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INTRODUCTION

Ellen: Hi there, IELTS podcast listeners. This is Ellen and I'm here today to offer you another tutorial. This time, my tutorial is going to be about speaking and more specifically, I want to look at Speaking Part 3.

For me, Speaking Part 3 is interesting for a ton of reasons, but there's not really a whole lot of useful or accurate or detailed information about it. So, that's what I wanted to give you today;



some information that I think will help you prepare and help you understand what's happening in Speaking Part 3.

As I said, it's interesting for a lot of reasons. It could potentially be the hardest part of the test, but nobody really realizes that. You see what I have seen is that test takers are typically really stressed in the beginning of the test.

So, Part 1 is the easiest part of the test. It's the least challenging in a lot of ways because you are essentially talking about things that are familiar to you and you're being asked very kind of closed-end questions. So, it's not particularly challenging yet. Because it's the beginning of the test, people are really stressed during it.

The major stress point in the test I have seen is Part 2 because students think oh, I have to talk for two minutes and what am I going to say and how can I possibly speak without interruption and



keep going for two minutes? So, once Part 2 is done, it's funny. You see like this cloud just lifted off test-takers and they suddenly really just relax and that's great in a lot of ways because Part 3 really requires a lot of abstract thought and it requires some more mature thinking, some more mature language and what I have seen is that test takers who maybe were a little reserved in the beginning of the test, maybe not coming up with a lot of advanced or sophisticated language, in Part 3, they really shine, okay? But as I said, it is difficult because you have to think about some very abstract things and it's a dialogue.

PART 3 IS A DIALOGUE

So, let's talk a little bit about it. As I said, Part 3 is a dialogue, so it has a more relaxed atmosphere. It's not going to be like Part 1 where talk about this and then you say 2-3 sentences



and then the examiner asks you another question. It's your time to really extend your ideas, talk about them in a more open-ended way.

It's also interesting because the examiner is actually not supposed to follow the script entirely and this makes it very different from the other parts of the test because the examiner has to follow the script 100% with no diversion at all. Here though, the examiner is supposed to create an atmosphere where it does feel like a looser kind of discussion, okay?

So, what should you expect? After you finish your Part 2, the examiner will take away the booklet from you, the pencil, and the note-taking sheet and then will say something like we've been discussing this issue and I'd like to ask you a couple of more questions about this. Let's discuss this, okay? And so the examiner will present you with a topic.



Now, here's the thing. The examiner has on his or her book three different topics that are related loosely in some cases to what your Part 2 topic was about. The examiner has to ask you two of those topics, okay? The first topic is the least challenging. The second is kind of in the middle and the third topic is the most challenging. So, if you're a high-level candidate, so if you're like a 7 and above, you should probably expect to get the second and the third topics, okay? If you're below a 7, then you should probably expect to get the first and the second topic.

So, the takeaway here is everyone is going to get that second topic, but the higher-level students are going to get topics 2 and 3 and the lower level students are going to get topics 1 and 2. What is the difference? It's just the level of abstraction, the kind of thought that is required. Maybe a little more talking about society and predictions for the future and they just require more abstract and more complex language, okay?



So, the examiner will tell you let's talk about this and then the examiner has a list of three or four questions. As I said, the examiner does have to change the language around a little bit. So, the examiner really cannot and should not read directly from the book, but has to put the questions in his or her own words and you answer in pretty much as long as you want. This is not a limit of 2-4 sentences like Part 1. You are expected to come up with answers, ideas and really just extend it.

UNSCRIPTED FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

Now, what the examiner is also supposed to do is ask you an unscripted follow-up question. That question can be as simple as why or why do you say this, but it can also be something just



attached to something you have said and the examiner could say oh, well you mentioned this. Tell me a little bit more about why.

So, you could get some questions like that. The examiner is really just trying to extend the dialogue, trying to give you opportunities to show your ability to speak fluently, fluidly, and extensively in English, okay? So, remember that all of these are opportunities to show how well you speak English. That's what the examiner is trying to gauge.

As I said, the questions do get harder as you progress in the Part 3. They get more abstract that is, but also remember that this is the last impression the examiner is going to have of your ability to speak. Also remember that the examiner is grading you holistically and by that I mean the examiner is taking all parts of the test. So, it's not like Part 1 will be given greater consideration than Part 2 or vice-versa. All parts of the test are going to be considered equally.



