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**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

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**Ben:** Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we're going to look at tips to answer Part 1 IELTS Speaking questions. I'll just give you an overview before we jump into it, so an overview of the tutorial.



First part, I'll just give you a very brief overview of Speaking Part 1 then we're going to look at what is the examiner listening for. Number three, topics and different types of questions and then finally, we're going to-- well penultimately, we're going to look at how long to speak for.

This is an issue that a lot of students have challenges with and then-- it's not penultimately though. It's more than expected. We will just quickly look at troubleshooting certain points and then how to prepare yourself. That'll be the final part. And it's not going to be just myself today. Daphne is also with us. So, how are you doing today, Daphne?

**Daphne:** Hi, Ben. Hi, everyone. I'm good, thank you. Hope you're all doing okay in lockdown wherever you are all over the world.

**Ben:** Okay then. So, I will briefly go over the overview and Daphne is going to then jump into what is the examiner listening for. So, we're basically going to do a quick section each and basically, that's going to be the layout. So as not to waste your time, we're going to get straight into it.



Actually, no. I've changed my mind. Let me just mention the speaking feedback service that Daphne is running at the moment. We're getting some great results from that. I've been checking the emails where the students were saying-- and it seems like we're really seeing some fast improvement with the students. Would you agree, Daphne?

**Daphne:** Absolutely. It's been really, really good. Thanks everyone for sending in your Speaking Part 2 cue cards. Also, if you haven't done one yet, please do one for me. All you have to do is record your Speaking Part 2 which is really good practice to record it live. I think it gives you that buzz that you're in an exam almost and you actually perform and we give you feedback. So, I send this recorded feedback back to you with some suggestions on what you can practice and what you can do to improve. I think people are finding that really useful.

**Ben:** Absolutely especially if you're in lockdown. You might as well make the most of it and this is a very effective way just to find out where you might be losing points and how to correct it and also get insights on how to boost your own score so you can get that band 7, 8, or 9; what you're aiming for.



Okay. So, very, very briefly, Speaking Part 1 lasts-- well, the whole test lasts about 12-14 minutes depending on the student. The first part roughly takes about five minutes and it'll start with the examiner greeting you with good morning or good afternoon. My name is Jeff or my name is Susan, whatever and now is your time to speak.

So, it might not be so demanding and just to go off topic here; perhaps I should have mentioned that before the speaking part actually starts, I strongly recommend you get warmed up with the English language. So, if you can, maybe jump on a telephone call. So, if you've got your speaking exam at 12 then jump on a telephone call or an online class at 11, get warmed up with the language.

You don't want to go in there cold. It's very much like a sporting activity where you warm up and you want to be at the top of your game. You want to be wound up, ready, loose at the flowing. You want to be in that mindset. You don't want to be starting up a cold engine with the examiner. You want to be already warm, running, and humming away very confidently and getting into that flow state.



**Daphne:** That's a very good tip, Ben. That's a really, really good tip because if you're not warmed up, your voice can sound a bit panicky, but actually, if you heard yourself almost already and a phone call is a great idea then yes, you're ready to go.

**Ben:** Absolutely. I realized this every time I go back to Spain to see my friends, the first like 10 minutes I can't understand them because they're speaking too fast. I'm only catching like one word out of three, but by the end of the lunch, for example, I'm there and obviously, I'm not at their level, but I'm much more communicative. I'm much more talkative. I'm responding faster and it took me a while to realize that it is like an engine and you do need to get warmed up.

**Daphne:** Yes, tuned in.

**Ben:** Yes, exactly, exactly and also you're probably going to get tuned in to the examiner's accent much quicker as well because you won't be as conscious of your speaking because you'll be warmed up. You'll



be feeling more confident and this will free up some mental energy to start decode and tune in to the examiner's accent if they do have one.

**Daphne:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ben:** In the first part, you're going to be asked about whether you work, study, or possibly where you currently live and then you'll get around three follow-up questions and in these, the examiner is going to ask you about two different topics. So, there are roughly about four questions to answer on each topic. So, if we just break this down, we've got five minutes, possibly four questions about work or study and then four questions on two topics. That's 12 questions in about 4 minutes 30 seconds assuming 30 seconds is taken up at the beginning.

