recommended it to me and lent me her copy. The book basically gives advice about how to understand

men and women, and how to communicate better with each other. Its main idea is that men and women are from different planets, and we cannot assume that our way of communication is similar. In fact, we should assume that it is quite different.

This book was really an eye-opener for me. I had never thought about men and women in this way before. It helped me to understand better why men are the way they are, and also why women do the things they do. All the information was so well presented that it was easy to accept and understand. And, it wasn't offensive or derogatory to either men or women. Reading this book has been very helpful for me to understand my boyfriend better. At first, I wanted him to be just like me and thought it was strange why he was different. Now, I can accept him to be the way he is and I know that he's really just from another planet. I have read the book three times now. Whenever I start to misunderstand my boyfriend, I go back to the book and re-read it again. It always helps me to get a better perspective on our relationship.

Useful Words and Expressions

- bestseller** /,best'sel.ər/ *n* [C] a book which is extremely popular and has sold in very large numbers
- biweekly** /baɪ'wi:kli/ *adj, adv* happening or appearing every two weeks or twice a week
- content** /'kɒn.tent/ *n* [U] the ideas of a book, speech or film
- contents** *n* [plural] the list of articles or parts in a magazine or book, with the number of the page they begin on
- detective** /dɪ'tek.tɪv/ *n* [C] someone whose job is to discover information about crimes and find out who is responsible for them
- detective story/film** *n* [C] a story or film in which a detective tries to solve a crime
- editor** /'ed.ɪ.tər/ *n* [C] a person whose job is to prepare or control a book or a newspaper before it is printed
- entertaining** /en.tə'teɪ.nɪŋ/ *adj* funny and enjoyable
- essay** /'es.eɪ/ *n* [C] (UK) (US paper) a short piece of writing on a particular subject
- hardback** /'hɑ:d.bæk/ *n* [C or U] (US hardcover) a book which has a stiff cover
- heading** /'hed.ɪŋ/ *n* [C] words written or printed at the top of a text as a title
- main character** /,meɪn 'kær.ɪk.tər/ *n* [C] the most important person in a book, play, film, etc.
- main idea** /,meɪn aɪ'dɪə/ *n* [C] main information about something
- out-of-date** /,aʊt əv 'deɪt/ *adj* (information) old and not useful or correct
- paperback** /'peɪ.pə.bæk/ *n* [C] a book with a cover made of thin card
- periodical** /,pɪə.rɪ'ɒd.ɪ.kəl/ *n* [C] a magazine or newspaper, especially on a serious subject, that is published regularly
- philosophical** /,fɪl.ə'sɒf.ɪ.kəl/ *adj* relating to philosophy
- plot** /plɒt/ *n* [C] the story of a book, film, play, etc.
- poem** /'pəʊ.ɪm/ *n* [C] a piece of writing in which the words are arranged in separate lines, often with sounds repeated at the ends of lines
- press** /pres/ *n* [C] a business which prints and produces books and similar things
- publisher** /'pʌb.lɪ.ʃər/ *n* [C] a person or company that manages the writing, production, and sale of books, magazines, newspapers, or software
- publishing house** /'pʌb.lɪ.ʃɪŋ 'haʊs/ *n* [C] a company which publishes books
- quarterly** /'kwɔː.təl.i/ *n* [C] a magazine that is published four times a year
- subscribe** /səb'skraɪb/ *v* [I] to pay money so that you will regularly receive copies of a newspaper or magazine
- title** /'taɪ.tl/ *n* [C] the name of a book

Useful Sentence Structures

The book mainly focuses on (noun clause).

The book mainly focuses on how people should look at life from a different perspective.

I was deeply (adjective) by what he wrote in the book.

I was deeply moved by what he wrote in the book.

The main character depicted in the book is (adjective phrase).

The main character depicted in the book is completely imaginary.

The author mainly wishes to deal with (noun phrase).

The author mainly wishes to deal with the dark side of human beings.

The author was totally inspired by (noun clause).

The author was totally inspired by what she experienced in Africa five years ago.

The book didn't come out until (time phrase).

The book didn't come out until the year before last.

Comparatively speaking, (noun / noun phrase) is (adjective phrase) but (adjective phrase).

Comparatively speaking, e-books are easier to access but harmful to the eyes.

I enjoy reading and (noun) has always been my favourite subject.

I enjoy reading and adventure has always been my favourite subject.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing books.

1. book mainly focuses/how to raise polite and happy children

2. I/deeply angered/what he wrote in the book

3. main character depicted/in/book/is an old woman who fights against sexual discrimination

4. the author mainly wishes/ deal with our ideas about family which come from Confucius

5. the author/totally inspired/a young child he met who was sick with cancer

6. the book didn't come out/3 years after the author died
 7. comparatively speaking/biographies/interesting/leave out many of the negative details of the person's life
 8. I enjoy reading/mystery/my favourite subject
 9. the author mainly wishes/deal with the social inequality of poor people
 10. comparatively speaking/dictionaries/useful/should be used in the proper way
- 2. What kinds of books does each of the following people like? Describe the type of book that would best suit each person.**
1. A young child who is just starting kindergarten
 2. A teenage girl who doesn't enjoy reading
 3. An elderly professor who still loves to learn
 4. A working man/woman who is very busy with work but enjoys reading for relaxation
 5. A university student who wants to improve his/her English

Describing Stories and Ideas

1. Describing Stories 19.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a recent news story that you heard or read about.

You should say:

how you heard about the news story
 what people, places and events were involved
 how you felt about the news story

and explain why you found this news story particularly interesting.

Sample Study

I recently heard of a poor widow in Gansu Province who didn't have enough money for her son to continue going to school. I read this in a Chinese newspaper not too long ago. The son was a very good student, always first or second in his class, and very well liked by his classmates and teachers. When he told his teachers that he was going to quit school so that he could find a job, they were really surprised. His teachers found out that his mother could not afford to pay for her son's school fees, so they started to talk among themselves to see what they could do. Some of the teachers wanted to donate some money, while others wanted to raise money. After all their efforts, they had over 10,000 yuan, which was enough for the boy to continue his studies at middle school and high school, plus attend university for the first two years.

I was really touched by this story because it's nice to hear about people helping each other. That doesn't always happen in big cities, where everyone is so busy with their own lives. The people in the countryside can really give us a good lesson about how to live and take care of each other.

Useful Words and Expressions

censor /'sent.sər/ *v* [T] to remove parts of a book, film, letter, etc. for moral, religious, or political reasons

ensorship /'sent.sə,ʃɪp/ *n* [U] the process of removing parts of a book, film, letter, etc. that are considered unsuitable for moral, religious, or political reasons

depict /dɪ'pɪkt/ *v* [T] to describe someone or something using words or pictures

foreign correspondent *n* [C]

foreign /'fɔr.ən/ *adj* from or in another country
correspondent /,kɒr.rɪ'spɒn.dənt/ *n* [C] a newspaper or television reporter

heartbreaking /'hɑ:t,breɪ.kɪŋ/ *adj* causing extreme sadness

interview /'ɪn.tə.vju:/ *n* [C] a meeting in which someone is asked questions about themselves for a newspaper article, television show, etc.

journalism /'dʒɜː.nə.lɪ.zəm/ *n* [U] the activity of reporting the news for a newspaper, magazine, radio programme, or television programme

journalist /'dʒɜː.nə.lɪst/ *n* [C] a person whose job is to report the news for a newspaper, magazine, radio programme, or television programme

media /'miː.di.ə/ *n*

the media [S + singular or plural verb] newspapers, magazines, the Internet, radio and television considered as a group

memorable /'mem.ə.r.ə.bəl/ *adj* likely to be remembered or worth remembering

news agency /'njuːz ,eɪ.dʒənt.si/ *n* [C] an organisation which supplies reports to newspapers, magazines and broadcasters

reliable source /rɪ'laɪə.bəl ,sɔːs/ *n* [C] someone or something supplying information that can be trusted to be accurate

report /rɪ'pɔːt/ *n* [C] a description of an event or situation

reporter /rɪ'pɔː.tər/ *n* [C] someone whose job is to write articles or make broadcasts about events in the news

sources of information *n* [C]

source /sɔːs/ *n* [C] a place where something comes from

information /,ɪn.fə'meɪ.ʃən/ *n* [U] (informal info) facts about a situation, person, event, etc.

unbelievable /,ʌn.bi'liː.və.bəl/ *adj* extremely surprising or unable to be believed

Useful Sentence Structures

The story started when (clause of time).

The story started when a strange man showed up one day in the family home.

I was really impressed by (noun clause/phrase).

I was really impressed by how fascinating the story was.

It was (adjective) to hear about (noun phrase) because (clause of reason).

It was sad to hear about the story because the lady was leading such a miserable life.

What happened to (noun phrase) was (adjective phrase).

What happened to the wealthy family was extremely unbelievable.

At the end of the story, (clause).

At the end of the story, the couple were happily married, and two years later moved to Austria.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing stories.

1. the story started/some people started to get strangely ill

2. I was really impressed/the way everyone worked together to finish the project

3. it was moving/hear about it/because I was in a similar situation before
4. what happened to the little boy/very fortunate
5. at the end of the story/everyone wanted to find ways to help more children
6. the story started/a man became very angry with his wife
7. I was really impressed/the strength that the students showed to overcome their problems
8. it was heartbreaking/hear about it because it was such a sad story
9. what happened to the elderly professor/really unfair
10. at the end of the story/I understood better the difficulties that the poor peasants face

2. For each of the news categories listed below, think of a recent news story. Complete the details, and then describe in detail what the stories are.

World news

Source:

Summary:

Your thoughts and feelings:

National news

Source:

Summary:

Your thoughts and feelings:

City news

Source:

Summary:

Your thoughts and feelings:

Personal news

Source: _____

Summary: _____

Your thoughts and feelings: _____

2. Describing Ideas  20.MP3**Candidate Card**

Describe your idea of a perfect house/apartment.

You should say:

how big it is

what it looks like

what the surrounding area is

and explain why it is a perfect house/apartment to you.

Sample Study

My dream home is a large apartment located in downtown Beijing. It has at least 3 bedrooms and is at least 100 square metres large. There is also a fairly large kitchen, an open area for the dining room and the living room, and a bathroom with a bathtub.

My ideal home is bright and sunny. It has wooden floors and wooden doors. Not the dark kind of wood, but a fairly light colour of wood. The bedrooms all have windows facing south or east, and the living and dining rooms also have large windows which let in a lot of sunlight throughout the day. The kitchen has a stove and oven, enough room for a refrigerator and a sink. The bathroom is tiled, and has a large bathtub, a toilet, and a sink with counters all around. There is also enough room in the bathroom for the washing machine.

I want my ideal home to be in the downtown area of Beijing so that I can be just steps away from restaurants and shops. Maybe there will be several tall apartment buildings in my area. There will also be some parks and play areas for children. Most of my neighbours will be young professionals, and maybe some young families.

This kind of home is perfect for me because I love to be where the action is. I can't imagine not living in the downtown area because I love to be walking on the streets, shopping, trying out new restaurants, and seeing some shows. I also want to live close to my work so that I don't have to travel very far each day. So, my home will be like my small island of peace, amidst the hustling and bustling of downtown Beijing. Whenever I want some excitement, I'll just step outside. And, when I want some quiet time, I'll just go back to my home.

Useful Words and Expressions

- square** /skweər/ *adj* used with units of measurement of length to express the total size of an area
- metre** /'mi:t.ər/ *n* [C] (abbr **m**) a unit of measurement equal to 100 centimetres
- air conditioner** /,eə kən'diʃ.ən.ər/ *n* [C] a machine which keeps the air in a building cool
- apartment** /ə'pɑ:t.mənt/ *n* [C] (mainly US) (UK usually **flat**) a set of rooms for living in, especially on one floor of a building
- apartment building/block** /ə'pɑ:t.mənt 'bɪl.dɪŋ/ ,blɒk/ *n* [C] (US) (UK **block of flats**) a large building that is divided into apartments
- balcony** /'bæl.kə.ni/ *n* [C] an area with a wall or bars around it that is joined to the outside wall of a building on an upper level
- bathroom** /'bɑ:θ.ru:m/ *n* [C] a room with a bath and/or shower and often a toilet
- cramped** /kræmpt/ *adj* not having enough space or time
- deposit** /drɪ'pɒz.ɪt/ *v* [T] to pay someone a sum of money when you make an agreement with them, which either will be returned to you later, if the agreed arrangement is kept
- deposit** /drɪ'pɒz.ɪt/ *n* [C] extra money that you pay when you rent something, and that is returned to you if you do not damage it
- dining room** /'daɪnɪŋ ,ru:m/ *n* [C] a room in which meals are eaten
- dryer/drier** /'draɪ.ər/ *n* [C] a machine that dries things
- furnished** /'fɜ:.nɪʃt/ *adj* containing furniture
- hall of residence** /,hɔ:l əv 'rez.ɪ.dənts/ *n* [C] (UK) (US **dormitory**) a college building where students live
- kitchen** /'kɪtʃ.ən/ *n* [C] a room where food is kept, prepared and cooked and where the dishes are washed
- landlord** /'lænd.lɔ:d/ *n* [C] a person or organisation that owns a building and is paid by other people for the use of it
- living room** /'lɪv.ɪŋ ,ru:m/ *n* [C] (UK also **sitting room**, Australian also **lounge room**) the room in a house or apartment that is used for relaxing, and entertaining guests, but not usually for eating
- neighbourhood** /'nei.bə.hʊd/ *n* [C] (UK) (US **neighborhood**) the area of a town that surrounds someone's home, or the people who live in this area
- next door neighbour** /,nekst 'dɔ: 'nei.bər/ *n* [C] (UK) (US **neighbor**) someone who lives very near to you
- next door** /,nekst 'dɔ:r/ (also **next-door**) *adv, adj* in the next room, house or building
- real estate agent** /'riəl rɪ'steɪt ,eɪ.dʒənt/ *n* [C] someone who works for a business that sells houses or land
- refund** /'ri:.fʌnd/ *n* [C] an amount of money that is given back to you, especially because you are not happy with a product or service that you have bought
- refund** /,rɪ'fʌnd/ *v* [T] to give someone their money again, especially because they have paid too much for something or have decided they do not want it
- refundable** /,ri:'fʌn.də.bəl/ *adj* (money) that can be given back
- spacious** /'speɪ.ʃəs/ *adj* (approving) large and with a lot of space
- stairway** /'steə.weɪ/ *n* [C] a passage in a public place with a set of steps that leads from one level to another
- tenant** /'ten.ənt/ *n* [C] a person who pays rent for the use of land or a building
- utility** /ju:'tɪl.ɪ.ti/ *n* [C, usually plural] (slightly formal) a public service such as gas, water, or electricity that is used by everyone
- washing machine** /'wɒʃ.ɪŋ məʃi:n/ *n* [C] a machine for washing clothes, sheets and other things made of cloth

Useful Sentence Structures

The perfect (place / home) to me is (noun phrase).

The perfect place to me is an apartment near my family.

I have always been thinking of (noun phrase).

I have always been thinking of a luxurious house of my own by the ocean.

What I used to dream about was (to-infinitive phrase).

What I used to dream about was to have my own home.

