

[Music]

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: Hello there, podcast listeners. In this tutorial, we are going to be talking about how to speak about your hobbies for IELTS Speaking Part 1 and in this tutorial, we have Daphne. How are you doing today, Daphne?

Daphne: Hi, I'm good. Thanks, Ben. Hi, everyone.

Ben: All right. As you probably know, Daphne along with Ellen and sometimes myself correct essays and offers feedback and not only is she an IELTS writing expert, but also she helps students with the speaking and specifically she's the one offering you feedback for the speaking. How is that going, Daphne?

Daphne: It's going really, really well, thank you. Thanks everyone for sending in your-- we're doing this practice on the cue cards for Speaking Part 2, so thank you for sending in your cue cards. You're recording them. We are giving you recorded feedback. It's really, really good

practice for you to record live so it feels a bit like an exam because you know it matters and you're going to send it to me, but it is really interesting. We're getting some great answers and I think students are finding it really useful to just have that feedback on what to work on because there are a lot of issues in speaking.

Ben: Absolutely, absolutely and it's very difficult to identify where you're going wrong. It's very difficult to sort of like self-evaluate because there'll be some areas that you're probably not aware that you're doing incorrectly.

Daphne: I think that's very true. I think we get into bad habits and when someone else says to you well, do you know you're doing this the whole time or you're repeating that the whole time and it kind of maybe brings you back onto the right track. It gives you the chance to still re-correct and then move forward from there, doesn't it?

Ben: Exactly, exactly and before we get into the hobbies, I just want to mention that when I was a teacher in Spain, I had come over from Manchester and I had done my Erasmus-- my student exchange program in Spain, I had learned Spanish, and I was teaching English in Spain which is what I used to do and I remember I told this first year student that the way to pronounce answer is not answa. It's answer and she was like oh-- in typical Spanish passionate dramatic style, she jumped out of the chair, she was like oh my word! All my life since school I've been saying

answa and only now have I realized it's answer. So, we can also help you avoid to make those mistakes.

Daphne: Yes, that is so true. In learning French, Ben, the same experience, but when you're corrected by a French person, you never forget. You get it right after that.

Ben: Is that true? I knew they were quite proud of their language. Do they really tell you that--

Daphne: They're really, really precise and because it's grammatic, it can be very complicated in a very formal language and so it's like studies as well different levels of formality, but yes, they expect you to be perfect. So, high standards.

Ben: Yes and just one last thing. Just yesterday actually my girlfriend she rebuked me because I said hello to an elderly lady in the flat and I was like what's wrong with saying hello? I said it like in a cheerful way. She's like no, no, no. You can't say hello. It's too informal. For an elderly person like that, you've got to show respect and as I like ooh.

Daphne: I like that, but anyway that's a different podcast, Ben.

Ben: Yes, yes definitely. Okay, let's jump into this. I've been quite looking-- I've been looking forward to tell you about my new hobby, but we can jump to that and also, my dad's got a new

hobby which I wanted to tell you about. It's a little bit violent, but I'll tell you more about that later.

So, let's jump into it. IELTS Speaking Part 1 topics. Now, let's just very briefly go over the Part 1 format. You're probably aware of it, but it's definitely worthwhile reviewing it. So, as you know, it's divided into three parts: Part 1 you're going to be asked about whether you work, study, or where you live. Then the examiner is going to ask you about two different topics to talk about and there's probably around four questions to answer on each topic. And this lasts for about five minutes, so you've probably got about a minute and a half to talk about each of these two topics.

Now, as you know, it is quite brief and you probably don't have a lot of time to think about what you're going to say and you've got to sound confident and of course, spontaneous. So, with that in mind, let's jump into this topic. Specifically, we're going to focus on Part 1. Right then. So, how would the examiner start this part of the exam, Daphne?