And we'll come back down to this a little bit later, but what can we basically take away from these numbers? Well, to start off is we've got a lot of questions in a very short space of time. Think of it as a



police interrogation. Actually, no. That's probably not going to help. Don't think of it as a police interrogation.

**Daphne:** That's really going to make you be able to relax, Ben, isn't it?

**Ben:** Exactly, exactly so when you go in just say immediately you never did anything, you never saw anything--

**Daphne:** I'm innocent I promise.

**Ben:** Exactly, but it is important to think about first impressions and this goes back to what we were saying before. So, go in there warm. Go in there warmed up, friendly, smiling, and as natural as possible because this is going to help you sound spontaneous. It's going to help you sound confident. You probably will be more confident and it's, as I said a million times before, it's your opportunity to really just go in there, make the examiner sit up, make the examiner raise their eyebrows and think wow! I've got a stellar student in front of me. This student is different. This student is prepared and this student



really wants to shine and that's I think probably the healthiest mentality to go in for. So, what is part two? What is the examiner listening for, Daphne?

**Daphne:** Well, the examiner is listening for four really important things. So, these are the categories that your speaking will be graded on. The examiner is reading questions from the booklet and they're listening to your answers. So, if you know now what they're looking for, this can help you plan your answer and the questions are designed so that you can begin to show your language skills, but yet you have that security of talking of a familiar topic in an area while the examiner is assessing you.

So, they're looking first at fluency. Now, fluency is really interesting. Fluency is your ability to keep talking without long pauses or hesitations. It doesn't mean you have to be 100% accurate. I really want to stress that because people get worried about I can't make any mistakes, but you need to be able to rephrase or to backtrack or say something in a different way. So, if you've gone wrong, you can say oh, I meant this, but you don't need to say that every time because fluency is also this whole thing about keeping going, keep moving like I am like Venice; you keep going forward. So, fluency is the first thing.



Vocabulary; you need to be able to show your vocabulary here and Part 1 is really nice because you've got that general vocabulary that you know how to talk about your hobbies or where you live, but you can also throw in quite specialist words. Really you can have quite topic-specific vocabulary to show off and also you need to be able to show collocations. This is something we use in English the whole time. These are words that sit together happily. They are familiar patterns of words.

**Ben:** Excellent point and now just to interrupt there, this is why it's worth reviewing some interesting background information of your hometown or getting familiar with the specific phrases you use in your hobby and writing them out because this way, they're not going to sound foreign to you and if there is anything unique or special about your hometown, you can explain it in a much richer fashion. And this is going to help you just feel more at ease and not stumbling at the first hurdle so to speak.

**Daphne:** Yes, exactly and you've got fluency, you've got vocabulary. The next thing is grammar. So, although a lot of it will be in the present simple tense, it is actually a great opportunity to show off a range of structure. So, you want to be showing different verb tenses. You've got your present simple, present



perfect, past simple. So, put in some modal verbs-- I might have done this or I might try this in the future-- and some conditional-- if I had some more money, I would travel more or I would travel to Japan if you're talking about holidays or something, but if you only remember talking in the present tense, the examiner won't be able to give you a high score band.

So, the next thing is your pronunciation and intonation. So, you need to speak clearly and your pronunciation must be acceptable enough so that the examiner can hear the individual sounds. Some of the languages I know have very different sound systems to English and it can be very difficult for them. And use intonation. So, your voice should be coming up and going down. This kind of movement, this slow singfulness of a language which is really important.

**Ben:** Absolutely and this is probably a good time to mention the feedback service. Just to mention it again while we're talking about pronunciation and intonation because if you're getting feedback, you can start experimenting with the intonation of your answers and also, you're going to be aware of some of the words that you're pronouncing incorrectly and discovering these errors is extremely challenging without



getting the feedback .So, I would strongly suggest that you get the feedback in advance of the exam and this way, you're aware and you can go in there more confident knowing okay, I used to pronounce these five words incorrectly.