I have never been keen on (gerund phrase).

I have never been keen on living on the ground floor.

I am not sure whether one day (clause).

I am not sure whether one day I can purchase such a beautiful house.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing ideas.

1. the perfect home / me / one that has a beautiful view

2. I have always been thinking / moving to my own place

3. what I used to dream about / have my own home and my own car

4. I never been keen / noisy neighbours

5. not sure whether one day / I / have my own happy family

6. the perfect apartment to me / one that is close to my work

7. I have always been thinking / living near the mountains

8. what I used to dream about / having a separate room for all my books

9. always been keen/working hard to get what I want
10. I am sure that one day/I will own two or three homes
2. You are a real estate agent. Show your partner the apartments and houses for sale and rent, and try to persuade him/her to buy or rent one of your properties. Be prepared to answer questions about the apartments and houses (e.g. size, number of rooms, monthly rent/mortgage, neighbours, location, surrounding area, cost, etc.). Make up any information that is not in the advertisements.

For sale:

- * 3-bedroom apartment just north of the city, 24-hour security, available immediately, 500,000 USD
- * New 2-3-bedroom apartments southwest of the city, very convenient, 76-108 square metres, 700 USD/square metre, mortgaging available
- * 2-bedroom apartment near the zoo, recently renovated interior, 200,000 USD non-negotiable

For rent:

- § 2-bedroom apartment near university area, monthly rent 1,000 USD
- § 1 room to share with a business professional, downtown, 700 USD/month
- § 3-bedroom town house near west end, near restaurants and bars, 1,500 USD/month negotiable

Describing Shopping Experiences and Movies

1. Describing Shopping Experiences 21.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a memorable shopping experience.

You should say:

when it was
where you were
what you bought

and explain why it was a memorable experience.

Sample Study

Last December, I travelled to Thailand for a holiday. In Bangkok, there's a very popular market that's only open on the weekends. It's called the Chatuchak Market, and it has about 7,000 vendors.

I went to the market early on Saturday morning. It was very hot, but not too crowded. There were so many different things for sale – not just things for tourists, but also all kinds of clothes, shoes, bags, jewellery, household goods, books, food and drinks. Everything was very cheap, and the quality was also good. The vendors were also very kind and helpful.

I bought a couple of shirts, some English books, and a leather wallet. After a while, I was very hot and thirsty, so I also bought some water and ice cream.

Shopping in Chatuchak Market was memorable because it was such a huge market and you could buy almost anything there. It was impossible to see the entire place, so I just walked around and looked at things that interested me. In fact, at one point, I was worried that I wouldn't be able to find the way out. At about 1:30 p.m., the market was getting very crowded, and I was getting hot and tired, so I decided to leave.

If you're ever in Bangkok on the weekend, I would suggest that you visit the market.

Useful Words and Expressions

Types of Stores

chemist /'kɛm.ɪst/ *n* [C] (US **drugstore**) a shop where you can buy medicines, make-up, sweets, cigarettes, etc.

department store /dɪ'pɑ:t.mənt ,stɔ:r/ *n* [C] a large shop divided into several different parts, each of which sells different things

discount store /'dɪs.kɑʊnt ,stɔ:r/ *n* [C] a shop which sells its goods at cheap prices

grocer /'grəʊ.sər/ *n* [C] (old-fashioned) a person who owns or works in a shop selling food and small things for the home

grocer's /'grəʊ.səz/ *n* [C] (old-fashioned) (UK also **grocery shop**, US also **grocery store**) a shop that sells food and small things for the home

market /'mɑː.kɪt/ *n* [C] a place where people go to buy and sell things, usually outside

shopping mall /'ʃɒp.ɪŋ ,mɔːl/ *n* [C] (also **mall**) (mainly US) a large usually covered shopping area where cars are not allowed

store /stɔːr/ *n* [C] (UK) a large shop where you can buy many different types of goods

vendor /'ven.dər/ *n* [C] someone who is selling something

wholesale /'həʊl.seɪl/ *adj, adv* of or for the selling of goods in large amounts at low prices to shops and businesses, rather than the selling of goods in shops to customers

Describing Stores

crowded /'kraʊ.dɪd/ *adj* full of people

empty /'emp.ti/ *adj* nothing in

popular /'pɒp.jʊ.lər/ *adj* liked, enjoyed or supported by many people

Describing Price

cheap /tʃiːp/ *adj* costing little money

inexpensive /,ɪn.ɪk'spensɪv/ *adj* cheap

off /ɒf/ *adv* used for saying that a price has been reduced by a particular amount

on sale/offer /ɒn 'seɪl/'ɒf.ər/ *exp* available for purchase at a reduced price

Describing Merchandise

brand name /'brænd ,neɪm/ *n* [C] the name given to a particular product by the company that makes it

brand new /,brænd 'njuː/ *adj* completely new, especially not yet used

quality /'kwɒl.ɪ.ti/ *n* [C or U] how good or bad something is

poor/low quality/poorly made *exp*

high/good quality/well made *exp*

second-hand /,sek.ənd'hænd/ *adj, adv* not new; having been used in the past by someone else

Useful Sentence Structures

I went to (noun / noun phrase) (on) (time phrase).

I went to the computer store last Saturday afternoon.

There was/were (nouns) on sale.

There were computers and printers on sale.

The quality of (noun) was (adjective).

The quality of the computers was very good.

I bought (nouns).

I bought a notebook computer, a printer, and a mouse.

In fact, at one point, I (verb phrase).

In fact, at one point, I almost bought two printers.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing shopping experiences.

1. went / grocery store / late Friday evening
2. there / instant noodles on sale
3. quality / toys / not very good
4. he / bought / English-English dictionary / new backpack
5. in fact / at one point / almost changed my mind / didn't buy anything
6. went / drugstore yesterday
7. there / vitamins on sale
8. quality / this brand of vitamins / excellent
9. bought / dog food / leash
10. in fact / at one point / almost spent all my money

2. Spin a yarn: Choose a common and inexpensive item, such as a pencil or a notebook, and tell an exaggerated story about your experience purchasing it. Use at least two of the phrases below.

- very last one
- desperately wanted to buy
- incredible sale
- one of a kind
- just before the store closed
- waited for three hours

2. Describing Movies 22.MP3

Candidate Card

Describe a movie you have recently seen.

You should say:

what the title of the movie was
where and when you saw it
what it was about

and explain why you liked or didn't like it.

Sample Study

Last week, I saw a DVD called "Ratatouille". It's actually a children's movie made by Disney, but it's also very entertaining for adults. I watched "Ratatouille" at my friend's home when we had a party to celebrate his birthday.

The story is basically about a friendship between a rat named Remy and a young man named Linguini. The rat loves to cook, and dreams of becoming a real cook one day. He reads a cookbook written by a famous chef, Chef Gusteau. Remy's father doesn't support his dream, and wants him to be a normal rat. The young man, Linguini, has trouble keeping a job and finding his way in life. One day, he is hired to work in a famous restaurant, but actually, he can't cook at all. So, Remy and Linguini form a partnership which they hide from everyone else. Remy guides Linguini by hiding under his hat and pulling his hair to make Linguini's hands move. In this way, they make many delicious dishes together.

I liked "Ratatouille" because it has very good computer animation, and there are also some good lessons. They are about following your dreams even if others don't support you, facing the consequences of not being honest, and the importance of being a loyal friend. There were also many funny moments in the movie.

"Ratatouille" is a good movie for both children and adults. I would recommend it to everyone.

Useful Words and Expressions

actor /'æk.tər/ *n* [C] (female **actress**) a man or woman who acts in films, plays, or television programmes

adventure /əd'ven.tʃər/ *n* [C or U] something exciting and possibly dangerous that you do or that happens to you such as a journey or experience

animated cartoon *n* [C]

animated /'æn.i.meɪ.tɪd/ *adj* if a film is animated, drawings, or models of people and animals are made to look as if they can really move and talk

cartoon /kɑ:'tu:n/ *n* [C] a film made using moving drawings instead of real people and places

box office /'bɒks ɒf.ɪs/ *n* [C] the place in a theatre or cinema where tickets are sold

character *n* [C]

main /meɪn/ *adj* [before noun] larger, more important than others of the same type

character /'kær.ɪk.tər/ *n* [C] a person represented in a film, play or story

main character *n* [C] the most important people in a film, a story or a play

supporting character *n* [C] a character usually used to give added dimension to a main character

cinema /'sɪn.ə.mə/ *n* [C] (mainly UK) (US usually **movie theater**) a place where people pay to watch films

comedy /'kɒm.ə.di/ *n* [C] a funny film or play

director /daɪ'rek.tər/ *n* [C] a person who is in charge of a film or play and tells the actors how to play their parts

documentary /,dɒk.jə'men.tər.i/ *n* [C] a film, television or radio programme that gives facts and information about a subject

educational /,ed.jə'keɪ.ʃən.əl/ *adj* providing education or relating to education

exciting /ɪk'saɪ.tɪŋ/ *adj* making you feel excited

funny /'fʌn.i/ *adj* humorous; causing laughter

horror film /'hɒr.ə ˌfɪlm/ *n* [C] (mainly UK) (mainly US **horror movie**) a film in which very frightening and especially unnatural things happen, for example dead people coming to life and people being murdered

meaningful /'miː.nɪŋ.fəl/ *adj* useful, serious, or important

plot /plɒt/ *n* [C] the story of a book, film, play, etc.

scary /'skeəri/ *adj* (informal) (UK also **scarey**) frightening

science fiction /,saɪənts 'fɪk.ʃən/ *n* [U] (informal **sci-fi**, also **SF**) books, films about an imagined future, especially about space travel or other planets

screen /skriːn/ *n* [C] a flat surface in a cinema, on a television or a computer system on which pictures or words are shown

surprising /sə'praɪ.zɪŋ/ *adj* unexpected

touching /'tʌtʃ.ɪŋ/ *adj* making you feel sadness, sympathy, etc.

Useful Sentence Structures

(time phrase), I saw a(n) (noun) called "(name/title)".

Two weeks ago, I saw a movie called "Facing the Giants".

I watched (noun phrase) at (noun phrase).

I watched the movie at the movie theatre.

The movie is basically about (noun phrase).

The movie is basically about love between a father and his son.

I liked (noun phrase) because (clause of reason).

I liked the movie because it didn't have a lot of swearing.

There were also (adjective) moments in the movie.

There were also several suspenseful moments in the movie.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements describing movies.

- 1. last night/saw/DVD/“Star Wars”
- 2. we watched/movie/downtown movie theatre
- 3. the movie/basically about a young boy who learns to be brave
- 4. I liked/movie/because/was very suspenseful
- 5. there/also/many surprising/moments/movie
- 6. this afternoon/saw/movie/“The Bondage Breaker”
- 7. I watched it/my brother’s home
- 8. the movie/basically about how many people try to achieve success
- 9. we liked/DVD/because/very meaningful
- 10. there/also/many funny moments/DVD

2. Think about one of your favourite movies, or the most recent movie you saw. Fill in the table below, then ask your partner about his/her favourite movie, and tell about yours.

	Movie title
Type of movie	
Main character	
Supporting characters	
Plot	
What I liked about the movie	

Unit 3 Topic Card Practice for Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test

Candidate Card 1

Describe a teacher who has greatly influenced you in your education.

You should say:

where you met him/her
what subject he/she taught
what was so special about him/her

and explain why this teacher influenced you so much.

Candidate Card 2

Describe a wedding you have been to or heard about.

You should say:

who got married
what they wore
what they did on that day

and explain how you felt about the wedding.

Candidate Card 3

Describe your favourite gift.

You should say:

what the gift was
who gave it to you
why you like it

and explain what it means to you.

Candidate Card 4

Describe your idea of a perfect holiday.

You should say:

- where you would like to go
- how long you would like to stay
- what activities you would like to do there

and explain why this type of holiday attracts you.

Candidate Card 5

Describe the house/apartment where you live.

You should say:

- where it is located
- when you moved in
- what kind of place it is

and explain whether you like it or not and why.

Candidate Card 6

Describe a sports person you admire.

You should say:

- who he/she is
- what he/she looks like
- what sport he/she does

and explain why you admire him/her.

Candidate Card 7

Describe a success you have had that you are proud of.

You should say:

- when it was
- how long you were trying for it
- what efforts you made

and explain why you are so proud of it.

Candidate Card 8

Describe a place of natural beauty you have been to.

You should say:

- where it is
- when you went there
- what the place looks like

and explain why you like it.

Candidate Card 9

Describe a season you like the most.

You should say:

- which season it is
- what you normally wear
- what activities you do

and explain why you like this season the most.

Candidate Card 10

Describe a person in your family who is most similar to you.

You should say:

- who this person is
- what he/she looks like
- what kind of personality he/she has

and explain why he/she is most similar to you.

Candidate Card 11

Describe a piece of equipment which you find very useful.

You should say:

- what it is
- what it is used for
- when you first used it

and explain why you think it is useful.

Candidate Card 12

Describe the type of clothing you like.

You should say:

- what it is made of
- what kind of people wear it
- whether it is popular

and explain why you like it.

Candidate Card 13

Describe the kind of music you enjoy.

You should say:

- what kind of music it is
- when you listen to it
- whether it is popular

and explain why you like it.

Candidate Card 14

Describe something made by yourself.

You should say:

- when you made it
- what it is used for
- why you made it

and explain whether it is useful to make things by hands.

Candidate Card 15

Describe one hobby of yours.

You should say:

- when you started it
- how much time you spend on it
- whether it is useful

and explain why you enjoy it.

Candidate Card 16

Describe your favourite restaurant.

You should say:

- what its name is
- what kind of food it offers
- what kind of customers eat there

and explain why you like it.

Candidate Card 17

Describe somebody you admire.

You should say :

- who the person is
- what he/she does
- what kind of person you think he/she is

and explain what you admire about him/her.

Candidate Card 18

Describe an interesting building in your home town.

You should say:

- where the building is
- what it is used for
- what features it has

and explain why it is interesting.

Candidate Card 19

Describe something you own which is important to you.

You should say:

- how long you had it
- who you got it from
- what you do with it

and explain why it is important to you.

Candidate Card 20

Describe a skill you want to learn.

You should say:

- what the skill is
- whether it is difficult to learn
- how you plan to learn it

and explain why you want to learn it.

Candidate Card 21

Describe a festival you enjoy the most.

You should say:

- what festival it is
- when it is
- how you celebrate it

and explain why you enjoy it.

Candidate Card 22

Describe the most memorable event in your life.

You should say:

- when it happened
- where it happened
- who was there

and explain why it is the most memorable event to you.

Candidate Card 23

Describe an arts and crafts product.

You should say:

- what it is
- what it looks like
- how it is made

and explain why you like it.

Candidate Card 24

Describe a film you enjoyed watching.

You should say:

what film it is
who you saw it with
what it is about

and explain why you enjoyed it.

Candidate Card 25

Describe your English study.

You should say:

when you started to learn English
what subjects you studied
whether you like English

and explain why learning English is important.

Candidate Card 26

Describe a friend who is very important to you.

You should say:

when you met the friend
what he/she looks like
what activities you often do together

and explain why he/she means a lot to you.

Candidate Card 27

Describe a library you visited.