Daphne: Okay. So, these topics are personal. I think that's something to reassure you about because you can panic and you can think I don't know what's happening? How can I prepare because I don't know what they're going to say to me, but what you have to remember about Part 1 is it is about you and the aim of Part 1 really is to just help you take a breath, find your pace, and relax if you possibly can, but the idea is that these are about you or personal experiences.

So, for example the examiner might start with let's talk about your hobbies. This is a sort of question you've been asked since you started learning English. It's actually really boring, in my opinion, but you're going to have to try and sound excited and they'll follow you up with the first question.

So, they're reading from a script and they might-- if your answer if you're long enough they might say why, but basically, they'll start with a question like what hobbies or interests do you have?

Ben: And then some of the possible follow-up ones would be?

Daphne: The follow-up questions: do you need to use any special equipment to do this hobby? Do you prefer to do your hobby with other people or do you prefer to be alone? And why do you think so many people have hobbies?

Ben: We're going to do a test-- well, sort of like an example. Daphne is going to ask me the questions later where I can share what I've been wanting to tell her from the beginning. I wanted to share some information about my new hobby. Now then, these questions is basically your opportunity to shine. This is your chance to show the examiner and just basically to show your level.

You don't want to show-- you don't want to like overload the examiner, but it really is-- this is your time and just to go a little bit off script now, I would strongly recommend good posture, positive attitude, straight back, look the examiner in the eye. Don't stare them down, but do sort of like make eye contact every couple of seconds and then maybe look down to the floor or look somewhere else and then carry on talking. Retain that eye contact. I know this is something that a lot of students struggle with, so I just wanted to briefly mention that and also just remember-- yes, go on.

Daphne: I'm just going to add to that, Ben. Sound excited, sound enthusiastic, [unintelligible 00:08:16.28] expression. Hopefully, you can hear that with Ben and me now, but the more expression you put into your voice, the more engaged you are. It shows you care and the examiner will be on that journey with you. They'll be interested if you're interested.

Ben: Absolutely, absolutely. I remember saying the best way to be interesting is to be interested. If you're interested in this exam and you're looking forward to it, you're excited about it and you're smiling, it's going to help you. I've interviewed quite a few students and especially the charismatic ones you can hear it on the interview. There's a lot of charisma there and in the back of my mind I'm like this definitely helped you with your exam. You sat back, you leaned back in your chair, you smiled, you made the examiner smile. Just like in this interview, you're making

me smile whoever the student is. There's that-- I wouldn't say it's as informal as banter, but there's definitely a drop of charisma in there.

And if you can pull that off, that's fantastic, but if you do struggle with these kinds of things, the basics is posture, smiling, a little bit of excitement and just being aware. Also being aware of the examiner's situation. Do you know how many people they've got to talk about these things with all day? So, you going in there with a fresh, excited, non-nervous attitude is just going to be a real breath of fresh air and it's definitely going to help you.

Daphne: Yes, yes. Okay, Ben, so what hobbies or interests do you have?

Ben: Okay. Well, recently, Daphne, I took up lock-picking as a hobby and you would be surprised it's opened so many doors for me. Sorry. Okay, let's do it properly and I'll tell you about my real hobby. Can you ask me again, please, Daphne?

Daphne: Right. What hobbies or interests do you have?

Ben: Well, I love taking photos and I have this really expensive camera. It's a Nikon and I've had it for about five years. In fact, my grandfather gave it to me. He was the one who got me interested in photography. What I like most is taking photos of landscapes. It's risky though

walking around with a camera these days, so I only take it with me at the weekends when I go out with family or friends.

Daphne: I really like that answer, Ben. That's fantastic. What I really like is how you've actually given me a lot of information. You've given me what-- I'm trying to count-- five sentences I think in one little answer which is fantastic. Really expanding, giving a lot of extra information and I thought that was a great answer.

Ben: Yes, thanks. I did write it out before this tutorial, but I think it took about 17 seconds to say that and also, we've got to take into account that I was reading it out, but even so, it's still a relatively full answer and we cover a lot there. If we just go into it in a little bit more detail, there are about five elements to it.

