



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.

INTRODUCTION

Ben: IELTS Speaking: Recent questions with model answers or model answers for recent questions is probably a better more congruent way of saying it. Anyway, **in this [tutorial](#), we are going to look at recent cue cards that students have seen on the exam recently.** So, we're talking **August, September. [August and September](#).**

What they've done is they contacted us and they said hey, I had this cue card. I had this cue card and obviously, I don't want you to memorize these answers, but I do want you to have a listen. I'm going to break down my answer and I'll also share some tips and some vocabulary regarding what's going on in this answer.

CUE CARD # 1

So, let's jump straight into it. So, this is a cue card seen recently by a student and it said:
“Describe a time you enjoyed.

You must include:



- where you were
- who was with you
- why you enjoyed it, and
- what you were doing.”

Now, obviously, we do need to make this a little bit more formal. It's not a good idea even though you did enjoy it.

CUE CARD # 1 ANSWER

Yes, last Saturday I was drinking with my friends. It was really good fun... because I very much doubt that you can pull a very big story out of that. Maybe you could. It did cross my mind about thinking-- about explaining an event like that. I was going to talk about a curry I had with my friends then I thought there's not that much I could really talk about.

So, I searched my memory and I went further back and I was like actually yes. What I'm going to do is talk about a family event because there are lots of characters there and I do have quite a few funny memories and also what I did here is I kind of cheated a little bit because I took one funny memory I had from a different family event and I put it in this one because it kind of fitted.



Anyway, let's have a look. Just to review the cue card again, I'm going to talk about a time that I enjoyed, where I was, who was with me, why I enjoyed it, and what we were doing-- what I was doing. So, let's start.

I would like to talk about a time I went with my family to do some canoeing and cycling near Portsmouth in the south of England. There was quite a lot of the family there at the time: my mum, my uncles, my grandma, my brother, and my cousins. Almost everyone. If my memory serves me well, I think it was around early 2000 we went down.

I think I enjoyed it because there are a lot of funny memories. We played a lot of pranks on each other. For example, I clearly remember pushing my uncle off his bike. I remember it because it was the first time I'd ever gotten one over my uncle. I was cycling very close to him so much so he ended up without any space on the track and eventually came off the track and slipped down the banking. It made everyone laugh so much because he usually bullied everyone else.

Anyway, before cycling, we went canoeing, but for me the water was insanely cold. I think it was because I had just flown in from Spain where it's much warmer. Apart from the shivers I got, it was thoroughly enjoyable. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day especially the fish and chips in the pub in the evening. And that's my talk about an enjoyable day.



LET'S ANALYSE ANSWER # 1

Okay. So, there were a few things there. One, there was the **anecdote about something with my uncle with a bike ride** and I can't remember exactly. I think it was a totally separate holiday, but I just wanted to put that story in there because it was quite funny I thought at the time, but also I've got the anecdote. I can go into details and talk about bike track.

I even used the expression **I got one over my uncle** and this means to **take advantage of them or to win them, to beat them or to like win** in a certain sort of like activity. It was good because this is true. He was the one who was usually a bully with all of us especially because he was the biggest and I remember it clearly.

We were just cycling there and there was a steep banking on one side and I just slowly kept on nudging him to the side until it was too late and he didn't realize it. Anyway, this is the kind of activities we get up to in our family. We just do lots of nasty, but funny things to each other.

Anyway, that was another phrase that I use. Anyway, just to pull the talk back on track, I also **used some useful phrase that I have used before and I'm using it again because I really think it's universal**. I heard a student use it and I thought that's a really useful phrase because it's a collocation and it's quite practical. You could put it in pretty much any talk. So, this is what I'm trying to do now. I'm trying to incorporate it into most talks and the phrase, I hope you



remember it, is if my memory serves me well. If my memory serves me well, I think it was around early 2000 we went down.

Here, just for the detail-oriented people, because we are from the north, my family-- we always say to go down. However, I think the politically correct term is to say up because we're going up to London. I don't know. There's a bit of a farce, but-- So, we always say go down to London, but it was kind of a contradiction because later I said I flew in from Spain but anyway, I don't think the examiner will be so fixated on the use of that kind of language.

So, I also used some other phrases like insanely cold. I didn't say it was very cold. I said it was insanely cold and just really does emphasize it and I used shivers. I got the shivers; when your body is shaking. Another expression I used is so much so. **“I was cycling very close to him so much so he ended up without any space on the track”**. So, this phrase indicates that the **previous statement was true to a very great extent and therefore it has the result I mentioned**. So, I was very close to him so much so... I was so close to him he ended up without any space.