And just one last thing before we move forward that if it's a native English speaker like myself or Daphne, we are going to not only identify the words being pronounced incorrectly but we're also going to give you the correct ways to speak to them. We're going to give you the correct sound of the words and if it's a serious error, we'll probably even break it down and say okay, the stress is here and then here. So, this is a very effective way of moving forward and improving your ability, not only for the IELTS exam but for your English in general, your language skills. So, yes, very important point there.

**Daphne:** Yes.

**Ben:** All right. Now, number three; topics and questions. There are the different types of questions. So remember in the first question, it's something like let's talk about what do you do. Do you work or are you a student or let's talk about where you live? Now, the best way to answer this is probably briefly, not short



but we're going to be brief. We're going to keep our powder dry so to speak which means we're not going to just shoot all our ammo off at the very first opportunity. We're just going to give a brief complete answer.

For example, if I get asked let's talk about what do you do. Do you work or are you a student? A typical answer could be well, I'm the human resources manager at a multinational company. You've probably heard of it. I've been there for about four years and I'm responsible for all the stages of recruiting as well as sending staff members on courses to update their skills and knowledge and so on.

Now, why did I keep that answer fairly brief? Well, because the next questions are probably going to require more complex language. For example, a typical question could be something like what's more important; the work you do or the people you work with? Now, why would that be a more complex question, Daphne?

**Daphne:** There you've got [unintelligible 00:15:09.12] compare and to explain. So, in the first one, you've given a lot of detail in your first answer about what you do, but also you've saved something really



interesting. [Unintelligible 00:15:20.03] then thinking okay well, what else are we going to do? When they talk about what's more important; the work you do or the people you work with, immediately you can say, for example, I really, really enjoy the work I do, but in fact for me, it's more important to feel confident with my colleagues and just explain. Because that's the way you learn best or that's the way you think you perform best, but yes, save some sentences, save some information, save a skill for the later questions because they're going to be very more complicated, yes.

**Ben:** Absolutely, absolutely and Daphne cut my lunch there so to speak. I wanted to put you on the spot, Daphne, and ask you that direct question. What's more important; the work you do or the people you work with? But you answered it straightaway. Super. All right, next one. Another possible question could be do you think you will live in your house for a long time? So, why would that be a possibly complex question, Daphne?

**Daphne:** Well, I'm going to answer this from true experience because at the moment, I've just been told I have to move house. So, I could say I would like to stay where I am, but in fact, my landlord recently told



me that we have to move. So, I will be looking for a new house and I hope that this could be somewhere by the seaside. So, in that sentence, I've explained the situation, so I've been able to explain, but I will say I will be looking, so I'm going for something future and I hope it might be by the seaside. So, I'm using a conditional as well there. It is quite a simple answer, but it's a complex show of grammar in there too I hope.

**Ben:** Absolutely and there's a little bit of depth in there. There's sort of like the personal experience of the landlord and the topic-specific vocabulary related to living in a house or renting a house. You've got the landlord. So, yes. These little personal anecdotes and these personal sort of like background don't be afraid of sharing them. The whole idea is to get you comfortable with the examiner and obviously a way to get comfortable is just to share these kinds of situations, experiences, and opinions, and so on.

Now then, to prepare for this part of the exam as we were saying before is to strongly suggest to get feedback on possible answers, possible cue cards. You can also look at sample answers online, but remember that you're not going to learn English just by watching these tutorials. You're going to have to--



I always say you can't learn to ride a bike by reading a book. You have to actually get on the bike and it's the same with any language. You're going to have to put in the effort. You're going to have to start speaking.

I know so many sites, teachers, tutors, professors who say talk, record yourself, and then listen to it and that's okay advice, but I think it's much easier to move forward if you've got somebody else who's going to give you that feedback and plus it's more effective because you're going to be discovering mistakes that you didn't know you were making.