So, first of all, in the first sentence, yes I do-- sorry, I love taking photos and I have this really expensive camera. So, in that sentence, I'm talking about the hobby. Then I said-- go on, sorry?

Daphne: Yes, so that was what the hobby is. If we look at the question words, that's quite helpful, isn't it? We have what the hobby is.

Ben: Exactly. Good point.

Daphne: Next one was how long.

Ben: Yes, so I said it's a Nikon and I've had it for about five years.

Daphne: Okay. The next one was how [unintelligible 00:12:29.27] interested.

Ben: Yes. So, I was there talking in fact my grandfather gave it to me. He's the one who got me interested in photography. It's just a tiny little bit of background there and it just adds a little bit of depth to my answer.

Daphne: And I like also the fact with that one that it's personal and so if it's not just general yes, photography is great. You can take nice pictures. The examiner is learning more about you and as we said at the beginning, Part 1 is about you.

Ben: Exactly. Yes, good point, good point and then I went into a little bit more detail. Again, it's about me. I said what I like most is taking photos of landscapes.

Daphne: Yes, that was lovely. I thought your own additional comments at the end that was quite interesting, Ben, about why you don't take a big camera with you.

Ben: Yes. Again, it's sort of like adding just a little bit more depth, a little bit of my personal experience. So, I said it's risky walking around with a camera these days, so I only take it with me when I go out with family or friends. So, it's just additional information to help the examiner understand the whole situation plus it gives me an opportunity just to share some topic-specific

vocabulary which is what we're going to focus on now. So, can you pick out some or could you possibly share some vocabulary that you heard-- some topic-specific vocabulary there?

Daphne: Yes. Well, the vocabulary is not-- and I think also here with the Part 1 it's not difficult vocabulary here because Ben is talking about something that he enjoys doing, but what I liked is that he is using collocations. So, he's using a really expensive camera. So, not just I like using a camera or I just use my phone. He is giving additional adjectives. He's using really expensive to just add depth to his answer.

So, he then talks about the fact that-- in a way this is grammar and vocabulary-- when his grandfather got him interested in photography, he's talking about landscapes. He could equally talk about portraits. These are specific kinds of photography and I like that. So, he's just saying that; he's using the details of photography vocabulary I suppose, but without using too much.

Ben: Yes, exactly, exactly. So, another point is the grammar there. I used very straightforward, easy to learn structure. It's basically I really like and then gerund. I really like playing football. I love taking photos. I despise painting or whatever, but with this structure, it's very versatile. It's very straightforward to use, to basically adopt into your own personal vocabulary.

If you are struggling with certain grammar structures, what I strongly recommend is doing a search for a translation booklet and this is how I personally learned a lot of Spanish grammar

structures when I was learning Spanish a while back. Each day, I would write out 30 sentences and just translate them from English to Spanish, Spanish to English; just back and forth, back and forth, back and forth and this really helped me because later in the evening, I would be using those structures or I would at least kind of force them into the conversation just to make sure that I am remembering them, I'm recalling them.

And this is how we take them not only from our passive vocabulary and put them into our active vocabulary but also this is how we just get to grips with them and make sure we remember them at a much deeper level.

Daphne: And I actually-- just adding to the grammar, grammar is something that the examiner is looking for and it's very easy when you're talking about hobbies just to stay in the present simple tense because it just feels natural. We do use present simple most of the time, but I'm really hot on grammar. It's something that I spent a long time studying. The grammar is the glue that keeps the whole language together and it's so important.

At the very beginning of speaking English, you learn to talk about your likes and dislikes, but at IELTS especially if you want-- if you're aiming for a higher band. I'd just like to add something, Ben, about dependent prepositions and expressions to do with the gerunds; the -ing form. So, if

you're aiming for a higher band, think about using some of these expressions like I'm interested in photography because it enables me to be creative or artistic.

