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Ben: Hello there, IELTS students. Welcome to IELTS podcast. You no longer have to worry, fret or panic about IELTS because we are here to guide you through this test jungle. Enjoy these IELTS tutorials and if you need more help or want to access the famous online course, you can visit us at ieltspodcast.com.

INTRODUCTION

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Ben: Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we will be looking at recent cue cards seen around the internet, sent in by students, and sent in by our students as well who are on the course and taking exams. The layout will be first we look at a cue card and I will apply this framework that I think you will find very useful. It's almost like a **cheat sheet** and after that, we are going to look at some of the follow-on questions for part 3.

I specifically chose these follow-on questions because **1)** they are quite popular at the moment, okay? These are quite popular current events, current issues that are going on in the world. **2)** Good opportunity for some vocabulary that should come relatively easy for you as a student



and thirdly, I thought they were quite interesting and more likely to detain-- more likely to be relevant to our situation about what we are doing.

For example, they're not going to be questions about golf. I doubt that. Not that many of you play golf, but they are questions about streaming services, video games, and all of that. Let's jump straight into it. We will look at a cue card.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME CUE CARDS

Describe an interesting conversation you had. You should say when and where you had it, from where-- sorry who you were with, and why it was interesting. Final point and explain how you felt after that. So, just to summarize: describe an interesting conversation you had. You should say when and where you had it, who you were with, why it was interesting, and explain how you felt after it.



SOME IMPORTANT FRAMEWORK TO LEARN

Now, the framework that I'm going to suggest for you is the one that I've suggested in previous episodes. So, grab a pen because this is very useful and it's very straightforward and it's very practical. So, if we memorize this sentence, we can use-- or if we memorize this structure: **relative clause, superlative, conjunction**, okay, and we can start our talk with this. It's very, very straightforward, extremely practical and we're going to pick a bucket load of points in the process.

The next phrase is if I remember correctly and then for the why answer-- why it was interesting, we're going to answer with this. It was interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because of this. Secondly, because of this and then throughout the talk, we are going to splice in or we're going to put in some very useful phrases such as if I remember correctly, as I was saying, it's hard to explain why.

Now, I wanted to mention these to you at the start before I gave you the cue card talk because now that you are aware of them, hopefully, you will be able to pinpoint them and you'll be paying attention and you can hear them being used naturally. So, just one more time I'll go through the cue card and then I'll jump straight into my two-minute presentation.



Describe an interesting conversation you had. You should say when and where you had it, who you were with, why it was interesting, and explain how you felt after it. I would like to tell you about one of my older friends who sat down with me one evening and answered all my questions about settling down and family life.

He was about ten years ahead of me. I suppose you could say he's one of the wisest friends I've ever had although I wasn't so impressed with his dress sense. Anyway, if I remember correctly, we were in Lisbon. There was a big event-- big seminar. There were probably about 70 people on the table, but I managed to corner this guy. His name's Eddie and we kind of orientated our seats to each other, so we kind of shut off everybody else. Plus, it was getting late so they were leaving.

We just had like a one-on-one and I was asking him all the questions about, as I said about family life, about how to balance family life with business life-- with work life, how to keep up to date with your interests, how to maintain your hobbies and all of this because to me, it seemed like quite a juggling act. You've got all of these different projects and responsibilities and tasks to complete every single day.

So, it was just me and him and as I said, we kind of just ignored everybody else and the reason why it was-- well, there are two reasons why it was interesting. Firstly, he seemed to have everything under control on the surface. That's what I thought initially. Externally, everything



was under control. It was going well. He seemed to be winning in every single department, but this is the second part why it's interesting is because when I dug a little bit deeper, I found that not everything was as rosy as it seemed on the outside.

For example, he did have arguments with his wife. I didn't think so. I would never have dreamed that he would have had arguments, but he said yes, I have arguments. Yes, sometimes he has terrible days where he just doesn't feel like working and I was surprised because I'd always seen him-- he just seemed like five-star. Everything was perfect. So, as I was saying, Eddie he did seem to have success on the outside, but when I dug a little deeper, it just wasn't as perfect as it seemed and he openly admitted that.

How did I feel afterwards? Well, it's hard to explain, but I think I'd say I felt kind of relieved because for me, he was the standard I wanted to get to if you understand. He was like one of my role models or almost a mentor because I was relieved that even people that look perfect don't have it all together. They're just human and that's my presentation about an interesting conversation I had and I hope you liked it.