Then, as I normally finish-- as I normally do, **I finished with “and that's my talk about an enjoyable day”**. If you were paying attention, which you probably were, you could see-- you could hear that I methodically went through where I was, who I was with, why I enjoyed it, and what we were doing.



I mentioned sort of like most of the points maybe once or twice and I put in an anecdote there. It's just a case of planning and working through these bullet points. I think there's also a little bit in skill-- a little bit of skill in choosing like the right memory to share in this instance. As I explained before, I wasn't going to talk about the curry night I had a few days ago.

Right then, let's talk about-- by the way, and with that specific cue card, the student said that the follow-on question was about how people spend their time which is quite interesting. So, if I had the question, you could talk about different hobbies. Some people like to read books, some people like to do sports. Some people like to play games. I think it really is quite open. Of course, I didn't get the whole brunt of the follow-on questions.

CUE CARD # 2

Let's move on to cue card number two.

“Describe any physical skill you learned.

You must include:

- **where you learned it**
- **why you learned it and**



- how long it took to learn. “

Now, I chose wisely. I think I chose wisely, of course, but I wanted to choose a skill that I could go into detail about and had its own vocabulary along with it and I wanted to make sure that I knew that vocabulary that came along with it.

In this case, I think I did and there's a nice little back story to this skill as well. So, let's go.

CUE CARD # 2 ANSWER

I would like to tell you about the time I learned how to box. I learned this skill in Spain and it was something I had always wanted to do. I think when I was younger, my parents wouldn't let me and throughout school, I was a little embarrassed to do something the other teenagers were not doing.

Anyway, I learned from a really tough coach. This coach called me peligro which means danger in English. I think he was taking the mickey because I was so bad when I started. It took me a good two years to learn this skill. I enjoyed every minute of it. The classes were hard. If my memory serves me well, we did a brutal 90 minutes every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday



with a mixture of fitness, technique, and in the final five minutes, we even spurred against each other.

However, I wouldn't say I've learned the skill-- I wouldn't say I've fully learned the skill because there is still a considerable amount left to learn. Eventually, I'll get back into it though. I'm certain. That's my short presentation about a skill I learned.

LET'S ANALYSE # 2 ANSWER

Now, with this specific-- with this presentation, I gave-- so, where did I learn it? I learned it in Spain. Why did I learn it? Well, because I think I learned it as you heard because when I was younger my parents wouldn't let me and then when I was a little bit older, I was kind of embarrassed.

I'm working through it. I'm giving just small anecdotes there. I was embarrassed when I was a teenager and then I go into details. I'm telling you about Sergio, my coach, who was really tough and it just gives me the opportunity to use the expression of taking the mickey. He was laughing at me, but in a friendly way. They were joking. Also, there's a tiny little bit of story there because I started off terribly bad and I stuck with it for like a good two years.



And a good two years; we use this speech if we want to emphasize the amount of time taken. It took him a good six years to set up that business, for example. Then I add just a few details. I enjoyed every minute of it. I didn't say I liked it a lot. Like or it was very good; these are very basic terms. No, I said I enjoyed every minute of it. How much richer does that sound than I enjoyed it a lot?

Then I explain why. Where am I now? I enjoyed every minute of it and I explain why. Because the classes were hard and I also use that phrase again: if my memory serves me well or if I remember it correctly, we did a brutal 90 minutes. I didn't say we did 90 minutes. I said we did a brutal 90 minutes because I remember clearly that these were very tough classes.

Then I could use my vocabulary which is fitness, the technique, and then we spurred. I could probably talk about muscle memory, about jabs, uppercuts, and all these kind of stuff. I didn't really need to go into that much detail. And then how long did it take me to learn? I just admitted look, I haven't learned the skill yet. If I learned it, I would probably be a world champion then you can say you've learned it.

Also, as I've said before, I just finished my presentation with and that's my short presentation about a skill I learned just to avoid the dead silence, just to avoid any uncomfortableness. Right.



CUE CARD # 3

Let's move on to cue card number three.

“Describe an advertisement that you saw;

- where you saw it
- why you remember it, and
- if you liked it or not.”

CUE CARD # 3 ANSWER

So, I'd like to talk about a very controversial advert I remember from when I was younger. It was an advert by the Benneton clothing company if I remember correctly.