So, we're bringing in that lovely interested in dependent preposition structure and photography. Actually that was for the because, but I'm interested in taking photos you could say with the -ing, but you're bringing in vocab as well at grammar here. I'm fascinated by landscapes. I'm fascinated by watching landscapes change in the seasons; something like that.

I'm attracted to... you could use as a lovely expression here and going back to vocabulary, I'm reliant on my tripod, for example, when I have to take pictures of wildlife. I'm excited by is another one. I'm excited by watching people's expressions change, whatever, but that little grammatical structure with the -ing is good. It's sophisticated. It's the kind of thing you can use quite naturally. The examiner will be thinking hey, that's good. They know what they are doing here.

Ben: Absolutely and then just to-- well, first of all, hopefully you had a pen in your hand. Sorry, we didn't remind you at the beginning, but if I were preparing now for the exam, I would have written all of those phrases down because there is a high probability you can use them in this. There is a very high probability.

We just said Speaking Part 1 is all about you and if you can say I am interested in, I am fascinated by-- well, not if you can say. There's a high chance that you will have the opportunity to say these and if you've written them down and you've gotten comfortable with them, then it's going to make you sound like a much more sophisticated speaker.

And just like Daphne said, the examiner is on the lookout for these advanced phrases, for these advanced constructions, so it's in your interest to write them down and then maybe you translate them all into your own language then translate them back the next day trying to memorize the prepositions and then use them in your speaking, practice with a friend, or even when you're recording yourself and possibly sending it to us for feedback.

Basically just to summarize, write down these phrases that we just mentioned. Try and get them into your active vocabulary and use them in the most natural possible fashion when you're in the exam and you will help the examiner to give you grades because at the end of the day, the examiner is on your team.

They want to give you as many points as possible. It might not feel like it, but having this mindset will definitely help you. The examiner is on your team. They want to give you those points. Make it easy for them. Use those phrases and just collect the points, get your band score and off to Australia or off to the UK to that university, happy days.

Daphne: Exactly. Let's make it easy. Exactly, exactly, yes, yes.

Ben: Okay. So, the next point we want to talk about is verb tenses and modals and conditional sentences. So, the examiner is going to be-- just like we said, the examiner is going to be paying attention to how accurate your grammar is. So, we should take every opportunity possible to show how well we know these constructions and these tenses and these grammar points.

Okay. So, the other thing with my Part 1 answer, if one of the answers I could say-- where is it now-- yes, I'm talking about my hobbies, so I would say I love taking photos and I have this really expensive camera. It's a Nikon and I've had it for about five years. In fact, my grandfather gave it to me. He was the one who got me interested in photography. So, how many different tenses could you spot there, Daphne? Sorry to put you on the spot.

Daphne: I thought you might say that actually, Ben, so I've been harping on my fingers as we go along, but that was really clever because it's a very simple sentence and it's exactly the sort of sentence that you want to use, but Ben used I think definitely three past tenses and the rather clever got me interested in at the end.

But there he started on present tense: I love taking photos. I have this very expensive camera. It's a Nikon. I've had it-- so present perfect there-- for about five years. So, present perfect and past simple. Really important that you are confident on when you use present perfect, when you use

past simple. It is an area where a lot of students trouble, but if you think of it as present perfect is time up until now so unfinished time whereas the past simple is finished time. For me, that's the easiest way to get it correct in my head.

So, as soon as you've got an indicator like five years, it's going to be present perfect. If it was five years ago, that's finished. That would be past simple, but-- sorry, I've gone off topic, but I've had it for about five years, so he's correctly present perfect there. In fact, my grandfather gave it to me. So, that was in the past. It's past tense there. So, we've got I love, I have, it is; present simple. I had; present perfect and my grandfather gave it to me and then he was the one and so, nice, Ben, lots of different tenses in there.