Okay. So, while I was doing this talk, I had the bullet points in front of me, okay? So, I did use the **relative clause**-- I had these phrases in front of me, so I used the relative clause. I said I'd like to tell you about one of my older friends who sat down with me and answered all my questions, okay? And then I said he's probably one of the wisest friends I've ever had--



superlative. Then I used a **conjunction**-- although his dress sense did leave a lot to be admired. I think I said something like that, which is a lie, by the way. He dressed impeccably. He dressed very well, but I wanted to just use a conjunction and it was a small conjunction.

I have all of this in front of me with the bullet points and I strongly recommend you do the same. You get all these phrases in bullet point form, you practice looking at a cue card, and then you go through. If I remember correctly-- very easy to use. It's almost a collocation because those four words you're more likely to hear them together and you can use it anywhere. It's universal. So, if I remember correctly and then I just set the scene. I was quite descriptive; seminar, 70 people, it's in the evening in Lisbon.

Then this is one of my favorites at the moment because the next part I said it made it sound like those like much better constructed. It sounded much easier on the ears because I gave you two reasons. I said firstly and then I said secondly, but when I say that I'm going to give you two reasons, you're waiting for the second one. Anyway, it's just lends a little bit of structure for your talk. So, there are two reasons and then the two next universal collocations as I was saying and it's hard to explain why this person is a role model or it's hard to explain how I felt afterwards.

So, hopefully you have written these down. We're still working on this construction and eventually, we will integrate it into the Speaking Confidence Online Course, but as we're



working through it and as we are refining it, I still wanted to share it with you because I find it very useful. I've tested it on students and we've managed to get them from 6.5 to 7 in the speaking. I'm not saying this framework was responsible, but it did play a big part. I'm very convinced.

HAVE A LOOK AT SOME FOLLOW-ON QUESTIONS

Anyway, let's move on to the **follow-on questions**. These follow-on questions will be slightly different to the cue card we've just covered. As I said before, these are follow-on questions that I cherry picked, so to speak, because I think they're relevant, I think they're some of the most frequent topics and thirdly, I think that you've got a good opportunity for vocabulary that you can not only use in your in your speaking but in your writing.

So, first one: Where is the most crowded place in your city? The most crowded place in my city would probably have to be-- by the way, I'm going to talk about Manchester because where I'm from is not a city, but I live close to Manchester.

So, the most crowded place in Manchester, England would possibly be Piccadilly Square and I think it's busy because there's a big bus station in the center, there are lots of popular shops



such as Primark-- I hate to say it, but Burger King and also, there's a very large, very busy chaotic hectic train station which is just bringing in thousands and thousands of people every hour. When you leave the train station, there's only one way and that's straight into Piccadilly Square. Pretty much that's like the main exit, so everybody just flows into Piccadilly Square.

Next question: Why are cities becoming overcrowded day by day? This is interesting. Although I don't have the exact reason, I would guess that they're becoming more crowded because in the cities nowadays, it's usually where you get-- it's usually where the jobs are located and if there's a lot of jobs, people will go there and they'll live there.

Interestingly, I was listening to a podcast the other day. It was about Elon Musk and he said that although cities have gone 3D as in they've increased in height, transport has stayed 2D as in that we haven't built 20-decker buses, but we've build 20-decker buildings, for example. So, this could be another reason why cities are becoming overcrowded. So, just to summarize: probably traffic and the newer or jobs and opportunity and probably more prosperity as well.

People behave differently in crowded places. Why do you think this happens? I guess we become desensitized by the amount of people. For example, in my village where I'm from in England, if you're walking around on the hills and-- for example, on Boxing Day recently, I was walking around on the hills and everybody I met we usually sort of like locked eyes and said you all right and then carried on whereas in cities, if you had to do that every day, if that was the



routine, you would quickly become insane. So, I guess we desensitize meeting people because we're interacting with people every single minute every single hour. So, I guess that's probably why we might behave differently.

How do you think people should deal with traffic congestion? I think there are lots of ways people could deal with traffic congestion: use more public transport, take biking to work, work remotely. All of these actions would reduce the amount of cars on the road I guess. You could also do car sharing or carpooling, possibly even take taxis maybe. I don't know actually. That's probably not the best suggestion. So, I guess there are lots of different ways and it just takes time to change, to adapt these because for the last 20-30 years, the standard way to get into cities has been with cars.