You should say:

where the library is
what facilities it has
why you visited it

and explain why it is good.

Candidate Card 28

Describe one of your experiences of being late.

You should say:

when it was
who you were with
what happened

and explain how you felt.

Candidate Card 29

Describe a leader.

You should say:

who he/she is
what he/she does
how you knew him/her

and explain why you admire him/her.

Candidate Card 30

Describe a hotel.

You should say:

where it is located
what it looks like
what facilities it has

and explain how you like it.

The following topics are said to have been used in the past years.

- Describe a classmate of yours
- Describe a happy person
- Describe a colleague
- Describe a neighbour
- Describe your own personality
- Describe a successful person
- Describe a character in a TV programme or a movie
- Describe a historical place
- Describe a place you always go for shopping
- Describe a restaurant you always go to
- Describe a club or pub
- Describe a hotel
- Describe your favourite room in your house
- Describe your accommodation
- Describe a newspaper or magazine
- Describe a wild animal
- Describe a dish you like
- Describe a website you often visit
- Describe a way of transportation
- Describe an important decision in your life
- Describe a birthday celebration
- Describe a short course
- Describe a bad weather
- Describe a difficult thing
- Describe your favourite music
- Describe your ideal job
- Describe an ambition of yours

Chapter 4

Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test

Unit 1

How to Prepare for Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test

1. An Overview of Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test

This stage of the Speaking test requires you to take part in a discussion of more abstract concepts and issues which will be linked to the topic you discussed in Part 2. Topics that may be discussed include your plans for the immediate and long-term future, and the impact that these may have on you and your family. Your opinions about attitudes towards, and reasons for your particular future plans may also be discussed. The time limit for Part 3 is about 4 – 5 minutes. You will be scored on how well you are able to communicate effectively in English. The examiner will help you and move the conversation along.

To start this section, the examiner may say to you:

“OK. We’ve been talking about X and now I’d like to discuss with you some questions related to this.” (“X” refers to the subject discussed in Part 2).

The questions in this part will be more demanding and require some critical analysis on the part of the candidate. For example, for the question about a holiday destination in Part 2, the examiner might choose to ask you questions about tourism and the airline industry. Some typical questions related to this topic might be:

- Can you describe the main tourist attractions in your city?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages that tourism brings?
- Can you talk about some of the possible future changes in tourism?

If in Part 2, you have talked about your favourite foods, then questions in Part 3 might be:

- What are the benefits and disadvantages of inviting people to eat at home or in a restaurant?
- In what way do you think people would change their eating habits in the future?
- What is the difference between meals people have today and in the past?

2. Preparing for Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test

This part of the test focuses on the candidate’s ability to express and justify opinions, and to analyse, discuss, and speculate about issues. If you did not hear a question clearly, ask the examiner to repeat it. If there is something you do not understand, ask for clarification. This is part of a normal conversation, and will show your ability to react appropriately in this sort of situation. What you must not do is just sit blankly and say nothing. You can start with the following utterances:

I don’t think that there are many changes in this area. Anyway, the one I can see is ...
Comparatively speaking, the newspaper as the news media is more reliable than the Internet is.
I would say that there might be some changes in tourism in the future.
In my opinion, there are a few differences, but the biggest one is ...

You then try your best to give answers in a logical way with clear explanations, specific examples, and justifications. The following expressions are very useful in answering this part:

There are two reasons, I suppose.
First of all ... Then ... Next ... Finally ...
On the one hand ... On the other hand ...
One is ... The other is ...

Finally, try to avoid too broad generalisations in your answers. For example:

E: What is the difference between meals people have today and in the past?

C: Meals people have today are a lot better than what people had in the past, I think. Nowadays people can eat more sensibly.

You should expand or elaborate on the points that you have made: *In what way are meals better? Food? Taste? or Nutrition?* Also, *what does more sensibly specifically mean?* Try to offer some explanations and examples to back up these ideas or statements.

In addition, while thinking about your ideas in your head, or you need time to collect your thoughts, use expressions (sparingly) like:

Um,
Well,
Actually,
In fact,
You see,
You know,
How shall I put it,
It's like this, you know,
Let me think for a second.
That is an interesting question I've never thought about before.
Just give me a minute to collect my thoughts.
Well, that is a big question. Let me think for a moment.
Actually, it depends. Different people have different ideas. My idea is ...
Well, that is a good point. I would explain in this way.
It is not so easy to describe my thoughts.
I'm not exactly sure how to answer the question, but ...
That is a rather difficult question, perhaps ...
I am sorry that I don't know much about that.

Do not panic when you cannot understand the questions right away. Part 3 is really more difficult than Parts 1 and 2. The examiner will want to see the ‘ceiling’ of your English ability. That is why the questions are getting harder. If you really do not understand any question, you may ask the examiner to repeat it, or rephrase it for you. The following sentences are very beneficial for you in this situation:

I am sorry. I don't quite understand what you mean by X.
I didn't quite follow what you were saying about X.
Excuse me, could you explain what you mean by X?
I don't quite see what you mean, I'm afraid.
I am afraid I'm not really very clear about what you mean by X.
I don't quite see what you are getting at.
Sorry, I didn't quite catch you. Would you mind repeating your question?
I am not quite sure what you mean. Could you repeat your question?
Sorry, I didn't quite understand what you were talking about. Does it mean that ...?
Excuse me, I didn't quite catch you. Do you want me to talk about ...?
Sorry, are you asking me to talk about ...?

Last of all, the interviewer will conclude the Speaking test by simply saying something like: “*Thank you very much. This is the end of the Speaking test.*” Now it is time for you to stand up and say goodbye to the examiner. These are common leave-taking expressions you may use:

Thank you for your time.
Nice talking to you.
I enjoyed talking with you. Goodbye.
Hope to see you again.
Goodbye.

3. A Sample of Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test

E: Examiner C: Candidate

(This carries on from where Part 2 left off in Chapter 3.)

E: OK. We've been talking about food and I'd like to discuss with you some questions related to this. First of all, let's talk about eating habits. What do you think are the benefits and disadvantages of inviting people to eat at home or in a restaurant?

C: Both ways have advantages and disadvantages. Inviting people to eat at home creates a warmer atmosphere and at the same time, it can also be a lot cheaper to cook at home. But, the problem is that it may take much time for preparation and become a burden to the host-

ess or the host. The hostess or host cannot relax before and after the meal. So, sometimes inviting people to eat out in restaurants is a better choice. Of course, normally it costs more to do so because service is part of the cost, but you may enjoy a more relaxing time with the people invited. And, what is more, you can choose from a variety of dishes, which are not easily cooked at home.

E: What is the difference between meals people have today and in the past?

C: Yeah, what we eat today is different from what people ate many years ago. The difference is, I think, the food is a lot better in terms of variety and abundance. We have more choices these days while in the past, we could only eat whatever we had. And people eat more sensibly too. They will consider more about nutrition and try to have a more balanced diet.

E: What do you think of science in food production?

C: Science in food production? Personally, I don't like it so much. I think that all those chemicals they use to preserve foods must be extremely harmful to humans although you cannot tell the immediate effect right now. When I buy food, I prefer the 100% natural ones without any artificial flavours or other additives.

E: In what way do you think people will change their eating habits in the future?

C: Well, it is hard to say. Give me one second for this, em, the only change I can think of right now is people may be more picky about food. For example, they may be more worried about the chemicals contained in the food or on vegetables or meat, so they may become more interested in organic food.

E: Thank you very much. This is the end of the interview.

C: Thank you. Nice talking to you. Bye.

✦

Unit 2 Discussion Practice for Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test

Description



Sample Study 1

Can you describe the main function of newspapers?

On the whole, newspapers are meant to provide information about current events in our communities, our cities, our country, and our world. The journalists work hard to make sure stories are accurate, interesting and up-to-date. Most people buy a newspaper because they want to read the latest news. They often look at the newspaper headlines to see what the top stories are. However, newspapers also provide other information besides news. Some people want to read the advertisements more than the news. These people are often looking for a job or eager to find a good price for something they want to buy. Newspapers also have many advertisements that tell about which companies are hiring employees, what new products are available, and other opportunities that everyone should try. So, I would have to say that there are two main functions of newspapers – the first one is to provide current news, and the second function is advertising.

Glossary

accurate /'æk.jə.rət/ *adj* correct, exact and without any mistakes

advertisement /əd'vɜː.tɪs.mənt/ *n* [C] (informal **ad**, UK also informal **advert**) a picture, short film, song, etc. which tries to persuade people to buy a product or service

community /kə'mjuː.nə.ti/ *n* [C + sing/pl verb] all the people living in a place; the place where they live

eager /'iː.gər/ *adj* wanting very much to do or have something, especially something interesting or enjoyable

function /'fʌŋk.jən/ *n* [C] the natural purpose (of something) or the duty (of a person)

journalist /'dʒɜː.nə.lɪst/ *n* [C] a person who writes news stories or articles for a newspaper or magazine or broadcasts them on radio or television

up-to-date /ˌʌp.tə'deɪt/ *adj* modern, recent, or containing the latest information

Sample Study 2

What role does music play in our life?

Music plays a large role in our lives – but its effect is not always obvious. Babies learn through music. They can learn new ideas – such as knowledge about animals and many other things, and even learn their own language through the use of music. Children love to sing and dance to express

their happiness. Teenagers often find music helpful to express their feelings. Adults listen to music to relax after a stressful day. And elderly people frequently gather together in parks to dance or sing. This is their form of entertainment and enjoyment. So you can see that throughout our lifetime, music plays a significant role in each stage of our lives.

Glossary

obvious /'ɒb.vi.əs/ *adj* clear; easy to see, recognise or understand

significant /sɪɡ'nɪf.ɪ.kənt/ *adj* important or noticeable

stressful /'stres.fəl/ *adj* causing a lot of worry

teenager /'ti:n,eɪ.dʒər/ *n* [C] (informal **teen**) a young person between 13 and 19 years old

Useful Sentence Structures

In the first place, ...

In the first place, I don't think it is realistic to solve the problem in this way.

Generally speaking, ...

Generally speaking, travelling to a new country is an eye-opening experience.

On the whole, ...

On the whole, our education system is very well run.

The main function/role/point of (noun) is (to-infinitive phrase).

The main point of exercise is to make your body physically fit.

(noun) is/are basically supposed to (infinitive phrase).

Children are basically supposed to listen to their elders.

In addition, ...

It is not an effective way. In addition, it costs too much to get it down.

I have been told that (noun clause).

I have been told that they never trust companies who are behind with the payments.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements of description.

1. main point/disciplining children/to teach them right from wrong

2. computers/basically supposed/help us organise our thoughts, not think for us

3. on the whole/speaking a foreign language fluently/much more difficult than it appears

4. Taichi / basically supposed / provide exercise and relaxation
5. generally speaking / women enjoy very deep friendships
6. main function / examinations / check how much students have learned
7. in the first place / marriage provides love and companionship
8. in addition / children learn much faster than adults
9. good friends / basically supposed / help each other
10. on the whole / living in the city / provide / many opportunities for learning

2. For each of the topics below, write down your ideas about the main function / purpose, and one or two examples to illustrate your ideas.

	Main function / purpose	Examples
Sports		
Watching TV		
Vacations		
Computers		
Books		

3. The following passage is about accommodation in Britain for overseas students. Read it and in your own words, answer the questions below the passage.

Accommodation

Before you leave your home country, make sure that you have arranged for somewhere to live in Britain, even if it is only temporary accommodation.

Do not come to Britain hoping that you will be able to find accommodation when you arrive. Accommodation is not easy to find, especially in September when thousands of other new students are also looking for somewhere to live. It can take weeks to find suitable accommodation, or accommodation that you can afford.

As a student, there will be a variety of different types of accommodation available to you. The types of accommodation can be divided into two main categories:

Accommodation owned and maintained by the college where you will be studying. Universities and polytechnics are more likely to have this type of accommodation than smaller colleges.

Private accommodation, unconnected with the college but which the college may find for you, or help you to find.

If you are coming to Britain for the first time, it is probably a good idea to use the college accommodation. It is difficult to organise private accommodation if you are not in Britain. Also, college accommodation provides a comfortable base from which you can get to know the town or city where you are studying and discover the type of accommodation you might want to move to later on.

Most colleges which have their own accommodation give priority to new students. Some colleges will guarantee accommodation to students from overseas for the duration of their course.

As soon as you know that you have a place at a college:

- A. Find out whether the college provides accommodation.
- B. If the college does provide accommodation, they will ask you to complete a form requesting accommodation. They will normally send this form to you along with the offer of a place on a course. There will be a closing date for application for accommodation, so return the form before this date.
- C. If the college does not provide accommodation, find out whether there is an accommodation office, or somewhere at the college that helps students to find accommodation.
- D. If not, you must begin to look for your own accommodation.

Glossary

application /æp.li'keɪʃən/ *n* [C or U] an official request for something, usually in writing

available /ə'veɪ.lə.bəl/ *adj* able to be bought, used, or reached

category /'kæt.ə.ɡri/ *n* [C] a group of things that have similar qualities

guarantee /gə.rən'ti:/ *v* [T] to promise that something will happen or exist

maintain /mem'teɪn/ *v* [T] to continue to have

offer /'ɒf.ər/ *n* [C] a statement in which you are willing to give someone something if they want it

polytechnic /,pɒl.i'tek.nɪk/ *n* [C] (informal **poly**) (especially in Britain before 1992) a college where students study for degrees, especially in technical subjects, or train for particular types of work

private /'praɪ.vət/ *adj* only for one person or group and not for everyone

temporary /'temp.ər.ər.i/ *adj* not lasting or needed for very long

variety /və'raɪ.ə.ti/ *n* [C, singular] several different types of people or things

Questions

1. What does the passage suggest you do before you come to Britain and why?
2. What are the two categories of accommodation you might find as a student?
3. Why is the college accommodation a better choice for those who are coming to Britain for the first time?
4. What are the things you should do after you know that you are accepted by a college?

Agreement / Disagreement



Sample Study 1

Do you think that advertisements help people make choices?

In my opinion, advertisements are useful in helping people make choices. They provide information about what products are available and how much they cost. Without advertisements, people would only buy something they already know about, even though a better product might be available. Of course, we should also remember that the main purpose of advertisements is to make money for the company. People should learn to be careful when looking at advertisements so that they do not get cheated.

Glossary

advertisement /əd'vɜːtɪs.mənt/ *n* [C] (informal **ad**, UK also informal **advert**) a picture, short film, song, etc. which tries to persuade people to buy a product or service

purpose /'pɜː.pəs/ *n* [C] why you do something or why something exists

Sample Study 2

Do you agree with the idea that we are too dependent on technology today?

Yes, I believe we are absolutely too dependent on technology these days. You only have to see what happens when something breaks down to know that we are heavily dependent on technology. Let me give you a few examples. In communicating with one another, people used to visit each other to talk. Later, they would talk by telephone. Now, people send e-mails, chat on the Internet, and send messages through their mobile phones. People have moved away from face-to-face communication. At work, most companies rely heavily on computers. If there is a problem with the computer system, some employees cannot work at all. Sometimes the whole company must wait until the computers are repaired. At school, students used to do their homework by writing it out or using a typewriter. Now, many students will do their homework using a computer. They are not used to writing things by hand anymore, and students' handwriting is of poorer quality than students from previous generations. So, you can see that we are definitely too dependent on technology these days.