**Daphne:** Exactly.

**Ben:** So, another good way to prepare is to write about, as we were saying before, is to write about your work, your studies, where you live. Jump on Wikipedia, find that specific vocabulary. I had one student a while back who didn't know how to say his job in English. He's a physiotherapist. Fortunately, I could deduce what he was saying because he was Brazilian and I know Spanish and plus my brother is a



physiotherapist. So, putting it together like that, I could deduce he was trying to say he was a physiotherapist.

But you might not be that lucky. The examiner might not know a foreign language related to your own language and they might have a brother who's got the same profession as you. It's very unlikely that's going to be the situation. It's very unlikely you're going to have an examiner with that kind of setup. So, when you are doing your preparation, you're writing it out, you're researching the vocabulary, just go through the question words what, where, why, when, who, and how long.

So, now as we said, there's also going to be some other topics that you're going to be talking about. These could include the arts. So, we're talking about film, television, art, music, photography. We're going to be talking about education possibly; history, mathematics, science, communication. So, we talk about emails-- social media is a very common topic for Task 2 and in speaking as well-- technology, computers, smartphones, free time-- this is every English teacher's favorite question I think and I've been in cafes, Daphne, and the teacher will start-- and I've just been like overhearing because if I hear English I'll just



tune in automatically and whenever I hear an English teacher start the class like this, I just groan and I'm like poor student. This kid has been learning English for the last ten years and every English teacher is asking what do you like to do in your free time. It is painful.

**Daphne:** I completely agree with you, Ben. Being asked about hobbies for me it's just a nightmare because I do sports and stuff, but I don't sit there knitting. I don't have like a kind of hobby that I do. I don't feel I have enough time and I'm pretty sure it's the same with a lot of people. Ask me about something more interesting or ask me about something controversial that I can really have a good chat. Yes, it can be depressing, but you do-- that being said, you do need to get these answers ready. You need to be ready.

**Ben:** Absolutely and I remember just to inject a little bit of energy into the class I had with my students what I would do is I would ask them something controversial. In fact actually I used to just say are you Catalan if they were Valencian and they would just sit up on their chairs like what! Catalan? No, no, no, no. Okay, cool. I got the reaction.



All right, so moving on. Other possible questions: styles and tastes. For example, you could be talking about fashion. You could be talking about hairstyles. Relationships is another topic; friends, families, neighbors, pets, wild animals I guess. Environment, weather, sky, global warming, and stuff like that. So, again these questions are going to be going from the factual to the personal. They're going to be going from speculative to general.

So, just to demonstrate this, we could talk about-- say the examiner says oh, let's talk about history. Do you ever go to museums to learn about history? Another possible question: did you enjoy history classes at school? So, these types of questions are very frequently going to start with the following: do you or what type of or is there a or did you or have you changed or would you, do you think you will, why do you think? A common thing with all these questions is that they are all about you. Sometimes we probably don't even realize that we-- there'll be some-- sorry, that we've never even considered. So, if the examiner says let's talk about the sky. Do you ever look at the sky? Has anybody ever asked you that, Daphne?



**Daphne:** That's a super hard question. The history one I get. I would have to be museum, yes. History at school, I hated it. So, I would be thinking on my feet to be honest, Ben, if I had the one on history. Sky is really random, but that being said, yes, I do look at the sky and I'm always checking to see what the weather is going to be like and I do that by looking at the sky, not usually looking at my phone. At the moment, the weather in the UK is beautiful, so I'm always going that's an incredible sky. Also the sky at night. If you're asked about the sky at night, then you could really develop that, couldn't you? I would like to [unintelligible 00:24:19.21] more about that.

**Ben:** Absolutely. I totally agree with you there. That's probably where I would take the conversation. If I ever got asked do you ever look at the sky, I would direct it to something that I do, which is probably look at the sky at night or try and look for areas with low air pollution and then go stargazing so to speak.

So, just be aware and by the way, just one very quick strategy is if you do get a question that gets you a bit off guard like do you ever look at the sky, we can use fillers such as well, that's an interesting question or I've never been asked that before, but just a word of warning; don't use them too much. I remember I



had a student who answered every question with well and after the fifth time, it was driving me nuts. So, just bear that in mind. All right. How long to speak for, Daphne?