So, hopefully there you picked up a lot of vocabulary. Also, you'll have heard that I would correct myself. I just want to mention one final point. It's not really the quality of the answer. It's just the quality of your communication. So, even though I kind of went off a little bit when I was talking about the podcast, the cities becoming 2D 3D, I still brought it back and hopefully, you still followed my train of thought.



I didn't go totally off topic and start talking about cows in the road in Delhi, for example. I still kept it on topic and just pulled it back. I realized that it was kind of relevant and I made it more relevant.

Also, for the last question, I gave a big list of reasons straight away, yes? How do you think people should deal with traffic congestion? It's quite straightforward, so I just gave lots of different possible solutions. I gave an example and these-- it's funny actually because this is actually what we teach in the writing course; to give lots of reasons because it's an opportunity to show your vocabulary and then give an example and that's exactly how I tackled that last question and as you'd have heard, it was a very complete answer.

Next ones: the next questions are going to be related about study except for the last one, which is about older people and I'm pretty certain the examiners threw this question in about older people because it's quite common for students to say old-- for example, old people need care. If you say old people, it sounds a little bit rude. So, this is why we should say the elderly need to be looked after. The elderly are a tremendous source of wisdom, yes?

So anyway, let's jump straight into it. First, we're going to talk about students and then we're going to talk about helping, okay? Do you think university should be compulsory? Well, I guess there are two sides to this argument. On the one hand, having a better qualified workforce is



definitely a strong argument. However, on the other hand, if everybody has a degree, I guess they kind of lose the value which I think is what's happening in the West nowadays.

So, to be honest, I don't think everybody should have a degree. Also, some people are just not meant for academic study. Some people are more gifted as athletes or are more gifted in physical work. So, to force these types of people to go for a degree would be absolutely ludicrous.

Next question: Describe a situation when you helped someone. I guess I can talk about my partner who I'm helping at the moment. She's having a bit of difficulty finding a flat in her city and I'm offering sort of like different solutions and just trying to look at the problem differently. Maybe and possibly frustrating her by just looking at things differently, but I'm genuinely trying to help her.

Also nowadays, what I've learned is that sometimes people don't want help. They just want to vent their problems. Anyway, to answer the question, I'm currently trying to help my partner and find a city-- sorry, find an apartment and it's going okay, but I think it's probably a skill I could develop more.

How often do you help someone? This is interesting. Although I'm not an active volunteer in some kind of charity, when I see the opportunity to help somebody in the city, I take it and I do



enjoy it. For example, I remember once I was in London with my uncle-- in fact, with the whole family and the extended family and we were talking about nutrition for some reason and endurance running.

We were just coming out of the subway and there's this old lady with a massive bag and I broke off the conversation to help this lady get up the steps with this massive bag. It felt good and also, it felt good doing it in front of my uncle who is somebody who I admire. I wouldn't say I help people every day though when I see the opportunity, I do like to jump in.

What are the advantages of helping to someone? I guess the advantages of helping someone is that you get to prove your worth, you get to share your knowledge, you get to see them overcome problems faster, but it also depends on what type of help you're giving.

It might be academic help. For example, you might be giving them feedback on their essays. You might also just be physically helping them. Either way, I think it usually feels good. This is possibly one of the reasons why a lot of people volunteer in charities and organizations and possibly even choose certain careers such as teaching or medicine.

Do young people help older people? This is a really tricky question because it's very general. I would like to think that yes, young people do help older people. In the majority of cities where



I've lived in, I'm on the tram or on the metro or on the bus and I usually see younger people getting up and offering their seat to older people.

So, I think in general, they do. I think younger people definitely help their elderly grandparents, for example, especially with topics such as technology and mobile phones and apps and all of this and I guess those elderly people probably helped their elders when new technology came on the scene. So, I'd like to say that yes, I think in general, younger people do help elderly people.

Okay. So, that first bunch of questions obviously it's about helping and as I said, I wanted to get it out-- I wanted to make it clear that we shouldn't really be using old people. Also, I wanted to show that we could use two sides of the coin, so to speak. Do you think university should be compulsory? Well, I guess there are two sides to the argument. Firstly, everybody should be qualified. Secondly, not everybody is suited for university.