Glossary

communicate /kə'mjuː.nɪ.keɪt/ *v* [I or T] to share information with others by speaking, writing, or using other signals

dependent /dɪ'pen.dənt/ *adj* (on/upon sth) influenced or decided by something

employee /ɪm'plɔɪ.iː/ *n* [C] someone who is paid to work for someone else

previous /'priː.vi.əs/ *adj* [before noun] happening or existing before something or someone else

typewriter /'taɪp.raɪ.tər/ *n* [C] a machine with keys that you press to produce letters and numbers on paper

Useful Sentence Structures

I believe (noun phrase) is absolutely (adjective phrase).

I believe equality for women is absolutely necessary for our country to grow.

I totally support the position that (adjective clause).

I totally support the position that we need to protect our endangered animals.

As far as I'm concerned, I couldn't agree more about (gerund phrase).

As far as I'm concerned, I couldn't agree more about making higher education available to everyone.

For me, I disagree about/that (noun phrase/clause).

For me, I disagree about men having to do housework.

For me, I disagree that men have to do housework.

I completely disagree when it comes to (noun phrase).

I completely disagree when it comes to students working part-time jobs.

In my opinion, (noun phrase) is absolutely (adjective).

In my opinion, child labour is absolutely wrong.

I find it difficult to reach a conclusion on (noun phrase).

I find it difficult to reach a conclusion on the perspective she has.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements of agreement and disagreement.

1. totally support/position/war causes more damage than good

2. for me/disagree/putting too much pressure on students

3. I believe/good attitude/absolutely essential

4. in my opinion/no way dishonesty/right

5. as far as I'm concerned/couldn't agree more/eating healthy foods and getting adequate exercise

6. completely disagree/comes to/children showing disrespect to parents

7. for me/ agree/ everyone should have a chance to travel
8. totally support/ position/ rich people should pay higher taxes than poor people
9. in my opinion/ bullying/ absolutely getting out of hand
10. completely agree/ comes to/ adult children taking care of their elderly parents

2. Read the following statements and explain why you agree or disagree with them.

1. Men and women are basically very similar.
2. The only difference between men and women is their physical characteristics.
3. Women live longer than men.
4. Men are more intelligent than women.
5. Men have a better sense of space and direction than women.
6. A wife should earn less money than her husband.
7. Men should help to look after the children.
8. Women are better at driving a car than men.
9. Men can do anything women can do.
10. Women can do anything men can do.

3. Read the following passage about how to raise children. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the ideas presented and explain why.

The Best Way to Raise Children

Most parents today struggle to balance the demands of working full-time, taking care of household duties, and raising their children. And most parents feel strongly that they want to provide their children with every possible opportunity and enriching experience to help them do well in life. Not only do parents want to keep their children safe and teach them the values they feel important, they also want to give their children the best possible opportunities in life to help them be successful. But perhaps what children and parents both need these days is a completely different approach.

One of the most basic needs of each human is to be understood and loved. Children all want unconditional love and respect as unique individuals. They want to be accepted for who they are, recognised for their unique talents, differences, and gifts. They want to be seen as acceptable and precious, regardless of how much they are like their parents or completely opposite to their parents. This atmosphere of acceptance is the best way to raise happy and confident children. A happy and healthy child is one who is loved without conditions and understood without judgement.

But to fully understand, accept, and appreciate a child's uniqueness, parents must first come to know who he or she really is. Discovering a child's true personality is the first and most important step. Once parents understand their child, they can encourage their child in ways that work effectively with their child's particular personality type. Encouraging and responding to a child according to their personality type will be the most effective way to raising happy and confident children. When a child is happy and confident, he/she is able to do his/her best in school and work, and is free to be successful in the world.

Glossary

balance /'bæl.ənts/ *v* [T] to give several things equal amounts of importance, time or money so that a situation is successful

confident /'kɒn.fɪ.dənt/ *adj* someone who is confident believes in their own abilities and so does not feel nervous or frightened

enrich /ɪn'ri:tʃ/ *v* [T] to improve the quality of something by adding something else

household /'haʊs.həʊld/ *adj* [only before noun] used in homes, or relating to homes

individual /,ɪn.dɪ'vɪd.ju.əl/ *n* [C] a person who thinks or behaves in their own original way

opportunity /,ɒp.ə'tjuː.nə.ti/ *n* [C or U] an occasion or situation which makes it possible to do something that you want to do or have to do, or the possibility of doing something

unconditional /ˌʌn.kən'dɪʃ.ən.əl/ *adj* complete and not limited in any way

unique /juː'ni:k/ *adj* being the only existing one of its type, or not like anybody or anything else

Comparison and Contrast



Sample Study 1

Can you compare the transportation we have now with what we had in the past?

Well, despite all the changes that have occurred over the years, one thing that has remained more or less the same is the bicycle. For a long time, people have loved to ride their bicycles to work or school, and for some people, it is the best and only way to travel. Some things that have changed have been the number of cars on the road. There's no comparison between now and the past; there are many more privately-owned cars than before. Another main difference is that the public bus system has improved. Buses are more modern and comfortable, and there are many convenient bus routes to take people where they want to go. In some bigger cities that have underground transportation, the subway systems have all been improved and modernised. So, almost all of these changes have been for the better. The only thing that has not improved is the traffic jams. But perhaps we will never get rid of them.

Glossary

occur /ə'kɜ:r/ v [I] (-rr-) to happen

privately-owned *adj*

privately /'praɪ.vət.li/ *adv* by a person or company and not by the government

own /əʊn/ v [T, not continuous] to have something that legally belongs to you

route /ru:t/ n [C] a particular way or direction between places

Sample Study 2

What is the difference between weekday clothes and weekend clothes?

Weekday clothes are usually more formal than weekend clothes because on weekdays people are usually going to work, whereas on the weekend they are free to relax, stay at home, or go out. Actually, that probably is true for working people. They usually dress nicely or wear a uniform for work. On the weekend, they can choose whatever they want to wear. I suppose some people might dress up more on the weekend than they do for their jobs, while others would dress more casually on weekends. For students, they usually wear their school uniform on weekdays, and can choose to wear whatever they want on weekends. For the very young and the very old, there is probably not much difference between their weekday clothes and weekend clothes since they do not go to school or work. They can freely choose to wear whatever they want.

Useful Sentence Structures

Despite the fact that (noun clause), it is still (adjective phrase).

Despite the fact that it is more dangerous to travel nowadays, it is still exciting to visit a new country and experience a new culture.

On the contrary, ...

On the contrary, people should also save money instead of just spending it carelessly.

Comparatively speaking, ...

Comparatively speaking, eating out in restaurants at weekends is more fun than cooking at home.

The main difference between (gerund phrase) and (gerund phrase) is that (gerund phrase) is ...

The main difference between being single and being married is that being single is freer than being married.

(noun) is more (adjective) than (noun) because ...

Children are more carefree than adults because they have less to worry about.

(noun phrase) and (noun phrase) are completely different because ...

Love for parents and love for friends are completely different because they are expressed in different ways.

There is no comparison between (gerund phrase) and (gerund phrase). (gerund phrase) is ...

There is no comparison between driving a car and riding a bike. Driving a car is much more fun and convenient.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements of comparison and contrast.

1. dogs/better pets/cats/because/more loyal

2. main difference/sending an e-mail/phoning a friend/is that/sending an e-mail/more convenient to do/but/not as personal as/phone/a friend

3. no comparison/living standard today/living standard 50 years ago

4. main difference/owning your own home/renting an apartment/is that/take more care/your own home

5. food in central Vietnam/food in south Vietnam/completely different/because/one/very spicy/other is not

- 6. no comparison / studying English in Vietnam / studying English abroad / much easier / study English / an English-speaking country
- 7. men / more easily employed / women / because some companies believe / men / contribute more / their company than women
- 8. comparatively speaking / children / more optimistic / adults
- 9. despite the fact / English is becoming the world's common language / Chinese / still spoken by more people / than English
- 10. on the contrary / traditional Chinese medicine / better for the body / Western medicine

2. Use the table below to write down several similarities and differences for each of the topics given. Discuss your ideas with your partner.

	Similarities	Differences
A sports star / an ordinary person		
City / country		
Eating out in restaurants / eating at home		
Summer / winter		
Travelling alone / travelling with a group		

3. Read the following passage introducing life in Britain and compare life in Vietnam with life in Britain. Try to find out the similarities and differences.

The people

British people have always had a reputation for being cold and reserved. Though, it would be more accurate to say that British people are very private. British society is very much an “indoor” society and this is probably because of the climate. People living in warmer countries lead a much more “outdoor” life, and therefore less private life, than people from cooler climates.

British people also find it difficult to show emotions in public. It is very unusual to see them arguing, embracing (especially men), crying, and even being extremely happy in public places. Usually they are more inhibited and modest. However, it is difficult to generalise about a group of people who are so different.

You may find that British people take a long time to get to know, but once you do, you will find that most of them are as warm and friendly as anyone else.

Meals in a British home

Mealtimes for the British, perhaps with the exception of younger people, follow quite a fixed pattern.

Breakfast is usually eaten between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. and will probably consist of cereal with milk followed by toast. It is quite rare to find people eating a “traditional English breakfast” of bacon, eggs and sausages, except perhaps on weekends.

Lunch (as it is called in some parts of Britain) or dinner (as it is called in other parts) is the mid-day meal and can be anything from a sandwich to a three-course meal. The evening meal is either called dinner or tea. If you are invited for tea, don't just expect to be given a drink. Tea is often a light meal eaten in the late afternoon or early evening. Many people regard eating out in restaurants as a luxury.

People often socialise by visiting each other at home, but unless you know someone very well, it is not usual to “drop in” (visit) without being invited. If you are invited to someone's house for a meal, it is customary to take a small gift such as a bottle of wine, some flowers or chocolates.

Family life

You may find family life in Britain very different from family life in your home country. Although family ties are usually quite strong, it is not usual to find the whole family, including grandparents, aunts and cousins, living together in the same house, or even in the same town.

In general, if a young person leaves his or her home town to attend university, they very rarely come back to the same town at the end of their course. Many get married and set up their own home or move to where they think they will be able to get a job.

Pets

Many British families have at least one pet, a tame animal, which lives in the house with them and which they treat as part of the family. Dogs and cats are favourite types of pets but you will also find birds, goldfish, rabbits, hamsters and even mice!

Glossary

argue /'ɑ:g.ju:/ *v* [I] to speak angrily to someone, telling them that you disagree with them

cereal /'siə.ri.əl/ *n* [C or U] a food that is made from grain and eaten with milk, especially in the morning

course /kɔ:s/ *n* [C] a part of a meal which is served separately from the other parts; a set of classes or a plan of study on a particular subject, usually resulting in an examination or qualification

customary /'kʌs.tə.mər.i/ *adj* traditional

embrace /ɪm'breɪs/ *v* [I or T] (literary) to hold someone tightly with both arms to express love, or when greeting or leaving someone

emotion /ɪ'məʊ.ʃən/ *n* [C or U] a strong feeling such as love or anger, or strong feelings in general

extremely /ɪk'stri:m.li/ *adv* very

generalise /'dʒen.ər.əl.aɪz/ *v* [I] to say or write something very basic, based on limited facts, that is partly or sometimes true, but not always

hamster /'hæmp.stər/ *n* [C] a small animal that people keep as a pet. It is covered in fur with a short tail and large spaces in each side of its mouth which are used for storing food.

inhibited /ɪn'hɪb.ɪ.tɪd/ *adj* not confident enough to say or do what you want

modest /'mɒd.ɪst/ *adj* (approving) not usually talking about or making obvious your own abilities and achievements

pattern /'pæt.ən/ *n* [C] a particular way in which something is done, organised or happens

rare /reər/ *adj* not common; very unusual

reputation /,rep.jə'teɪ.ʃən/ *n* [C, usually singular or U] the opinion that people in general have about someone or something

reserved /rɪ'zɜ:vɪd/ *adj* someone who is reserved tends not often talk about or show their feelings

sausage /'sɒs.ɪdʒ/ *n* [C or U] a thin tube-like case containing meat which has been cut into very small pieces and mixed with spices

socialise /'səʊ.ʃəl.aɪz/ *v* [I] to spend the time when you are not working with friends or with other people in order to enjoy yourself

tame /teɪm/ *adj* (especially of animals) not wild or dangerous

toast /təʊst/ *n* [U] sliced bread made warm, crisp (= hard enough to break) and brown by being put near a high heat

Similarities

People:

Meals:

Family life:

Pets:

Differences

People:

Meals:

Family life:

Pets:

Evaluation



Sample Study 1

Based on the benefits and disadvantages tourism brings, what do you think of tourism?

From my point of view, tourism is basically a good way for a country to generate income from outside sources. I mean that instead of taking money from the citizens of a country, people from other countries bring money into your country which helps your country to prosper. A further advantage of tourism is jobs. Tourism provides many jobs to people, and this is good for the country's economy and also for society. If people are employed, they can help their country's economy to grow. In addition, they won't have too much time to complain and get into trouble. What I mean is that when people are working and making their own money, they are less likely to commit crimes in order to get things they cannot normally afford. So, this is good for society because it helps people to be responsible citizens. Just from these two examples, you can see that overall, tourism is a good thing.

Glossary

commit /kə'mit/ *v* [T] (-tt-) to do something illegal or something that is considered wrong
economy /i'kɒn.ə.mi/ *n* [C] the system of trade and industry by which the wealth of a country is made and used
generate /'dʒen.ər.ɪt/ *v* [T] to cause something to exist

normally /'nɔː.mə.li/ *adv* usually, regularly
overall /,əv.və'rɔːl/ *adv, adj* [before noun] in general rather than in particular
prosper /'prɒs.pər/ *v* [I] (of a person or a business) to be or become successful, especially financially

Sample Study 2

What do you think about the balance between work and leisure?

I don't think some people are good at balancing work and leisure. There are people who work 12 hours a day, 6 or 7 days a week. Their work is very demanding and they have little time to rest. Some people enjoy working long hours and don't mind missing out on leisure time. They are called "workaholics". Others are very unhappy about their jobs. Money is no longer a problem, but they don't have any time to enjoy the money they make. I suppose that some jobs require very long hours, and that each person can choose to take a demanding job with high pay or a less demanding job with regular hours and slightly less pay. Personally, I think that money isn't everything. I would take a job that has regular hours and slightly less pay, as long as I have enough money to live on.

Glossary

demanding /di'mɑːn.dɪŋ/ *adj* needing a lot of time, attention or energy
slightly /'slɑːt.li/ *adv* a little

workaholic /wɜː.kə'hɒl.ɪk/ *n* [C] a person who works a lot of the time and finds it difficult not to work

Useful Sentence Structures

All things considered, I think that ...

All things considered, I think that hosting the Olympics is very good for a country.

From my point of view, I think ...

From my point of view, I think watching too much TV is bad for children.

Personally, I think that ...

Personally, I think that children should be seen and not heard.

I don't find (noun phrase) particularly (adjective phrase).

I don't find young people these days particularly interested in saving money for the future.

One of the advantages/disadvantages of (noun phrase) is ...