**Daphne:** Okay. Well, we're going back to the math, which is not my favorite topic, but as Ben said at the beginning, you're going to have a minimum of 12 questions. So, the ones about you and then four questions roughly on these two topics. So, you've got 12 questions, Ben. Three main topics in four and a half minutes, so you're going to have roughly 1 minute 30 each topic. So, that's actually 20-22 seconds per question including the examiner asking it. How much can you say in 20 seconds? And my answer to that is actually more than you think. It sounds like nothing, but actually if you put on your stopwatch, you can say these three little mini sentences within one answer. So, maybe up to four-- three or four connected thoughts or ideas. So, you want to say not too little and not too much as Ben was saying before, but if you say too much, the examiner will interrupt you and carry on. So, you don't need to worry about that, but it's something that you can plan for.



Let's take an example. Ben I'm going to throw you in the deep end with this one. Is there a type of music you don't like?

**Ben:** Yes. Yes, there is. I really can't stand heavy metal because it's just loud and the singer just shouts instead of really singing. Apart from that, the lyrics are pretty meaningless, if you can understand what they are saying that is. I prefer songs that are more romantic.

**Daphne:** Oh, that's nice. Good answer. So, in that answer just when you count, but in that answer, Ben has connected four ideas. So, he talks about metal. Then he said why he doesn't like it and then he talks about the lyrics and then he's managed to say what he does like. So, there's a lot going on in that-- I didn't time you actually, Ben, but I'm sure that was under 20 seconds.

**Ben:** Yes and just an additional point there. There's plenty of topic-specific vocabulary. We've got heavy metal, singer, singing, lyrics, and songs. So, these are all terms that are very unique to this topic and when we've got a question about the weather, about anything, when you're practicing try and think of terms that are unique to that topic while you are actually answering the questions probably and a little bit too much



and you're just going to have to answer it as naturally as possible without trying to stuff topic-specific vocabulary in your answer. So, that's why it's always a good idea just to write out your answers before starting.

Now then, in the next section we're going to look at what can go wrong. So, how would you get around if you didn't-- what would you do, Daphne, if you didn't understand what the examiner has just asked you?

**Daphne:** I think this is such an important thing to talk about, Ben, and actually, people are very, very nervous about the speaking exam which is completely normal and things can go wrong. Maybe you're just in a rush, you're not very relaxed, you're not quite focused. Maybe you don't hear the question clearly or you didn't understand it. Don't worry. That is absolutely okay. It's very important to ask for clarification, but just do it in the right way. So, rather than saying what or pardon, which would obviously be rude, you can say I'm sorry, could you repeat that, please? Or could you say it again? Or I didn't quite catch it. Please, could you say it again? Something like that.



**Ben:** Absolutely. Yes, yes. I've said before in some cultures, it's perfectly normal just to say what? But in English it does sound rather too direct and rude. So, what happens if while you're speaking you realized you've made a mistake? How would the student get around this issue?

**Daphne:** If you've made a mistake, for example, if you've used past simple instead of the present perfect, don't worry. What you need to do is repair it or correct yourself and it's positive to do that because it shows that you've noticed your mistake, but don't do it the whole time because that will interrupt your fluency.

So, if you say I have been working there since four years, which is a very common error, and then you say oh, hang on. I got that wrong. I mean for six years, then that's absolutely fine because you've realized the error, you've corrected it very nicely. That's fine.

**Ben:** Absolutely and by the way, when you are correcting yourself, try to aim just for correcting small little slip-ups in grammar or vocabulary. Don't try and rewind and reorganize the whole point of your answer because that can often lead to more confusion. So, just try and make those corrections just for



smaller issues because otherwise you're digging a hole and it's going to be harder and harder and harder to get out of and we don't want that at all.