Ben: Super and also, we could possibly expect a question about future plans. So, a typical question would be do you think you will still have this hobby in the future or do you think you will have this hobby in the future? So, if I were to answer this about photography, I'd probably say something like yes, I think I will. I'm still youngish, but it's not a sport that depends on physical exertion, so I think I could do this for a long time and I don't think there will be massive issues going forward.

It's probably a little bit longer than necessary, but in that answer, I'm using the future tense and I'm also acknowledging that I'm not going to be doing it for-- well, I'm acknowledging that it's

not a physical sport and I think that I can probably keep doing it. So, it won't be an issue like physical-- how do I say it? I can't say downfall.

Daphne: Yes, it's something-- yes, you can keep going when you're older, but I think that was really nice. You're using future tenses, but also, it's a sensible answer. It's not just yes, I will. It's developing it and showing the agility in the language, showing the confidence really, isn't it?

Ben: Absolutely, absolutely. So, the next point: modals and conditionals. So, could you tell us about these, please, Daphne?

Daphne: Again, a bit like these dependent prepositions, I'm a massive fan of modal verbs. They are your friend. In the Writing Part 2, I'm endlessly saying to students use the verbs can, could, might, or may to suggest something. So, using modal forms in these answers can really impress the examiner, so possibly examples related to your hobby. So, on photography you could use a modal-- and actually, this is a conditional this one-- if I had the money, I would buy a better camera, but for now, I have to make use of the camera on my phone. So, that's really more conditional with the modal verb I would buy; second conditional there.

Ben: Absolutely. Good point there, good point. Okay. So, coming to an end now, just some final points that I would like to mention. 1) Remember to organize your topic knowledge, not just in the speaking exam but before you even get into the exam center. You want to make sure that

you're familiar with all the special terminology associated with your topic. So, for example with photography, we might be talking about shutters, lenses, developing photos, developing films, and it's a good idea just to write it out.

And I said this before; it's also good to just write about your home place. Find out something maybe interesting, something unique. This way-- for example, in the exam maybe you want to share something unique about your town or your city or your village, but you don't have the vocabulary because you don't know how to translate it because you've never done it before. So, this is why it's extremely important just to research ahead of time.

Likewise, not just your hometown or your home city or whatever or your country but also your job or maybe your studies because you're going to be asked about at least one of those. Anything else that you'd like to mention, Daphne?

Daphne: No, I completely agree with you there, Ben. I think you can prepare for this one. Although you don't know what's going to happen, you can prepare and I think you need to have two or three sentences or three sentences ready like Ben had at the beginning for each of these little questions. Get the vocabulary ready in advance. Know what the technical vocabulary is because you're going to impress the examiner straight through Part 1. That's a fantastic thing to do. So, get prepared and then you can relax and you can actually enjoy it.

Ben: Absolutely and shall I tell you about my dad's recent new hobby? It's a little bit violent.

Daphne: It sounds terrifying, Ben, but yes.

Ben: Well, I was quite surprised. I was on a Skype call with him, video call just with this lockdown and everything and he was there stabbing a clock and I asked him what are you doing? You already know, don't you?

Daphne: No.

Ben: Okay. He replied he said oh, this is a fun way to kill time. Sorry about that.

Daphne: I think lockdown is-- I think you must be just researching bad jokes online.

Ben: I think lockdown is having a different effect on all of us. Each person is reacting differently. Okay there, students. That's it from us today. So, if you are in lockdown and you're having a tough time, go and research some bad jokes like I've been obviously doing, but also just remember it's a good time to make the most of it. You've got time. You're not getting distracted by a job. You're not getting distracted by all the other things going on in life. You're at home and can't go shopping, can't go to the cinema, and so on and so forth.

So, head down translating, get working, a good opportunity and remember if you are struggling with this, reach out to Daphne and myself and IELTS Podcast and we would be more than happy



to help you there. So, thank you very much for listening and all the best with your exam. Good
bye.

Daphne: Bye.

[Music]

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com