One of the advantages of the Internet is that we can learn more information quickly.

The main drawback/problem with (noun/gerund phrase) is ...

The main drawback with focusing on your career is that you have no energy and time left for your family.

A further advantage of (noun/gerund phrase) is ...

A further advantage of living with your parents is not having to be responsible to pay the bills each month.

To summarise, ...

To summarise, the positive side is much stronger than the negative side.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements of evaluation.

1. all things considered/hard to do well in one's career and also take good care of one's family at the same time

2. from my point of view/advertisements/changed over the past 10 years

3. personally/young people too easily change jobs nowadays

4. I/not/find children these days particularly respectful of their elders

5. one of the advantages/studying English/can get a better job

6. the main problem / high school / too much pressure to study for exams
7. a further advantage / learning Taichi / good for your body
8. to summarise / living in the country / provide / us / fresher air and a healthier lifestyle / living in the city
9. one of the disadvantages / being overweight / poor health
10. the main drawback / putting money in the bank / can't take it out after the bank closes for the day

2. Consider the following topics and discuss the advantages and disadvantages. What is your opinion? Which side do you feel more strongly about?

Topic 1

A new factory will be built in your home town. Below are some comments concerning this proposal. Read each comment, and then write "A" if it is an advantage, or "D" if it is a disadvantage.

- a. Our town is peaceful now.
- b. A new factory will provide jobs.
- c. Industries cause pollution of the environment.
- d. Large factories create a lot of noise and traffic.
- e. The standard of living will increase as more people have jobs.
- f. A new factory will help the small businesses in town.
- g. Crime rates are higher in industrialised areas.
- h. A new industry will raise the standard of other factories.
- i. Our town is very friendly because everyone knows each other.
- j. Let's keep our town clean.
- k. Our town needs better recreational facilities for the children.
- l. Many families say their children want to leave home to work in the city.
- m. Public transportation will improve with a new factory.
- n. We will have to adapt to new thoughts and ideas.

Topic 2

A new policy states that middle schools should encourage students to watch two or three hours of TV each day. Some comments concerning this proposal are on the next page. Read each comment, and then write "A" if it is an advantage, or "D" if it is a disadvantage.

- a. Children will have less time and motivation to study.
- b. Commercials often give false information about products, and will mislead the viewers.
- c. It is easier to remember something learned from TV than from a book.
- d. Radiation from TV could ruin their eyes.
- e. Students can see what is going on in the world.
- f. Students will get fat and lazy due to lack of exercise.
- g. There is a lack of quality programmes.
- h. TV breaks families apart because they stop talking with each other.
- i. TV is an easily accessible form of education and entertainment.
- j. TV programmes can bring families together not only to watch them, but also to discuss them.
- k. TV provides an opportunity to continue learning through “distance education” programming.
- l. TV shows with violence and sex can have a negative influence on children.
- m. Viewers can learn about new products through shows and commercials.
- n. We can learn different things by watching TV.

3. Read the passage *Our Best Friends*. Answer the questions, and tell how you look at animals in our life by giving reasons.

Our Best Friends

It is all right to have pets, isn't it? A few animal rights activists say this is not “natural”. But what would happen to the more than 100 million dogs and cats in this country if they weren't living in our homes?

The average dog or cat leads a pretty easy, comfortable life. Most pet owners give their animals great amounts of love along with food and medical care. And most people are responsible enough to have their animals sprayed or neutered to make sure they do not add to the overpopulation problem.

But not all pets are so lucky. Some owners leave pets in cars on hot days where they may suffocate. Others tie animals up for hours or even days at a time. Some even forget to provide the proper food, water, and medicine. Still others take out their anger on their animals or simply abandon them.

Animal rights issues can make people very angry. Too often, people with extreme positions end up scraming at each other. They do not take the time to understand the other side. This does not result in progress. It does not help animals live with human beings in peace.

For centuries, few human voices were raised on behalf of voiceless animals. But nowadays, questions about the rights of animals need to be asked. The abuse of animals needs to be exposed. Often, extreme behaviour is needed to make people look at what is happening and work hard to make changes.

But are animals more important than humans? Should we stop animal research that can save human lives? Should we drastically change the way we live, the food we eat, the products we use? Solving this dilemma may be possible only when both sides meet more often in the middle.

Glossary

abandon /ə'bæn.dən/ *v* [T] to leave a place, thing or person forever

abuse /ə'bju:z/ *n* [U] cruel, violent, or unfair treatment

dilemma /daɪ'lem.ə/ *n* [C] a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two different things you could do

drastically /'dræs.tɪ.kli/ *adv* severely or extremely

extreme /ɪk'stri:m/ *adj* considered unreasonable by most people

neuter /'nju:.tər/ *v* [T] to remove part of an animal's sexual organs so that it cannot reproduce

overpopulation /,əv.və,pɒp.jʊ'leɪ,ʃən/ *n* [U] the state of having too many people living in a country or city

scream /skri:m/ *v* [I or T] to cry or say something loudly, especially because of fear, excitement or anger

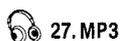
spray /spreɪ/ *v* [I or T, usually + adv/prep] to spread liquid in small drops over an area in order to kill insects or to prevent diseases

suffocate /'sʌf.ə.kert/ *v* [I or T] to (cause someone to) die because they do not have enough oxygen

Questions

1. Is it all right to have pets?
2. What do pet owners usually do?
3. What may happen to pets if they are lucky enough?
4. Can you guess what the extreme positions are?
5. Do you think that animals are more important than people?
6. Do we have to change our diet, stop animal research and set pets free?

Speculation



Sample Study 1

In what way do you think people will change their eating habits in the future?

Hmm. This is a hard question. In my opinion, it's quite likely that as the standard of living rises, people will be more selective about what foods they want to eat. They will try different foods, more expensive foods, and foods from other countries. There's a good chance that there will be more restaurants, many more restaurants with food from different countries, and better quality of food and presentation. Another change I predict is that people will want more convenience and fast foods. At home, they will buy prepackaged and ready-to-eat meals so that they don't have to spend as much time shopping and cooking. As people become busier with their jobs, they will want to eat their meals more quickly so that they have more time for other things.

Glossary

convenience food /kən'vi:ni.ənts ,fu:d/ *n* [C or U] food that is almost ready to eat when it is bought and can be prepared quickly and easily

prepacked /,pri:'pækt/ *adj* (US usually **prepackaged**) wrapped or put into a container before being sold

presentation /,prez.ən'tei.ʃən/ *n* [U] the way something looks when it is shown to other people, or the way someone looks

selective /sɪ'lektɪv/ *adj* intentionally choosing some things and not others

Sample Study 2

How much of today's technology will still be used in 50 years' time?

This is a very interesting question for me. Actually, I think that there's a good chance that none of today's technology will be used in 50 years' time. The reason, I think, is because technology is advancing at such a fast pace that much of what we use nowadays did not exist even 10 or 20 years ago. And if we consider what technology was like 50 years ago, we can already see how fast things have developed and changed. By looking back 50 years, we can already see what 50 years of progress in technology looks like, and there's no doubt that future technology will have a completely different look and approach. Technology in 50 years' time may very well be so vastly different from today's technology that people will laugh at our backwardness and simple lives. It's exciting and thought-provoking to just think what might happen with developments in technology.

Glossary

advance /əd'vɑ:nts/ *v* [I or T] to go or move something forward, or to develop or improve something

approach /ə'prəʊtʃ/ *n* [C] a way of considering or doing something

backwardness /'bæk.wəd.nəs/ *n* [U] the state of having made less progress than normal

thought-provoking /θɔ:t.prə'vɔ:kɪŋ/ *adj* making you think a lot about a subject

vastly /'vɑ:st.li/ *adv* very much

Useful Sentence Structures

It's quite likely that (noun phrase) will (verb phrase).

It's quite likely that car prices will go up.

(noun phrase) may very well (verb phrase).

The stock market may very well reach an all-time high later this year.

It's possible that (noun phrase) will (verb phrase).

It's possible that the government will reduce taxes next year.

There's a good chance that (noun phrase) will (verb phrase).

There's a good chance that the world will have one common language in the future.

(noun phrase) will definitely (verb phrase).

Today's university students will definitely be great leaders of our country.

There's no doubt that (noun) will (verb phrase).

There's no doubt that people will be upset about the new policies.

I cannot say for certain that (noun clause), but (noun clause).

I cannot say for certain that it will happen, but everything looks that way.

On the condition that (noun clause), then for sure (noun clause).

On the condition that it becomes warmer and warmer, then for sure some measures from the government must be taken.

Oral Exercises

1. Using the suggested phrases below, make statements of speculation.

1. quite likely/elderly parents/need someone to take care of them

2. good chance/this winter/extremely cold

3. no doubt/employees/unhappy about the pay cut

4. our standard of living/may very well/reach a new high

5. possible/marriage/change him for the better

6. studying English/definitely/be very useful in the future

7. quite unlikely/ teachers/ give students less homework
8. impossible/ she/ make a lot of money from that small business
9. advances/ technology/ may very well eliminate further jobs
10. possible/ working full-time/ help her settle into a routine

2. Read the following unfinished stories, and talk about what might happen next.

Story 1

What Happened to Karen?

It was a dark and stormy night. Rain poured down, lightning lit up the night sky, and thunder echoed throughout the city. Robert sat in a café sipping his coffee, and stared out of the window at the storm. But where was Karen? Why wasn't she here yet? Robert couldn't help feeling worried. She was usually on time. What was delaying her now? He looked at the clock again. Twenty-five minutes late. Robert thought back to the last time he met Karen at the café. They had enjoyed such a nice time together. He wanted to ask her to marry him. But Karen had seemed very nervous when they parted last time, and it didn't seem like the right time to ask. She didn't want him to walk her home. Robert was confused. Did that have anything to do with her being late this evening? Wait, who was that? Robert saw a dark shadow hurrying past the café. It looked like Karen.

Story 2

What Will Katie Do?

Katie was now in her third year of university. She felt like she had been studying Business Management forever. This wasn't what Katie had imagined when she first signed up to study Business. Since her first year in university, Katie knew she had chosen the wrong major. She was an artist, not a businessperson. Nevertheless, Katie had studied diligently and done reasonably well. She wanted to please her parents but was becoming increasingly depressed about her life. Her parents had encouraged her to choose Business as her major, saying that studying Business would help her find a good job after she graduated. At the time, Katie thought it was a good idea. She could do some painting and drawing in her spare time. Now, she felt like she was dying. She didn't want to see another business textbook or hear another lecture. She was even losing interest in art. Last week a new idea had come to Katie. At first, she felt that she couldn't possibly do that. But it seemed like the best solution. What would her parents think? Would they understand? Would they be hurt? Katie thought about these questions over and over and then decided to follow her plan.

3. Read the passage *What Does the Future Hold?* Answer the questions after the passage, and discuss your ideas about what the future world would be like.

What Does the Future Hold?

Nobody knows for sure what will happen in the future. However, there are certain trends that clearly support experts' predictions about what our future society will be like. The bad news is that the world's natural resources are being used up so rapidly that there is a good chance that 200 years from now, many resources will no longer be available. Air pollution, water pollution, and garbage are damaging our environment, causing some animals and plants to become extinct. What can be done to prevent further destruction of our earth's resources, animals and plants? Science and technology are focusing their efforts on finding solutions, but even greater problems may lie in the changes in society.

Although more of the world's citizens are being educated and have a higher standard of living than before, problems such as poverty, homelessness, and crime still exist. Some experts say that the problem is because families are not as strong as they used to be, and too many children are devastated by their parents' broken marriages. What kind of marriage will these children have? Will they marry at all? What will happen to the family?

Finally, there is no doubt that the world is becoming smaller. There is a greater awareness of other countries and cultures, and many people choose to live "international lives", travelling from their home country to live in foreign countries. Governments have improved relationships with one another, and business has bridged many gaps. Where is this heading? Will the world soon have one central government? One form of currency? One common language?

There is one thing that can be said with certainty regarding the future. The future holds many questions, most of them unanswered. What do you think the future holds?

Glossary

available /ə'veɪ.lə.bəl/ *adj* able to be used, or reached

crime /kraɪm/ *n* [U] illegal activities

currency /'kʌr.ən.t.si/ *n* [C or U] the money that is used in a particular country at a particular time

destruction /di'strʌk.ʃən/ *n* [U] the act of destroying something

devastated /'dev.ə.steɪ.tɪd/ *adj* very shocked and upset

extinct /ɪk'stɪŋkt/ *adj* not existing now

poverty /'pɒv.ə.ti/ *n* [U] the condition of being extremely poor

prediction /prɪ'dɪk.ʃən/ *n* [C or U] a statement that says what you think will happen in the future

rapidly /'ræp.ɪd.li/ *adv* quickly or suddenly

resource /rɪ'zɔ:s/, /'ri:.sɔ:s/ *n* [C, usually plural] a useful or valuable possession or quality of a country, organisation or person

trend /trend/ *n* [C] a general development or change to something different

Questions

1. What will the earth's natural resources be like in the future?
2. What will marriages be like in the future?
3. Will people be able to choose freely where they are going to live? What will the government do regarding the moving population?

Unit 3 Topic Practice for Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test



Transportation

- Can you describe the transportation in your city?
- What kind of transportation do you prefer and why?
- What is the difference between transportation means, such as planes, trains and cars?
- Can you compare the transportation in the past and now?
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of buying a car?
- Can you imagine transportation in the future and describe it to me?

Music

- Do you prefer to listen to music alone or with friends?
- What is the role music plays in our life?
- What kind of music do you like and why?
- Is music important in your life?
- Why is it easier for children to learn music than adults?
- Do you think it is useful for a child to learn to play a musical instrument?

Natural Beauty

- Can you describe a popular place of natural beauty in your country?
- What can we do to protect the natural beauty of the country?
- What measures has the government taken to protect natural scenery?
- What is an ideal place of natural beauty for you?

Food

- Do you like cooking and what is your favourite dish?
- What kind of eating habits do you have?
- Tell me something about food in China.
- Would you prefer to eat with friends or to eat alone?
- What is the difference between meals people have today and in the past?
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of inviting people to eat at home or in a restaurant?
- In what way do you think people will change their eating habits in the future?
- What do you think of science in food production?

Gifts

What do you think is the best present for children?
When do people usually exchange gifts in China?
Compare the gifts given today with those given 20 years ago.
How important are brand names when you are buying gifts?
Do you think that advertisements help people make choices?
What kinds of gifts do you think would be popular in the future?

Friends

By what ways do people make friends?
What is the difference between adults making friends and children making friends?
What is the most important factor you need to think about when you make friends?
What are the possible reasons which cause friends to break up?
How important is friendship to people and why?

Family

What is the typical structure of a Chinese family?
Would you consider your family a typical Chinese family and why?
What are the advantages and disadvantages of traditional families in China?
What are the differences of families in the past and today? And what caused the changes?
Can you compare the lifestyle of your grandparents' generation with that of yours?
Does the government have any policies to deal with family relationships?
Can you imagine what families will be like in the future?

Reading

In what way does reading help people?
Do you discuss your reading with your friends?
Compare the popular readings now with those 20 years ago.
How important is reading to people?
Are e-books more preferred than paper books and why?