**Daphne:** No. Keep moving forward. Exactly.

**Ben:** Exactly. All right. So, what can happen if we're not sure of what to say?

**Daphne:** Well, you mentioned fillers, Ben, and fillers are useful, but then also don't overuse them. So, it happens to us in that someone might ask me a question and I think whoa! I've never thought about that before and I would say that and what I'm doing in my head is I'm playing for time. Somewhere in the back of my brain I'm trying to generate some ideas or some vocabulary. We did this. This is a normal part of speaking, but don't do it every time. You could say, that's an interesting question or I've never thought about that before, but don't do that every time.

**Ben:** Yes. That always makes me smile because I'm imagining the student and the examiner says where do you live? And the student says I've never thought about that before. What's your name? That's an



interesting question. If I recall correctly, my name is Ben. So, yes. Use them in the most natural way possible and yes, be genuine with them. If you've never really thought about it before, you can totally say that.

And another thing which a tutor told me a long time ago that he used to tell his students was that a good strategy in this situation is to just say something. Don't freeze because if you freeze, your engine can stall and it's very difficult to sort of like jump into a silence. So, what I'm saying is that even if you're sort of like caught off guard, jump straight into the filler and as Daphne said, eventually that answer is going to flow on to the end of the filler more often than not.

We've got a technique in the Speaking Confidence Course about this, about answering with the correct grammar tense and so on and that's also another useful strategy because you can only use so many fillers so many times and it's good just to have basically a collection of different strategies to use in different situations so you're not overly reliant on fillers. Now, how can a student prepare for this?



**Daphne:** Okay. So, the first one is get ready with a lot of these topics. So, we've given you a list of topics today. You can also look on the website. There's also a list of topics there which can come up. So, practice writing down some answers. Practice recording yourself. Get ready. So, for example, for four questions on each topic just write down what you would say and that will be my first thing and looking at the vocabulary you're going to use and looking at possible grammar structures you could use as well.

**Ben:** Absolutely. Good points there. Also, if you're doing this with somebody else, I'd strongly recommend you take turns being the examiner, being the candidate. Maybe you could use a guide like this tutorial. If you just go to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com), you'll see the whole thing written out and that will probably guide you and you could just copy-paste, make your own exam format from the questions-- the follow-up questions, probably get cue cards as well. So, I would strongly recommend doing that.

I remember I had two Spanish students and they would correct each other's work-- written work and I was like wow! That takes it to the next level because if you're correcting your friend's work, you've got to be absolutely certain that what you're doing is correct. And also, it's going to be motivating as well.



**Daphne:** It's really good and even if you're just with somebody in your family, they could be the examiner and you can be the candidate.

**Ben:** Absolutely.

**Daphne:** You can recreate that kind of adrenaline and that exam kind of experience.

**Ben:** Exactly. I remember a friend Pedro who used to take his grandma out in the wheelchair and push her around the park and during this time, he was speaking English with her all the time. She had no idea what was going on.

**Daphne:** I love that.

**Ben:** But I was like really! He was just like she's happy to help me. So, yes. It's a win-win really. Okay, next point is to record yourself like we just said before. Also, if you're sending it in to us and getting instant feedback, you're going to obviously improve much, much faster.



By the way, while you are recording yourself, be aware of the time. You could use this tutorial as a guide as to how long you should be speaking. This is extremely useful because you're going to get a feel for what 16 seconds feels like talking and this will help you in the exam because it's not nice to be cut off and the examiner might have to cut you off if you're speaking too much and it might be playing in your mind for the rest of the exam. Hey, he's cut me off. Am I talking too long right now? Am I not talking long enough?

And also alternatively, you're going to avoid sort of like those silences where the examiner is silent because he's expecting you to talk more, but you haven't. So, getting familiar with the time and also getting a feel for how long four sentences sounds like, for how long 17 seconds sounds like. What's the next point, Daphne?

**Daphne:** The next one is really to do with getting feedback and just making sure you know what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are. So, do this with us on the speaking service feedback that we're doing or do it with a friend if you've got someone there who can help you. What are you good at? Is



your vocab amazing and your adjectives amazing or is your vocab just always the same? Send me your grammar. Send me your pronunciation. What are you strong on on grammar? What of your pronunciation is really amazing and what is not very clear? Work on these weaknesses and turn those weaknesses into strengths.

