



Female Voice: You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

[music]

Ben: IELTS Speaking: setting the tone for a confident test. In this tutorial, you will learn how to greet the examiner and how to make the best impression that you can before you start the exam. This will help you in your exam because, one, it will help you make a good first impression, two, you will set the tone for a comfortable confident speaking test and we all know we perform significantly better when we are confident.

I've seen students drop like half a band score or a full band score just because of nerves and it's heartbreaking because it's almost like a side issue that your confidence-- it is related to your language ability, but it's just a shame that some students react negatively or get nervous in this exam environment. So, this tutorial will help you-- will hopefully help you overcome these nerves and get a better understanding of what happens and why it happens.

Let's jump straight into it. So, first impressions do count and this tutorial will help you overcome-- will help you make the best first impressions. Now, the way that you greet the examiner is very important. Make sure that you smile and make sure that your greeting fits the time of day. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. And use the one that's appropriate there.



Now, you can wait until you're offered a seat. Some students might be tempted and they might just stand beside the chair and say, "Please, can I sit?" Can is not the most appropriate word. Can is a word of authority. So you're probably better saying please, may I... Please, may I sit? Please may I sit? Then when you are offered a seat, don't forget to say thank you.

These might seem bizarre formalities and especially if they are not part of your culture, but in the English speaking world, there is this-- there is a lot of culture in the language-- embedded in the language.

Now, when the examiner asks your name, it's probably better to use a contraction. So, don't say my name is Ben. You say my name's Ben. Use small things like that. The examiner will probably ask you then afterwards, "Are you comfortable?" or "Can we commence the speaking test?" When this happens, make sure you answer in a polite way and probably better to offer a full answer. Don't just say, "Yep, let's go for it." It's better to say something like, "Yes, I'm comfortable. Thanks" or "Yes, let's start."

Remember to smile. I've already said this, but it is important and you have to also consider the examiner has probably spoken to about 10, 15 students maybe before you that had sat there. So, if you can come in with a smile, a little bit of sunshine for that examiner, obviously, it's not going to do you any harm.

As you know, part 1 is to get comfortable, is well, is about getting comfortable. So, they're going to ask you where you work or if you study, what your interests are and we must



remember the aim of part 1 is basically just to relax you, to get to know each-- for the examiner to get to know you so you feel a lot more comfortable, feel a little bit more confident and then you can start to show your true ability.

Now, following this introduction, the examiner will introduce a topic which might include sports, television, hobbies, or the weather. Something like that. And these are general questions which require general answers and make sure that you answer these in complete sentences. This is why it's a good idea to write out some answers beforehand and not just to stop midsentence. Make sure that the clauses are complete.

Don't speak too fast. It makes it difficult if you're speaking really fast. Also, if you're speaking slower, then you've got time to think about what you are saying and you are less likely to make some mistakes. Obviously, you do not want to be speaking too slow. I would recommend you make some recordings and you just listen to yourself or you can get some feedback.

Also, when you are speaking faster, it sounds like you are nervous and also the words will be closer together and this makes it difficult to understand especially if there's a strong accent there, to begin with as well. This is why it is really good to make use of the pauses. I've said this before, but the pauses will make your speaking easy to digest and it will help you gather your thoughts together.

Now then, one very important tip is make sure that you allow the examiner to finish the question before you jump in with your answer. This is really important because not only is it



going to give you more time to think of a response, but also nobody likes being interrupted. So, even if you think you know what the examiner is going to say, just let them finish and then you can start.

Now then, just to recap. So, we start with the appropriate greeting. We give a natural smile. When the examiner asks your name, you give them-- you tell them your name, obviously. Try to use a contraction if you can. Also, don't get nervous if he doesn't ask you what your name is. He can check your name on your identity document.

By the way, when he does ask you for your ID, don't dangle it in front of his face. Just hand it over. So, he might say something like-- he/she might say something like, "May I see your identity document?" and then you can say something like, "With pleasure," or "Yes, here you go."