I remember searching for this advert because I was impressed by the outrage the whole campaign had created. The news programs reported it. The newspapers printed stories about it. It was outrage advertising at its most pervasive.

If I remember correctly, I found the advert in a book about the world's best adverts. There were prints from Absolute Vodka, Hamlet Cigars, and a few other global brands. Anyway, this advert featured a nun and a priest kissing. I think that was the image although I cannot remember the exact scene right now.

As you can imagine, this is a complete outrage in the Catholic religion. So, the Catholic Church condemned the advert which caused the press to report it. This ultimately gave more exposure to the company, the Benneton Company, of course. So, that's my talk about an advertisement I saw a long time ago.

LET'S ANALYSE # 3 ANSWER

Now, in this cue card model answer, you will have heard me say if I remember correctly twice. Of course, you don't have to say it twice, but I just wanted to-- I just wanted you to remember it correctly, okay? So, that's why I squeezed it in there probably one more time than it was necessary, once more than it was necessary.



There were lots of [topic-specific vocabulary](#) in this model answer. I'm talking about campaign, outrage advertising. I talked about the prints. I also go into details and say the prints from Absolute Vodka, Hamlet Cigars, and a few other global brands. Some more vocabulary there. Then I go into more details about the nun, the priest. I also use a conjunction: although I cannot remember the exact scene right now. Although.

Then a useful expression: as you can imagine. As you can imagine, this is a complete outrage in the Catholic religion. Then I mentioned the press which is some other useful vocabulary and I talk about exposure for the Benetton Company. All of these three cue cards-- sorry. Before I get into that, I finished with something similar to the other ones with: So, that's my talk about an advertisement I saw a long time ago.

TALK ABOUT REAL STORIES

What I wanted to say was that all of these three cue cards are real stories. I find it so much **easier when I'm talking about real stories** because I can go off in different directions. I can talk about examples. I can talk about details. I can share anecdotes. Plus when you're going off into details and examples or anecdotes, these are possibly from the past as well-- well, they will be from the past, so this is going to make you use the past tense as well.



FINAL TIPS

So, this is what I would strongly recommend: you use your own personal examples and just for one final tip. What I recommend you do is that you find cue cards. They don't have to be recent ones. We've got a lot of the cue cards when you sign up at ieltspodcast.com. You get a big chunky PDF with model essays, with sample cue cards, with sample task 2 questions, with lots of goodies in there.

What I recommend you do is that you get hold of these cue cards and you start writing out answers. You can write out your answers and then you can go back and upgrade those answers with the vocabulary so you change from very good to terrific and things like that. Then you record your answer and you listen for mistakes or even better, send it in and get some feedback for it.

We've got the [feedback service](#), the speaking feedback service and we can review your work for you and give you some tips and advice on how to improve it, but do this a lot especially if you struggle with part 2.

BONUS CUE CARD



Now, we're coming to the end of the tutorial. Just one other cue card had been seen.

A student saw this and it was

Describe a song:

- **describe your favorite song**
- **what you like about it**
- **who sings the song, and**
- **how you found the song.**

So, I'll leave you with that and if you've got time, I would write out your answer, go back and try to improve the answer, maybe do some research.

If you don't have that much good vocabulary about music, then go and [research some vocabulary](#) about music then upgrade your answer, write it out, send it to us, and we'll give you some feedback about it.

IELTS SPEAKING CONFIDENCE COURSE

If you're still struggling with the speaking, then have a look at the [IELTS Speaking Confidence Course](#) we have at ieltspodcast.com and in that course, we've got lots of useful techniques,



powerful techniques that help you respond quickly and automatically and we talk about going into detail-- we go into detail about making notes for the cue card, about how to structure your talk, and it's just full of tips and advice on how to [improve your speaking skills](#).

My name is Ben Worthington. If you enjoyed this [tutorial](#), please write us a positive review in [iTunes](#) or on WeChat or on [Facebook](#) or share it with a friend. I would really appreciate that. Remember we are here to help you and if you've got any questions, just shoot us an email with your question and we'll get back to you.

Have a fantastic day and keep pushing with your IELTS. You will get there. It's just a matter of time or putting in the hours. You learned your own language. People pass IELTS every single day. There is no reason why you cannot do this.

Just put in the work and you will get there. I'm not going to say you will get there. I'm going to say we will get there because we are here to help you. Okay, have a fantastic day and thanks again for listening.

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com