However, the examiner also knows that everyone, as I said before, is very stressed in Part 1. So, like I said, it's amazing to see sometimes the difference between the language that comes out of a student in Part 3 compared to what they did in Part 1. So, it's really your opportunity to shine.

WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS WILL YOU BE ASKED

Okay. So, what kinds of questions might you be asked in Part 3? One of my students a while ago was asked in Part 2 to describe a situation that made him angry. So, the Part 3 questions that he then got were related to emotions. So, for example, describe situations in your daily life that make you angry or that make people angry.

Now, here the questions are not so related to you, but your ability to think, as I said, abstractly about other people, about society, about what happens in the world. So, it's less about your



personal beliefs-- about yourself, but again, more broadly in relation to the world. It could be something about culture. So, how do people in your culture express anger? Is anger acceptable in your culture?

And then a lot of these questions will also ask your opinion on something. So, for example, some people believe that men are angrier than women? What do you think? So, you will be expected to agree with the statement or disagree with the statement and again, extend it into a dialogue, give at least several sentences as a response.

Now, another type of question you could be asked is to-- you could be asked, forgive me, **is to look into the future**. What do you think will happen? So, you could be asked about something different actually, not anger. How do you think that this issue will develop in the future?



So, all of these questions are really asking you to show different types of language because when you predict, you're going to use different tenses, you're going to use different words, you'll probably start using some modal verbs. So, each of these has a very specific purpose. Even though they kind of seem random and haphazard, they're not. They've all been designed with particular purposes in mind.

Another type of question that you may be asked is to **compare different things**. So, something like how is the way we express anger today different from how anger was expressed in the past? So, you could get questions like that where, again, you have to extend and you have to, again, provide the appropriate language and appropriate vocabulary and the language of comparison. So, it's another example of how each of these has a very specific purpose.



So, what I want to do now is give you a couple of examples of questions that you may find in your test and the questions that I'm going to refer to right now come from the Cambridge IELTS book no. 14 if I'm not mistaken. It's the last test in the book and this is something that I think a lot of us have seen before; this particular question. The Part 2 question is describe a website you have bought something from.

Like I said, it's something that we've seen a lot of times in one way or another. Sometimes it's describe a website that you use very often. Sometimes it's something that you've bought something from. The whole website topic is pretty common in [IELTS](#) nowadays, so sometimes just the wording changes a little bit.

Assuming that this is what you have spent your Part 2 talking about, we can now talk about some of the Part 3 questions you might get from this. So, the book has the question here: do you agree



that the prices of all goods should be lower on internet shopping sites than in shops? Now, as I said before, there are some **key words** that the examiner has in these questions and the examiner is actually not supposed to use the word agree.

So, the examiner would probably rephrase this a little differently to say something like some people think that the prices of all goods should be lower on internet shopping sites than in shops. What do you think?

So, an appropriate answer to this would be something like well, I do see why some people might be tempted to believe that e-shops should have lower prices than brick-and-mortar stores and one reason for this is the fact that there is less overhead. Online shops do not need to rent space for the actual physical shop. Therefore, they spend less money and they can then pass on these savings to their customers.



Another reason why online shops should be less expensive is because they have a much greater customer base. Whereas a physical shop can only count on the customers in that area, an online shop can even potentially sell internationally and not just regionally. That's an example of how you could answer a question like this.

I know that I used some higher-level vocabulary like brick-and-mortar shops. There were a couple of other things. Those are words that you can all look up and see what they mean perhaps even incorporate them into your own vocabulary.

Now, I also talked about how some of the questions you might be asked are related to predictions. So, here's an example of that. The question in the book says will large shopping malls continue to be popular despite the growth of the internet? So, it's asking you to predict essentially will they continue to be popular. A sample answer for something like this would be



no. In fact, I believe we are already seeing the repercussions of internet shopping on large shopping malls with many such areas closing around the country. People are finding the ease, the convenience of online shopping to really outweigh any advantages of the traditional shopping mall and so while I believe shopping malls will continue to exist, I also think we will see less of them in the future.