Clothes

What kind of clothes do people like to wear nowadays?
What is the difference between weekday clothes and weekend clothes?
Can you tell me something about the clothes students wear nowadays?
What is the attitude that old people have towards youngsters' clothes?
Can you imagine clothes in the future?
Is it very important to follow the latest fashion?

Sports

- Can you describe the benefits of taking sports?
- Why do people support certain sports teams?
- What is the importance of sporting competitions at the international level?
- Do you agree that sports should be a hobby only instead of a career?
- What do you think of the commercial activities of sports stars?
- What is the role of the government in providing funding for sports facilities?
- Why do some companies sponsor sports people and events?

Skills

- Are there traditional skills in your country and what are they?
- Do you think it is necessary to learn these traditional skills?
- What can the government do to preserve traditional skills?
- What is the most important skill nowadays?
- What kinds of skills are popular in your country?

Accommodation

- What kind of accommodation do you prefer?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in your place?
- What is the difference between your grandfather's house and your building?
- What changes would you like to make to your place?
- Can you imagine what your home will be like in 20 years?

Buildings

- What are people's attitudes towards old buildings?
- Should we preserve old traditional buildings and why?
- What characteristics should a perfect building have?
- What roles do old and modern buildings play in the society?
- Can you compare buildings 20 years ago and buildings today?

News

- How do you find out about news every day?
- How important is it to you to keep up with the news every day?
- What type of international news are you interested in?
- What is the main function of the newspaper?
- Can you compare news from TV, radio, the Internet and newspapers?
- Do you think that the newspaper is reliable as a source of information?
- How much do you believe in the news?
- How much power do you think journalists have in influencing the readers?

Festivals

What is the media's role in festivals in your country?
Can you compare the festivals celebrated in China and those celebrated in Western countries?
What are the typical ways that people celebrate the main festival in your country?
How important is it for people to have festivals?

Weather

Which season do you like the best and why?
How does weather influence people's lives?
Do you like hot countries or cold countries and why?
How important is the weather forecast in our lives?
What do you think of global warming?

Study

Is there any difference between study in the past and study now?
Should schools teach non-academic courses?
Why is learning English very useful nowadays?
How important is study for children?
Is it useful for old people to continue to study too?

Modern Technology

Tell me some of the machines we use in our homes today.
What are the negative effects technology has on people?
Can you tell me any of the negative effects technology has had on the individual?
Do you agree with the idea that we are too dependent on technology today?
Can you compare the attitudes of men and women to technology?
How much of today's technology will still be used in 50 years' time?

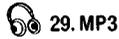
Tourism

What are the typical ways that people take holidays in your country?
Are holiday expectations now different from those of your parents/grandparents?
Why are holidays very important for people?
Can you describe some main tourist attractions?
What are the effects of tourism on local people and their environment?
Can you talk about the future changes in tourism 10 years from now?
What measures could be taken to reduce the negative effects of tourism?

Chapter 5

**IELTS Sample
Speaking Tests**

IELTS Sample Speaking Test 1



E: Examiner **C:** Candidate

E: Good afternoon, I am Peter. Can you tell me your full name, please?

C: My full name is Zhang Ling.

E: Can I see your identification, please?

C: Here you are.

E: Thanks. Now, in this first part, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself. Can we talk about where you live?

C: I live close to the campus of Beijing Language and Culture University. It is in the Haidian District of Beijing. The building I live in is a six-storey apartment building for teachers.

E: What do you like the best about where you live now?

C: The best thing for me... em... is the surrounding area. It is a very quiet place and the gym is very close. I can do physical exercises whenever I want.

E: OK. Let's move on to talk about shopping. Where do you shop every day?

C: There is a supermarket called Wufu within about 15 minutes' walk. Normally I shop there for one week's groceries. As for some small things I need occasionally, I just go to one of the small stores on campus. There are a couple right next to our building.

E: How do you choose your shopping place?

C: Well, first of all, I prefer a place which is easier to get to. It would be great if it is just in the neighbourhood. Then, I like stores with a variety of goods so I can have my choices. Of course, the price is also something I am concerned about.

E: Do you enjoy watching films?

C: Yes, I do. I used to watch films a lot. Watching films with friends is so much fun, especially when I finish all my work.

E: How often do you watch films?

C: I used to watch films about once a week. But now I cannot afford that and at the same time I am also busier with my work. I go to films quite irregularly, probably, er..., maybe about once or twice a month now.

E: Do people generally prefer watching films at home or in the cinema?

C: People probably prefer watching films at home, I guess. Of course, the effect is a lot better in the cinema, but the tickets are too expensive nowadays for common people and sometimes the cinemas are too far away from home. So, it is easier to just stay home and watch films on TV.

E: Now I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk, you'll have one minute to think about what you want to say. You can make notes if you like. *(The examiner hands the candidate a candidate card, a pencil and spare paper.)*

Candidate Card

Describe a person in your family who is most similar to you.

You should say:

who this person is

how he/she looks like

what personality he/she has

and explain why he/she is most similar to you.

E: All right? Remember you will have one minute to prepare. I'll tell you when the time is up.

(After one minute)

Can you start speaking now?

C: Definitely the person in my family who is most similar to me is my mother. Many people have told us that we look alike and I also notice a striking similarity between us. My mother is of average height and on the thin side. She has short, thick black hair and she wears glasses. (I don't wear glasses now, but I used to.) She has brown sparkling eyes and a round face.

My mother is the kind of person who can welcome anyone and make them feel at home. She really cares for people and is willing to open her home to them. Sometimes she is a bit fussy about being organised and having a clean home. I have a similar personality to my mother's. I love to care for people and enjoy helping them out. I enjoy welcoming others to have dinner with me, and my friends always tell me all their problems. Like my mother, I'm also sometimes upset when my home is messy, but I don't think I get quite as upset as my mother used to when I was a child.

E: So, we have been talking about your family, and now I'd like to discuss with you some general questions related to this. What is a traditional family like in your country?

C: Well, give me one second... I'd say that a traditional family in China is the one with three generations living together under one roof. Elderly people in China are not used to living alone by themselves or staying in nursing homes and their children won't let them do that either. So, they always stay with their own children and help with raising their grandkids. And, at the same time, it seems that the grandparents also have the highest authority over the house.

E: What are the advantages and disadvantages of a traditional family?

C: The advantages, I think, are that it is easier to take care of each other while living together and a big family also brings a feeling of warmth. Of course, there are some disadvantages as well. First of all, it is not easy to get along with each other since everyone wants his own way. Then, it is extremely crowded because most of the families have limited space. And, old people may feel lonely too while the kids are all at work.

E: Would you consider your own family a typical traditional family?

C: No, I wouldn't say so. Although my grandparents love us very much, they wouldn't choose to live with us. Back in their city, they have lots of friends and former colleagues to talk to. It is easier for them to have a life there. I myself also stay in my own apartment although my parents live very close. My family is kind of loose geographically although we do care about each other.

E: Does the government have any policies to deal with family relationships?

C: Any policies? I am not sure about it. Some policies are to encourage people to improve family relationships. For instance, some families are chosen to be model families and sometimes they even get a bonus for that. But, as for some big policies to improve family relationships, no, I don't think so.

E: That is all for the interview. Thank you. You may leave now.

C: Thanks. Good-bye.

IELTS Sample Speaking Test 2



E: Examiner **C: Candidate**

E: Good morning. I am Susan.

C: Good morning. I am Li Jianxin.

E: What shall I call you?

C: You can call me Jianxin. That's what my friends call me.

E: OK. Now, first of all, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself. Can you tell me about your study?

C: Right now, I am a freshman in Beijing University, majoring in English. I attend classes every day during the weekdays and they include compulsory courses like intensive reading, writing, oral English and some elective courses as well.

E: Why did you choose English as your major?

C: Actually, I didn't do well in English when I was in middle school. Later while catching up, I gradually found English quite interesting. My English teacher in high school was a great help too. At the same time, English is getting more and more important to China. So I decided to choose it as my major.

E: What do you hope to do after your studies?

C: I will see what will happen later. But if everything works out, I want to be working in a travel agency, mainly dealing with international travel so I can travel constantly from country to country.

E: Let's move on to talk about your childhood. Where did you grow up?

C: I grew up in a small town called Baoxin. I spent my entire childhood there with my family until later I went to high school in Chengdu at the age of 14.

E: Where did you usually play?

C: Luckily we lived by a small river and to the north of our home there was a hill. I used to play with the kids – swimming in the river and climbing the hill. The river was clean and the hill was covered with beautiful trees.

E: Let's move on to talk about housework. Who usually does the housework in your family?

C: My parents share the housework. My mother usually does most of the cooking while cleaning is normally my father's responsibility. But it also depends on who is busier.

E: What do you think is the most important household task?

C: I think cooking is the most important one. Eating is one of the biggest parts of our lives. It is hard work especially when we need to do it every day. Cooking skills are involved.

E: Now I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk, you'll have one minute to think about what you want to say. You can make notes if you like. (The examiner hands the candidate a candidate card, a pencil and spare paper.)

Candidate Card

Describe a popular sport in your country.

You should say:

where people can play it
what kind of people enjoy it
why it is popular

and explain your feelings about it.

(After one minute)

E: Can you start talking now?

C: The most popular sport in China is football. You can almost play it anywhere, as long as you have a large enough area. I've seen people play it on football fields, on empty roads, on drive-ways, and in parking lots, just about everywhere. Mostly boys enjoy football. Starting from elementary school until college, boys love to get together and play football. Young men love it too. As for the reasons, I think, first of all, it's very accessible. Almost anyone can play football. You don't need to have expensive lessons or equipment to be able to play football. The second reason is because football is a team sport. Once you play together on a team with your friends, you'll become addicted to playing it again and again. It's so exciting to play as a team and win as a team, though losing is not that exciting. But, it's fun to be part of a team. For me, I used to dislike football. Actually, I am not that athletic so I was never one of the first players to be chosen for a team. Later I learned how to play. It always made me so happy when my friends cheered for me. I finally started to enjoy playing football because I could see that I was able to help the team. Now, if one of my friends calls me to play football, I'll drop everything and play.

E: Can you describe the typical ways people in your country get involved in sports?

C: I am not sure how to put that into categories. Anyway, there are probably three patterns, I suppose. The first is that people do sports by competing with each other. They find it more fun when there are competitions. The second are those who just do sports for keeping fit. They go jogging, swimming, etc. in the gym or in the roads without any pressures. The final one, I guess, are those who like outdoor activities like hiking, travelling, rock climbing and surfing. They have fun and at the same time they are also doing sports.

E: Do you think that children should start sports at a very early age?

C: I think so. Actually sports should be a part of people's lives and it is better for children to learn when they are young. Doing sports can help a child to grow up healthy, I think. The only thing is that they should not be involved in any dangerous things or take any risks.

E: Why are sports very important to people?

C: Sports are very important to people for a couple of reasons. First of all, it improves people's health, as everyone can see. Then, it provides a way to get away from the hectic life and stop thinking about work pressures. Finally, it also helps people to cooperate with each other and work as a team.

E: How do you see sports in about 20 years' time?

C: It is hard to imagine that. I guess that sports at that time will be even more important than it is now. People will need less and less physical power for their daily living, and technology is developing fast with inventions which will replace people for all kinds of work. Then, people will absolutely do more sports to keep fit. And there could also be new ways of doing sports.

E: Thank you very much. That is the end of the interview. Good-bye.

C: Nice talking to you. Bye.

Answer Key

Chapter 2 Unit 2

Talking about Home Towns and Jobs

1. Talking about Home Towns

1.

1. My home town, Hue, is located in central Vietnam.
2. It is a beautiful place with many famous historical sights.
3. The weather in Ha Noi is usually quite cold in winter.
4. Da Nang is famous for handmade kites and the kite festival.
5. Ho Chi Minh City is hotter than Nha Trang.
6. My home town, Dong Nai, is located in the south of Vietnam.
7. Da Lat is a beautiful place with lots of hills.
8. The weather in Da Lat is usually most beautiful in spring.
9. Ha Dong is famous for its silk.
10. Ho Chi Minh City is more modern than Tien Giang province.

2.

A: Hi there! I don't think I know you! What's your name? Where are you from?

B: My name is Lan. I'm from Phan Thiet.

A: Oh, I've heard of that place! But I think I might be confusing it with another place. Well, if you don't mind, could you tell me a bit about your home town?

B: Well, first of all, my home town is located in the southeast, along the coast. Phan Thiet used to be a very quiet fishing village, but it has become more popular as a tourist destination recently.

A: What are the people like? Is it true that they are generally quite tall?

B: No, that's not true. In fact, most people in my home town are of average height. Actually, there are both some tall people, and some rather short people.

A: Oh, that's not what I heard. I wonder where I got that idea! Tell me something about the weather in your home town. If I want to visit, when is the best time to come?

B: The best season for visiting is summer time. During summer, you can go to visit the beaches, and swim in the ocean. We have some beautiful scenery, too.

A: But, why isn't it that good to visit during the other seasons?

B: People do visit it during the other seasons, but it's really a shame if you don't see Phan Thiet during the summer time.

A: Are there very many places in your home town? What kind of role did your home town play in ancient Vietnam?

- B: In ancient times, my home town was famous for being one of the fishing villages. Later, it was open to foreign trade around the late 1990s. It was also a summer resort for many of the foreigners who lived and worked in other areas of Vietnam.
- A: That's really interesting. I didn't know that before. Are there any other interesting facts about your home town?
- B: Of course! Most people don't know that my home town is one of the most famous cities producing "nuoc mam", a kind of sauce made from fish, which is typical of Vietnam.
- A: What are the special products from your home town? Any special foods or clothes, or arts and crafts?
- B: Phan Thiet is famous for seafood, green dragon fruit, and "nuoc mam".
- A: What do you think is the biggest difference between your home town and Ho Chi Minh City?
- B: Personally, I think that Phan Thiet is far more beautiful than Ho Chi Minh City. Of course, it is also much less important in culture, education and politics than Ho Chi Minh City.
- A: Hey! Thanks for all the information! I think I'll go visit your home town on my next vacation! Would you mind giving me your e-mail address so that I can keep in touch with you?
- B: No problem at all. Let me write it down for you.
- A: Thanks so much! I hope to see you again soon!

2. Talking about Jobs

- 1.
1. I work in a multinational company. I'm responsible for marketing.
2. A typical day for me includes meeting with clients, designing advertisements, and talking with consumers.
3. I really dislike my job. I plan to work there only as long as it takes until I find another job.
4. My work is usually very stressful. Every night, I come home really exhausted.
5. I feel most satisfied in my job if I can find new ways to help our company become more efficient.
6. I think that I make a good secretary because I am helpful and organised.
7. I work in my uncle's company. I'm responsible for selling computers.
8. A typical day for me includes ordering supplies and helping customers with problems.
9. I really love my job. I plan to work there for a long time.
10. I think that I make a good kindergarten teacher because I really love children.

2.

A: If you don't mind, I have a few questions to ask you about your job.

B: No problem. Go ahead.

A: Well, first of all, what kind of job do you do?

B: I'm a computer programmer.

A: Where do you work?

B: I work in a small computer software company, located in the downtown area.

A: How long have you worked there?

B: I've been working at the same company for three years now.