Smiling does make a difference. As I said, you're going to set the tone, you're going to be sitting there and using your good manners, you're going to have a friendly disposition even if you're exhausted and irritated after doing so much. Maybe you've done your writing and your reading and your listening and you're kind of exhausted, but it's your opportunity now just to put on your best face. Your best frame of mind. You are in the last sprint.

Now then, the introduction doesn't form a part of the test, but you can use it to get yourself more relaxed and to set the tone for the rest of the test. It's like a job interview. You want to go in there showing your best self. You want to go in there smiling, with a happy disposition. So, if



the examiner asks you how you are, you can say quite simply, "I'm fine. Thank you." "I'm fine. Thank you, Sir." That's okay. That's good and then you smile.

Also, I have heard students they don't know where to look with their eyes and this can be quite-- I think this is also a cultural thing and in this instance, I recommend that you just look at the eyebrows of the person. Don't look deep into their eyes and smile. This might come across as a bit creepy.

You can just like look at them, look at them in the eye for a few seconds while you are talking and then maybe just look at their eyebrows or maybe just sort of like turn to the side or look down at the paper or look down at the floor. You do not have to hold solid eye contact all the time. Break it every now and again and if you think it's been going on for too long, then you can also just look at their eyebrows or look at the space between their eyes and you'll come across-- it comes across as natural.

So, don't worry about it and by the way, meditation is a good way just to relax yourself before you go into the exam because sometimes we can get into like little issues like am I looking at his eyes too much? Have I been looking too long? I should break straight away. Just a few seconds is fine and when you meditate, you can usually hold the gaze for a little bit longer and you're usually just not thinking about these irrelevant side issues.

Now then, when you do sit down, it's good to hold your head up high. This will help you feel more comfortable. You can also sit up straight. Keep your back straight. Try not to slouch. Try to



keep your whole spine erect and your shoulders back and also just be aware of your body language. You don't want to be slouched there because it doesn't give that good impression.

Remember this is like the last sprint for you to get the IELTS score that you want. Put in a good showing going there, back straight, head up high, shoulders back, and smiling and you will see a big difference.

Now then, that's everything that I wanted to say about that. I'll just mention a few other bonus tips. To speak more confidently, you can speak slightly louder as well. You can also visualize the words coming out of your mouth. This helps and there are quite a few different techniques. What I recommend is trying them and then choosing one that works for you. Different students will have different success stories as regards to different techniques.

There's a whole host of techniques in the Speaking Confidence course and they are very practical and they are battle tested. These are techniques that I've seen students use. I've used these techniques for improving my Spanish and they come from a real world background. They don't come from some kind of teacher who's never spoken a foreign language or has just written-- has just done some research on Google. These techniques have come from teaching experience and from interviewing experts in the matter.

So, have a look at that if confidence is a serious issue for you and hopefully these tips will help you improve and remember if you know any student who is struggling with the IELTS exam, please send them a link and tell them about the podcast.



Also, if you are enjoying these episodes, please leave us a five-star review and then contact us and tell us that you've done that and we've got a surprise for you and also just remember keep your head up high, not just for the exam but when you're preparing and when you're in sort of like a rut, when you're struggling with this and you just-- everything seems a bit hopeless, just think ahead to that exam day.

Think ahead to getting that exam result, checking your score online and seeing that 7 or seeing that 8 or the 9. Seeing the grade that you want. Those are the kind of thoughts you want to be filling your head with, not like I'm so lost. I don't know where to start. You need to think of that band 7. You need to think of the day that you open up your test results and you get the score that you need. That's what you need to be filling your mind with and then work backwards. Okay, I need to get a 7. What areas am I losing points in? What areas do I need to work on? And then do some research online and master that specific area.

Okay, I think I'm going on now and I'm going a bit off on a random topic, but anyway, I hope that was useful for you and all the best with your IELTS preparation.

[music]

Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com