Now, another type of question that you may get is, as I said before, **a consider question**. So, you're asked to assess something, to speculate on something and give your opinion on it even though it's not related to you specifically, but your opinions about something.

Again, referring to Cambridge IELTS 14, one of the speaking tests has the Part 2 question describe something you liked very much which you bought for your home. So, in the Part 3



questions, you could expect something like why do some people care about how their home looks and other people do not?

So, here you're asked to assess why some people may be interested in the appearance of their home and others not so concerned about that. So, what kind of an answer could you give here? Again, you're suggesting ideas. So, an answer you could provide for something like this could be something like I believe that people generally can be differentiated into those who care in general about aesthetics and appearances and those who do not.

This can be seen in the way people dress, in the way they keep their cars or other possessions. There are some people who gain a certain sort of satisfaction from things having a nice appearance and other people who really are just concerned with the function of their possessions such as their home rather than the form of these things.



So, that's the kind of thing you could say and, of course, you could extend it even further. So, maybe the examiner might ask you a follow-up question like what other things might people be concerned with the appearance of? Perhaps you could offer some answers there, for example, someone's office space. It's very easy to go into people's offices and see that some have picture frames and things that create a soothing kind of relaxing and aesthetically pleasing environment whereas other people may have papers strewn all over the surface and no personal objects that show any sort of personality or any sort of aesthetic consideration.

So, that's the kind of follow-up question you could expect from something like this and again, that is going to be the examiner's creation and it usually will follow something that you have already said. So, the examiner is essentially trying to continue the dialogue off of something you have already provided.



The last type of question in Part 3 that I want to look at is one of these comparison questions. Again, with this topic of purchasing something from your home, a Part 3 question that you could get would be comparing living in a flat to living in a house and the examiner can express this question in many, many different ways.

The way it's written in the book is in what ways is living in a flat or apartment better than living in a house or it could say something like talk to me about the benefits and disadvantages of a flat versus living in a home. So, it really depends, but as I said, the examiner will switch these words around because he or she is required to use his or her own words.

So, what could you say about something like this? You could answer that many people truly value the privacy and personal space that living in a house provides them. They want a garden



and they want room to feel free and like they're not disturbing other people. However, there is much to be said for the convenience of living in a flat.

First of all, flats are usually located closer to the city whereas a house requires you to live further away. This, of course, will increase your commuting time and perhaps you may not have all the facilities, all the amenities that living closer to an urban center provides.

A flat, of course, has the disadvantage of having less space. There is less privacy as you are surrounded by other flats with tenants. So, this means that you must respect quiet hours, that you must not make a lot of noise and, of course, you don't have space outdoors unless you have a balcony, but you certainly wouldn't have the kind of yard in order to spend time outdoors.

So, what kind of a follow-up question could you expect to something like this? Well, the examiner might ask you what kinds of people prefer living in a flat and what kinds of people



prefer living in a house? So, to this you could say something like I think people who value their privacy would prefer a house. I also think that people with young children would prefer a house because this way their children can spend time outdoors and yet be in a safe sheltered environment.

On the other hand, business professionals, people who need or want all of the opportunities that urban life provides would certainly value living in a flat ideally in an urban center more than a house. Also, people who don't want or cannot maintain a garden or a detached house may also prefer urban living or rather living in a flat. So, people who for some reason or another cannot or do not want to maintain a detached house may prefer living in a flat.

Clearly, living in a detached house has different costs, different expenses that one must consider. So, living in an apartment may be a less expensive option for these people. Also, perhaps elderly



people who cannot physically maintain a detached house with its garden, with its exterior may prefer living in a flat. So, these are some of the people who would prefer living in one over the other.

Okay. So, this is pretty much what you can expect from Part 3. It does last five minutes. As I said, it'll be some questions. It'll be some answers. It'll be some follow-up questions from the examiner. The idea is to make it a dialogue and to make it feel like a looser kind of discussion.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE AND ADVANCED SENTENCES

Remember that you will be expected to provide advanced language, advanced sentences, more abstract thought, okay? Remember that you should extend your answers maybe about a paragraph. By that I mean certainly at least three or four sentences in each answer, okay?



So, thanks for being with me today. I wish you all the best of luck with your IELTS preparation.

[Music]

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com.