A: Could you tell me what your main responsibilities are?

B: Sure. I'm primarily responsible for meeting with customers and designing software that they can use in their companies.

A: Wow! That's interesting. I didn't know that was what your job was all about. Can you tell me what a typical day is like?

B: A typical day usually begins with meetings with customers – sometimes I go to their company, and other times I meet them in my office. After I understand what kind of computer program they want, I usually spend my afternoons designing and writing the program.

A: Would you say that your job is rewarding?

B: Actually, for the most part, it is a very rewarding job. I like to see my computer programs working smoothly and helping the company to meet its goals. However, my job is very much in the background. No one ever knows who actually wrote the computer software.

A: If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

B: That's a tough question. I suppose I would change my work hours. I hate having to get up so early in the morning, I'd rather start work at about 10 a.m. and work until around dinner time.

A: How long do you think you'll continue to work in this job?

B: Probably for another three or four years at least.

A: What are your work hours like? How long is your work day? How many days do you work each week?

B: I work Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.. Five days a week.

A: It sounds like a demanding job. How did you find it? I mean, did you get your job through a newspaper advertisement, or what?

B: Actually, I was pretty lucky to get such a good job. My father's friend was just starting a computer software company, and agreed to let me work for him for a few months. He liked my work, and I liked working for him, so we signed a formal contract, and I've been working for him now for almost 2 years.

- A: Oh, I see. Say, if you were to give advice to someone who is just starting out in this field, what would you say?
- B: Well, I would definitely tell them to study hard and learn as much as they can while they are still studying. Then, to just try to learn as much as they can from their first job, as this will help them in other jobs, too.
- A: Thanks so much for answering all my questions! I really appreciate it!
- B: You're very welcome.

Talking about Studies and Schools

1. Talking about Studies

1.

1. I studied at a small university near Melbourne and majored in Business.
2. I am certified as a chartered accountant.
3. The best thing about being a student is making friends with people from all around the country.
4. For a degree in Engineering, one needs to take courses in Calculus, Physics, and Maths each year.
5. I will be qualified for working as a tour guide when I complete my last exam in August.
6. I studied at the same university my father taught in, and majored in Computer.
7. The best thing about being a student is learning to live on your own.
8. I will be qualified in banking and finances when I graduate next year.
9. I am licensed as a professional engineer.
10. For a certificate in Business English, one needs to study a minimum of 3 years and pass 2 exams each year.

2.

- A: Hi, Brian! You look so busy! What are you studying?
- B: Well, you know, I'm in my last year of high school now. I'm so busy preparing for the university entrance exams in June.
- A: Wow! I remember when I took those exams. They were really tough. It took up all my time, just preparing for them.
- B: That's exactly how I feel. There's so much to study and so little time.
- A: Well, don't give up. Keep it up.
- B: What did you study in university?

- A: I majored in English and International Trade.
- B: What kind of courses did you take for that major?
- A: A lot of English courses – Conversational English, Writing, Listening, Reading; and also courses in Economics, Finances, Politics, Marketing, and Accounting.
- B: That sounds interesting. Why did you choose that major?
- A: When I was in high school, I always liked English, and I was also very interested in Business. So, I decided to major in something that could combine my two interests.
- B: What would you say was the most interesting course you studied in university?
- A: That would definitely be Conversational English because my teachers were always very interesting and lively. We only had foreign teachers for this class, and it was interesting to see the different teaching styles they used.
- B: Is it really true that college life is much freer than middle school life? I mean, if college life is the same as this, I don't think I'm going to make it through all those years of intense studying.
- A: College life is much freer than middle school life. I really enjoyed having more time to do things that interested me, and more freedom to choose elective courses.
- B: Was there anything you disliked about college?
- A: Well, yes. One thing I really disliked was having to get up early each morning for morning exercises. Actually, I think many students disliked this part of college life.
- B: And what would you say was the best thing about being a college student?
- A: For me, the best thing was a chance to learn to be independent and take care of myself. I also liked how teachers treated us as adults and gave us a lot of responsibility to do our homework.
- B: Well, college certainly does sound like something to look forward to. I'd better keep on studying if I'm ever going to make it into college. Thanks for the encouragement. I really appreciate it.
- A: No problem at all. All the best to you! Study hard!

2. Talking about Schools

1.
 1. When I was in senior middle school, I used to hate Mathematics class.
 2. My favourite teacher in high school was my Chemistry teacher, Mr. Turner.
 3. I really liked Mr. Turner because he made classes interesting.
 4. My elementary school years were very carefree.
 5. I spent a lot of time doing homework and helping my classmates with their questions.

6. Physics was my least favourite subject.
7. My school was located two blocks away from my parents' house.
8. My high school years, especially the last year, were very difficult and busy.
9. When I was late for class, I used to get a stern warning from my teacher.
10. My favourite teacher in elementary school was my second grade teacher, Mr. Ross.

2.

A: Can you tell me something about your years in school? I'm interested in learning what people think about their years as students.

B: Sure, no problem. What do you want to know?

A: Well, first of all, when did you start attending school?

B: When I was three years old, I began attending nursery school.

A: What are some of your happiest memories about your early years in school?

B: I remember going to school with my mother, and being picked up by my grandfather. My teachers were very kind, and we had a lot of fun playing and learning.

A: Where did you go to elementary school? Where was it located?

B: My elementary school was located just 5 minutes away from my house.

A: Tell me about one of your elementary teachers. Do you still remember them?

B: Of course! There was one teacher named Miss Vana Bell who always loved to sing. All the students loved her, and she made our classes very fun.

A: That's interesting! How about your middle school teachers? What were they like?

B: Most of the middle school teachers were rather serious, but they were also very concerned about us learning good study habits.

A: What was your favourite subject in middle school?

B: My favourite subject was Biology because we learned a lot of interesting things about animals and plants.

A: What kinds of activities did you do after school?

B: When I was in middle school, I used to spend most of my time studying. Occasionally, I would join some sports activities, but that was only when I had free time.

A: Did you continue doing the same activities when you got to high school?

B: Unfortunately not. I didn't have enough time to do other activities.

A: What did you spend most of your time on when you were in high school?

B: I remember that I spent a lot of time trying to improve my English. This was very hard for me because I had a lot of trouble with listening comprehension.

A: I have heard that high school students have very little time to enjoy life. They have to study so hard to prepare for the university entrance exam.

B: That's right. My high school years were very busy and full of pressure. I'm glad that I got through high school!

A: Thanks for taking the time to answer all my questions.

B: You're welcome.

Talking about Holidays/Festivals and Travels

1. Talking about Holidays/Festivals

1.

1. During the Spring Festival, most Vietnamese families gather/get together to eat, drink, and entertain themselves.
2. The Spring Festival is a very important holiday because it's the start of a new year and the Vietnamese feel that having a good start is essential to having a good year.
3. What I enjoy the most about the Spring Festival is seeing my cousins again.
4. The tradition of having many red things during the Spring Festival comes from the ancient times when people believed that evil spirits were afraid of the colour red.
5. Special food like square cakes (glutinous rice cakes) is served during the Spring Festival.
6. People used to serve a very expensive meal to celebrate the Spring Festival.
7. During the Spring Festival, most Vietnamese families eat square cakes, a kind of glutinous rice cake wrapped in banana leaves, in order to honour our ancestor, King Hung, who himself made them to present to his respected father.
8. What I enjoy the most about the Spring Festival is seeing the beautiful flower displays in the city centre.
9. Liberation Day is a very important holiday because the Vietnamese people generally celebrate the unification of the nation.
10. People used to eat moon cakes under the full moon to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival.

2.

A: I can't believe our exams are almost over.

B: Yes! We'll soon be heading home to spend the winter holidays with our families.

A: I suppose this is true for almost everyone, but I just love the Spring Festival.

B: I think it's similar to Christmas in Western countries. Don't you think so?

A: Yes, in many ways it is very similar. Yesterday, my friend from Canada was asking me questions about the Spring Festival.

B: What did he want to know?

A: He asked me what people do during the Spring Festival, so I told him that most Vietnamese families go back to their parents' homes and spend several days together eating square cakes, watching the annual Tao Quan – king of the kitchen performance on New Year's Eve, talking, catching up with each other, and visiting other families and close friends.

B: In my family, we celebrate the Spring Festival a bit differently. We go on holidays, and have a Spring Festival celebration wherever we are. Sometimes we go to Mui Ne, Binh Thuan province, enjoying the sunshine and the beach.

A: Yes, I did tell my friend that there were some differences in tradition depending on where you were, and also depending on each family. Then, he wanted to know where the traditions came from. For example, why we clean our homes before the new year, and set off firecrackers on New Year's Day.

B: So, you told him that the tradition of cleaning our homes came from the ancient times when it was considered unlucky to do any cleaning or washing during the Spring Festival. People thought that all the cleaning should be done before the beginning of the new year, so that no sweeping or washing away of good fortune would happen in the new year, and the tradition of lighting firecrackers came from long ago when people believed that evil spirits would be scared away by fire and loud noises.

A: Yes, I told him the history of those traditions. He also asked me what I liked the most about the Spring Festival. So, I said that I enjoy getting together with my family, especially my cousins, and also close friends. What about you? What do you enjoy most about the Spring Festival?

B: For me, the best part about the Spring Festival is the chance to rest from a busy work schedule, watch TV, and eat good food!

A: Oh yes, I enjoy that, too. Actually, there are so many fun things about the Spring Festival that it's hard to choose just one. The last question my friend asked was about why the Spring Festival was so important in Vietnam.

B: Did you tell him that it was because the Vietnamese people believe that a good start at the beginning of the year will mean a smooth year ahead.

A: Yes, and also because starting the new year well will also bring good luck.

B: Well, I'm excited to go home and celebrate the Spring Festival. Hope you have a good holiday! I'll see you next semester!

A: Thanks. Take care!

2. Talking about Travels

1.

1. I enjoy travelling because I can see a lot of new and interesting things.
2. The best thing about travelling is meeting people and making new friends.
3. My favourite thing to do is to go out in the evening and walk around the streets.

4. One thing I dislike about travelling is getting lost.
5. The places I am always attracted to are those that are busy and hectic.
6. I am not so keen on beaches and lying under the sun.
7. I dislike travelling because I find it very tiring.
8. One thing I enjoy about travelling is trying out new foods.
9. The places I am always attracted to are those that are not full of tourists.
10. I am not so keen on visiting historic sights.

2.

A: I'm planning to take a trip, and I'm looking for a partner to come with me. Are you interested?

B: I'm not sure. Where are you planning to go?

A: Well, I'm not exactly sure yet. Do you have any ideas?

B: I would like to go to Inner Mongolia, and ride horses in the grasslands.

A: That's an interesting place to visit, but I've already been there. How about Da Nang City in Vietnam? Have you been there before?

B: No, I haven't. What can we see there? What's there to do?

A: I heard that the famous sites are the beaches, the ancient town located in the middle of the city.

B: We could do that. How long do you think we should stay?

A: I think we should stay for at least three or four days.

B: That sounds good to me. You know, for me, my favourite thing to do on a trip is to do some sightseeing, and also to take time to visit some places of natural beauty.

A: Me too! I also like to go hiking, and spend time in natural places.

B: There are also some things that I dislike about travelling. One thing I dislike is eating new foods. I'm really picky about food. I hate trying foods that I've never tried before.

A: Really? How can you dislike that? What I dislike about travelling is not having enough time to do everything I want. I always feel a bit sad when I have to leave a place.

B: It seems that we have some differences of opinion. Do you think we could really be good travel partners?

A: I think we could be good travel partners if we try to plan things that we both like.

B: Well, let's find out how much the trip will cost, and think about when we can go. Then, we can both decide if we want to go.

A: Okay. That's fine with me. But don't forget that one of the best things about travelling is taking a risk and going on a new adventure.

B: Yes, you're right. I almost forgot. Maybe we should go ahead, and plan to take a trip together. What do you think?

A: There's an old saying "Nothing ventured, nothing gained" which means that if we don't take a chance, we will not gain anything at all. We should go for it.

B: Okay! I'm with you.

Talking about Interests/Hobbies and Friends

1. Talking about Interests/Hobbies

1.

1. I enjoy watching TV because it helps me to unwind after a hectic day.
2. I love to paint because it's so relaxing.
3. Jogging is my favourite hobby because it keeps me healthy.
4. Whenever I am working on my stamp collection, I feel so excited.
5. I started dancing at the age of 4 when I was in kindergarten.
6. I think I'd rather spend time listening to music than watching TV.
7. Whenever I am singing, I feel so happy and peaceful.
8. I enjoy playing computer games because they are fun and challenging.
9. Travelling is my favourite hobby because it helps me get some R and R.
10. I started playing chess at the age of 6 when I was just starting elementary school.

2.

A: Hi there, Katie! We're going swimming. Do you want to join us?

B: Sure, I'd love to. Swimming is one of my favourite things to do.

A: I didn't know you were so interested in swimming. What other things are you interested in?

B: I enjoy tennis, badminton, and volleyball. And I love painting, too.

A: Really? I enjoy that, too. Whenever I am painting, it makes me feel so relaxed and happy.

B: Me too! I first started to paint when I was a little girl. My parents just wanted me to try some painting lessons, and I soon fell in love with painting.

A: What else do you like to do in your spare time?

B: I'm also very fond of cooking and reading.

A: You have a lot of hobbies! Which one is your favourite?

B: My favourite hobby is swimming because it helps me keep fit, and also makes me have more energy to handle anything that comes my way! How about you? What are your hobbies?

A: I like painting, of course, and also running, reading, and surfing the Internet.

B: And which one is your favourite hobby?

A: I suppose I enjoy reading the best because I can jump into another world just by picking up a book. Sometimes, I'm so into a book that I spend a whole day reading it.

B: I think hobbies are really important. If I didn't have any of these things to do after working and studying, my life would be so boring.

A: I couldn't agree with you more. Whenever I am reading, I feel very satisfied and peaceful.

B: Yes! That's how I feel, too!

A: We'd better get going to the swimming pool. Do you have everything?

B: No. I'll just run home first to get my swimming stuff. I'll meet you at the pool.

A: Okay! See you soon.

B: I'll see you.

2. Talking about Friends

1.

1. I prefer friends who are funny and entertaining.
2. My ideal friend is someone who is easy-going and laid-back.
3. He is much admired for his good looks and modesty.
4. I can talk with him when I am upset about things at work.
5. As everybody says, there's no friend like an old friend.
6. When I was going through a rough time, my friends helped me to keep going and not give up.
7. I prefer friends who are good at keeping secrets.
8. My ideal friend is someone I can talk to without being afraid of being criticised.
9. I can ask her for advice when I'm not sure what I should do.
10. When I was almost going to fail my exam, my friends helped me to study harder.

2.

A: Today, we will talk about our friendship. Please think about your friends for a moment, and each student can tell the class something about the kind of friend they like best. Who would like to start?

B: I'll begin. I have a lot of friends from middle school and university. I like friends who are loyal, dependable, and responsible. Some of my friends I enjoy because they are fun and exciting. But my closest friends are the kind of people who will never let me down, and who are always there for me.

A: Thank you for sharing that with the class. Who will speak next?