So, we not only get to use the firstly and secondly-- actually, I think in my answer I used on the one hand and on the other hand. These are some phrases that you can definitely use, but be careful. We can't use all the vocabulary we've learned for the writing. We can't use all of that in our speaking. For example, certain phrases such as nevertheless is overly formal and thus as



well. It's probably too formal for this part-- for this exam-- for the speaking part. So, just bear that in mind.

Okay. Final questions: Do you like watching comedy on TV? I probably do actually although I don't watch it on television. I don't think that many people watch television anymore, to be honest with you. There's a trend called cord cutting where people are cutting their cable TV connections, for example. I think more people are moving over to streaming services such as Disney Plus or Netflix.

Anyway, I like watching comedy on TV. It varies. Sometimes I watch some British talk show or some British comedy show. I think I've been watching-- the one I've been watching recently is 9 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown, which is very dark English humor. And then also, there's the more what I was thinking is stupid obvious humor which is the American humor. So, I will sometimes watch American comedy series. The ones I've binge-watched in the past are probably The Office-- the U.S. version-- and Brooklyn 99, which I didn't like at first, but after like three episodes, I got into it. I think people-- sorry. I like watching comedy on TV. I like watching comedy series, but more so on my phone or my laptop nowadays.

Do you think you can make someone laugh? No. I've never been able to make anybody laugh in my entire life. I completely promise-- just joking. By the way, don't mess around like I just did.



Sorry, let's do that again. Do you think you can make someone laugh? Yes, I think so, but it also depends on the other person.

Some people if you've got the same sense of humor, it's obviously going to be quite easy. For some reason, Dutch people, German people, Swedish we usually have kind of a dark sense of humor although with my German friends sometimes there's a bit of a delay. It might be a little bit evil, so to speak.

Anyway, I think I can make someone laugh. I think the key is not to do it on purpose, but just to take advantage of opportunities that arise; situational opportunities or maybe stuff that's going on around you or maybe in the conversation. I'll just give you an example.

Yesterday, I was at the bank and I'm in Tbilisi at the moment in Georgia and not that many people speak English. I had a ticket for the queuing system and I think it was 749 and there is this person next to me and I asked them what number do you have and she said 745 and I was like-- and this was all in broken English because she couldn't really speak that much. So, I was like okay, let's swap-- change and she almost did it, but I was only messing around. Sorry, just to answer your question, I think sometimes I can do, but it depends on the situation. It also depends on how I feel like.



IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS FROM THE TUTORIAL

So, yes, that's everything from me today. I think the best takeaway from this tutorial would be to write down the framework that I briefly mentioned. Write it down in bullet points; maybe put it on a card. Then when you're looking at some cue cards, try and use fragments from this framework. What was it now? Relative clause + superlative + conjunction and then remember those phrases: if I remember correctly, if my memory serves me well, firstly, secondly, for example.

Try and get all of this down onto a piece of paper and then when you're doing your cue cards, use it. If you do enough cue cards, eventually it'll just be memorized and then once it's memorized and it's integrated into your active memory, then it starts sounding very natural. The best way to get into this active memory is to keep on doing it and doing it until it sounds natural, until it becomes automatic and then you can use it confidently.

So, yes, that's it for me today. We will be upgrading the [Speaking Confidence Course](#) soon. That's coming-- I think I've got it penciled in for March or April to upgrade the online courses. If you're struggling with your speaking or your writing, then get in contact. We can help you.



We've got an expert team of native English speakers giving you feedback so you can improve much faster and we can just end this frustration.

DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE BIGGER PICTURE

By the way, just one last thing before we finish. IELTS is difficult and sometimes it's easy to become obsessed with IELTS. Sometimes it's easy just to take test after test after test and then we lose sight of the bigger picture. We lose sight of why are we even taking IELTS? Ah yes, it's for my immigration. It's for my university studies. So, don't go down that rabbit hole.

Just take a step back and think okay, is this the best thing that I'm doing right now? Is the best thing to get help? Is the best thing to join the course? Is the best thing just to take two months off and give myself time to improve? So, just keep that in mind.

That's it from me today. I wish you all the best with your IELTS preparation. Remember to keep going. We're here to help you so come and visit us at ieltspodcast.com. Have a great day and keep listening.

[Music]



Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com



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