C: I will. Most of my closest friends are from elementary school. I say that they are my closest friends because they are the people I have known the longest. We have gone through elementary school, middle school, and high school together. When I make a new friend, I always look for someone who is interested in the same things that I'm interested in. Also, I like friends who have a good sense of humour, and who enjoy life.

A: Thank you. Who's next?

D: I'll be next. My ideal friend is someone who is hardworking, excellent, and intelligent. I don't have a lot of friends, but I do have some very close friends. I like friends who are good examples for me to follow, and always learning and growing.

A: Thank you for sharing with us. Next?

E: It's my turn to say something. I have thought about what makes an ideal friend and for me, an ideal friend would be someone who is loving and caring, but who also wants the very best for me. Unfortunately, I haven't yet found my ideal friend. But I have found friends who are really kind and caring. I have to admit that I'm still looking for a close friend who is bold enough to tell me if I do something wrong, so that I can become the very best person that I can be, and I hope that I will find one soon.

A: Thank you for sharing that. We all hope that you will find a close friend soon, and especially a friend who is eager to help you grow, and become the best you can be. That's all for today, class. We'll talk more on this topic tomorrow.

Talking about Transportation and My Home

1. Talking about Transportation

- 1.
1. Yesterday, the traffic was extremely bad.
2. If there's no traffic, it can take as little as 15 minutes.
3. If there is heavy traffic, it can take longer than the bus.
4. I usually take the subway if the weather is bad.
5. The biggest advantage of driving a car is the convenience.
6. Today, the traffic was pretty good.
7. If there's a car accident, it can take twice as long to get to work.
8. One disadvantage of riding a bike is that it takes more time to travel long distances.
9. I usually ride my bike if the weather is good.
10. One advantage of taking the bus is it's very cheap.

2.

A: It's already after 9 a.m.! Why are you so late?

B: The traffic was very heavy this morning.

A: Why was the traffic so heavy?

B: There was an accident, so it took (me) longer than usual to get to work.

A: It took me longer than usual to get to work, too! How far do you travel to work each day?

B: I travel about 22 kilometres each way to work.

A: That's far! How do you usually get to work?

B: I usually take the bus. If the weather is very bad, I have to leave home earlier. How about you? How much time does it usually take you to get to work?

A: If there's no traffic, it can take as little as 20 minutes. But if the traffic is bad, it can take twice as long.

B: How do you usually get to work?

A: If the weather is good, I will ride my bike. But if the weather is bad, I will take the bus.

B: If you ride your bike, how long does it take to get to work?

A: It takes about 30 minutes. One advantage of riding a bike to work is I don't have to worry about traffic.

B: You're right! Even if the traffic is heavy, or there's an accident, you can ride your bike around the problem.

A: Yes. That's the main reason why I ride my bike to work each day.

B: What if there's gridlock? Can you still ride your bike through traffic?

A: What's gridlock?

B: Gridlock is when many cars are blocking each other at an intersection. It usually looks like there's no way for anyone to move.

A: If there's gridlock, then, I usually wait for a traffic policeman to come, and clear up the tangle.

B: Gridlock usually looks impossible to untangle, but sometimes it just takes one or two cars to move back a little, and then, the rest of the traffic can flow smoothly again.

A: Well, let's hope that traffic tomorrow will be better than today.

B: Yes, I hope so, too.

2. Talking about My Home

1.

1. He has a modern and beautiful home.

2. There are 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, an open-concept living and dining room, and a kitchen.

3. Owning a dishwasher is becoming more and more popular.
4. I hope to buy a big fridge in the next two years.
5. One reason why I like this home is because it's in a safe neighbourhood.
6. You have a beautifully-decorated home.
7. There is 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, 1 living room, and 1 kitchen but no balcony.
8. Modern style homes are becoming more and more in demand.
9. I hope to move into a three-bedroom apartment some day.
10. One reason why this apartment is not too expensive is because it's far from downtown.

2.

A: Hi Richard! I heard you are looking for a place to live.

B: Yes. My lease finishes next month and I'd like to find a new apartment. I'm interested in a place like yours. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

A: Not at all.

B: Thanks. How large is your apartment? And how many bedrooms?

A: It's 110 square metres. There are 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and an enclosed balcony.

B: Why did you choose this place to be your home?

A: One reason why I chose this apartment is because it's close to work. Another reason is because I like its modern design.

B: What is one drawback about the place where you live?

A: The rent is very expensive.

B: Could you tell me about the neighbourhood?

A: Sure. It's really very convenient. There's a grocery store nearby, as well as several nice shops and restaurants. There's also a bus stop right at the front gate.

B: That sounds great! Could you describe some of your neighbours?

A: Most of my neighbours are middle-class Vietnamese families with a few foreigners, too. They are very friendly and helpful, and we watch out for each other.

B: I have just one more question, if you don't mind.

A: Go ahead.

B: What do you like best about your home?

A: The thing I like best about my home is it is very convenient – close to work and close to the shopping centre.

B: Thanks so much for your time. You've been very helpful.

A: You're very welcome.

Chapter 3 Unit 2

Describing People

Describing People

1.
 1. She is tall and has long, black hair.
 2. She is very honest and reliable.
 3. She has a big nose with glasses.
 4. He comes across as being strong and opinionated.
 5. He gives the impression of being confident and ambitious.
 6. He seems friendly at first.
 7. She is the most honest person that I have ever met.
 8. He resembles his brother in the way he smiles.
 9. He is the kindest person I have ever known.
 10. She resembles her father in the way she talks.

Describing Items and Past Events

1. Describing Items

1.
 1. It is made of wood and plastic.
 2. It is composed of two pieces: the car and the remote control.
 3. Last year, I got it as a going-away present from my colleagues.
 4. The best way to play with it is to hit it up in the air.
 5. It looks very lifelike in my eyes.
 6. It is made of a plastic body and a mini computer inside.
 7. It is composed of a small screen and a keyboard.
 8. Last year, I got it as a gift from my best friend.
 9. The best way to play with it is to place it on a table and watch it move.
 10. It looks really expensive in my eyes.

2. Describing Past Events

- 1.
1. I can still remember the time when I took my first violin lesson.
2. I'll never forget the day when my grandfather died.
3. I spent my entire 4 years in university trying to win a scholarship.
4. At that time, I was still quite young and not very mature.
5. It all started the morning when I went to the library to study.
6. The most exciting time I can recall is when my friends and I took a trip to Mount Lang Biang.
7. I can still remember the time when I realised my parents made mistakes.
8. I spent my entire summer working as a salesperson for a juice company.
9. It all started the evening when I met a friend at a party.
10. The most exciting time I can recall is when I was on my own and had my own money to spend.

Describing Places and Changes

1. Describing Places

- 1.
1. It looked beautiful when I first visited it in my last year in high school.
2. It is the place where I feel the most at peace.
3. The reason why I was attracted to it so much is because it reminds me of my carefree days as a child.
4. The place that gives me fond memories is the hill behind my grandparents' home where I used to play with the children in my neighbourhood.
5. It looked a bit shabby when I first visited it in autumn of last year.
6. It is the place where I go when I am feeling a lot of pressure from school.
7. The reason why I was attracted to it so much is because it has beautiful gardens.
8. The place that gives me fond memories is the park where my boyfriend and I used to go on Sundays.
9. It is the place where I used to go when I was a young child.
10. The reason why I am attracted to it so much is because it makes me feel like everything is going to be okay.

2. Describing Changes

- 1.
1. More parks and trees have been the biggest change I have noticed.
2. Great changes have taken place in recent years in making this city cleaner.
3. The change I predict for the next 10 years is there will be more private cars and fewer bicycles.
4. I am still not clear what caused the changes.
5. To my surprise, it looks much better than I thought it would.
6. By the time I returned to the city where I went to university, after only one year's absence, many things were difficult to recognise.
7. Fewer factories have been the biggest change I can see.
8. The change I predict for the next 10 years is there will be more highways between cities and towns.
9. To my surprise, it looks completely natural even though I know it is man-made.
10. By the time I returned to my cousin's home town, after being away for 4 years, many things looked exactly the same.

Describing Programmes and Books

1. Describing Programmes

- 1.
1. Watching TV makes people fat and lazy.
2. My favourite show is a movie about Emperor Quang Trung.
3. It is a waste of time to watch TV unless you watch news or documentaries.
4. What attracts me the most about the programme is the amazing pictures of animals.
5. The programme is on TV on Sunday at 2 p.m., and then repeated on Tuesday at 1 p.m.
6. Prime time for me is when I get off work, which is about 6 p.m.
7. Watching TV makes children quiet and attentive.
8. What attracts me the most about the programme is its interesting plot.
9. The programme is on TV every morning at 6 a.m., and then repeated every evening at 10 p.m.
10. Prime time for me is late at night after everyone else has gone to bed.

2. Describing Books

- 1.
1. The book mainly focuses on how to raise polite and happy children.
2. I was deeply angered about what he wrote in the book.
3. The main character depicted in the book is an old woman who fights against sexual discrimination.
4. The author mainly wishes to deal with our ideas about family which come from Confucius.
5. The author was totally inspired by a young child he met who was sick with cancer.
6. The book didn't come out until 3 years after the author died.
7. Comparatively speaking, biographies are interesting but leave out many of the negative details of the person's life.
8. I enjoy reading and mystery has always been my favourite subject.
9. The author mainly wishes to deal with the social inequality of poor people.
10. Comparatively speaking, dictionaries are useful but should be used in the proper way.

Describing Stories and Ideas

1. Describing Stories

- 1.
1. The story started when some people started to get strangely ill.
2. I was really impressed by the way everyone worked together to finish the project.
3. It was moving to hear about it because I was in a similar situation before.
4. What happened to the little boy was very fortunate.
5. At the end of the story, everyone wanted to find ways to help more children.
6. The story started when a man became very angry with his wife.
7. I was really impressed by the strength that the students showed to overcome their problems.
8. It was heartbreaking to hear about it because it was such a sad story.
9. What happened to the elderly professor was really unfair.
10. At the end of the story, I understood better the difficulties that the poor peasants face.

2. Describing Ideas

1.

1. The perfect home to me is one that has a beautiful view.
2. I have always been thinking of moving to my own place.
3. What I used to dream about was to have my own home and my own car.
4. I have never been keen on noisy neighbours.
5. I am not sure whether one day I will have my own happy family.
6. The perfect apartment to me is one that is close to my work.
7. I have always been thinking of living near the mountains.
8. What I used to dream about was having a separate room for all my books.
9. I have always been keen on working hard to get what I want.
10. I am sure that one day, I will own two or three homes.

Describing Shopping Experiences and Movies

1. Describing Shopping Experiences

1.

1. I went to a grocery store late Friday evening.
2. There were instant noodles on sale.
3. The quality of the toys is not very good.
4. He bought an English-English dictionary and a new backpack.
5. In fact, at one point, I almost changed my mind and didn't buy anything.
6. I went to a drugstore yesterday.
7. There were vitamins on sale.
8. The quality of this brand of vitamins is excellent.
9. He bought some dog food and a leash.
10. In fact, at one point, I almost spent all my money.

2. Describing Movies

1.

1. Last night, we saw a DVD called "Star Wars".
2. We watched the movie at a downtown movie theatre.
3. The movie is basically about a young boy who learns to be brave.
4. I liked the movie because it was very suspenseful.
5. There were also many surprising moments in the movie.
6. This afternoon, I saw a movie called "The Bondage Breaker".
7. I watched it at my brother's home.
8. The movie is basically about how many people try to achieve success.
9. We liked the DVD because it was very meaningful.
10. There are also many funny moments on the DVD.

Chapter 4 Unit 2

Description

1.
 1. The main point of disciplining children is to teach them right from wrong.
 2. Computers are basically supposed to help us organise our thoughts, not think for us.
 3. On the whole, speaking a foreign language fluently is much more difficult than it appears.
 4. Taichi is basically supposed to provide exercise and relaxation.
 5. Generally speaking, women enjoy very deep friendships.
 6. The main function of examinations is to check how much students have learned.
 7. In the first place, marriage provides love and companionship.
 8. In addition, children learn much faster than adults.
 9. Good friends are basically supposed to help each other.
 10. On the whole, living in the city provides many opportunities for learning.

Agreement/Disagreement

1.
 1. I totally support the position that war causes more damage than good.
 2. For me, I disagree with putting too much pressure on students.
 3. I believe a good attitude is absolutely essential.
 4. In my opinion, there is no way dishonesty is right.
 5. As far as I'm concerned, I couldn't agree more about eating healthy foods and getting adequate exercise.
 6. I completely disagree when it comes to children showing disrespect to parents.
 7. For me, I agree that everyone should have a chance to travel.
 8. I totally support the position that rich people should pay higher taxes than poor people.
 9. In my opinion, bullying is absolutely getting out of hand.
 10. I completely agree when it comes to adult children taking care of their elderly parents.

Comparison and Contrast

- 1.
1. Dogs are better pets than cats because they are more loyal.
2. The main difference between sending an e-mail and phoning a friend is that sending an e-mail is more convenient to do, but it is not as personal as phoning a friend.
3. There is no comparison between the living standard today and the living standard 50 years ago.
4. The main difference between owning your own home and renting an apartment is that you take more care with your own home.
5. The food in central Vietnam and the food in south Vietnam are completely different because one is very spicy and the other is not.
6. There's no comparison between studying English in Vietnam and studying English abroad. It's much easier to study English in an English-speaking country.
7. Men are more easily employed than women because some companies believe that men will contribute more to their company than women.
8. Comparatively speaking, children are more optimistic than adults.
9. Despite the fact that English is becoming the world's common language, Chinese is still spoken by more people than English is.
10. On the contrary, traditional Chinese medicine is better for the body than Western medicine.

Evaluation

- 1.
1. All things considered, I think it is hard to do well in one's career and also take good care of one's family at the same time.
2. From my point of view, advertisements have changed over the past 10 years.
3. Personally, I think that young people too easily change jobs nowadays.
4. I don't find children these days particularly respectful of their elders.
5. One of the advantages of studying English is that you can get a better job.
6. The main problem with high school is (that) there is too much pressure to study for exams.
7. A further advantage of learning Taichi is that it is good for your body.
8. To summarise, living in the country provides us with fresher air and a healthier lifestyle than living in the city.
9. One of the disadvantages of being overweight is poor health.
10. The main drawback with putting money in the bank is that you can't take it out after the bank closes for the day.

2.

Topic 1

Advantages: b, e, f, h, k, l, m

Disadvantages: a, c, d, g, i, j, n

Topic 2

Advantages: c, e, i, j, k, m, n

Disadvantages: a, b, d, f, g, h, l

Speculation

1.

1. It's quite likely that elderly parents will need someone to take care of them.
2. There's a good chance that this winter will be extremely cold.
3. There's no doubt that the employees will be unhappy about the pay cut.
4. Our standard of living may very well reach a new high.
5. It's possible that marriage will change him for the better.
6. Studying English will definitely be very useful in the future.
7. It's quite unlikely that teachers will give students less homework.
8. It's impossible that she will make a lot of money from that small business.
9. Advances in technology may very well eliminate further jobs.
10. It's possible that working full-time will help her settle into a routine.

Basic IELTS Speaking

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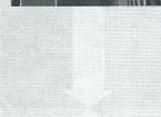
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