**Ben:** Absolutely there. Absolutely good point and plus if you are pushing for a higher grade, then you're going to have to go into uncharted territories and obviously upgrade your language by using some structures that you possibly haven't used before. And this is another reason why getting feedback and doing this testing with new structures, with more advanced constructions. Test these out in a safe environment which isn't going to cost you the price of an IELTS exam. Test a lot with those first before putting them to use in the exam.

So, next point; remember to make it personal. It's about you. Give explanations. Give examples. Examples are amazing because they're going to force you into details. If you're talking about the crepe you had at the seaside and you're talking about how amazing the crepe is, you're going to be forced into



using vocabulary such as delicious, crispy, sweet, the perfect texture; you're really going to dive into that topic. Next point, Daphne.

**Daphne:** This is more for the Part 2 on the cue cards, but also very much for Part 1 as well. Write out your answers. Don't learn them off by heart because you won't sound natural, but write them just so you can-- just find out what you would say. It's a really, really good practice. You don't want to be caught on the hop as we say. You want to be ready. So, write out your answers to some of these sample questions and use a Google Doc. Put them in a Google Doc and then you can see which grammar errors you're making.

**Ben:** Absolutely. That Google Doc is a groundbreaker I think and I am assisting Daphne. For me, it's a shot across the bow so to speak. That it was like automation is coming and our days are limited. The next episode is going to be two speaking bots speaking because we'll have lost our jobs.

**Daphne:** And their jokes will never be as good as yours, Ben.



**Ben:** No. 7 next point. So, also of course we don't want to be just practicing sort of like our productive skill which is the speaking. We're also going to be able to improve our output, our productive skills with the speaking such as the speaking by also increasing the amount of material we're absorbing. So, we could be listening to podcasts, the news, watching documentaries, but hopefully we're not just sat there like a couch potato just absorbing the information.

We want to be actively listening; writing down, rewinding, catching and stealing useful phrases and idiomatic expressions. We've been mentioning quite a few in this tutorial Daphne and I. So, when you do hear these expressions, phrases, and vocabulary, write them down because that's the only way they are going to get into your active vocabulary. I mean it's not the only way, but the chances of them being incorporated into your personal lexicon is significantly increased if you're writing them down. The final point for you, Daphne.

**Daphne:** It's very much linked to what you were just saying, Ben, actually in terms of working with your grammar and vocabulary; make a list of expressions and collocations. So, for me when I'm listening to



podcasts or when I'm watching the news, I'm always looking out for words that go together. You think about the environment; that is such a rich area of topic vocab. So, write down these words. Words connected to your hobbies, words connected to celebrations in your country, public transport in your country, whatever it is, but write down these words because you'll use them, not just in speaking but also in your writing. So, it is so, so useful. That would be my top tip.

**Ben:** Absolutely and it's essential if you are in a non-native English-speaking country and you're only listening to English by watching TV or by listening to podcasts or reading books or whatever, then you absolutely definitely need to be doing this. Otherwise, the learning curve is going to be much steeper and it's going to be a much, much longer journey until you reach your goal of fluency or your goal of band 7.

If you are lucky enough to live in an English-speaking country-- and I'm saying lucky as in it's obviously going to be much, much faster and much easier for you to learn English-- although it is going to help you, but you do have the luxury of living in an environment where the chances of sort of like hearing or using those words that you heard in the documentary, it's much more likely that you're going to have the



opportunity to hear those or to use them. So, it's possibly slightly less important, but still you are going to improve dramatically faster if you are actively building your vocab list, your collocation list, your list of expressions, your idiomatic expressions, and so on.

So, that's the end of this tutorial and remember if you are struggling with this exam that you've got Daphne and myself and Ellen and we're all here to help you improve. We can help you improve faster. We've got the online course. We've got the evaluation service where you can get feedback on your essays, the online course with the guarantee of jump to band 7 or it's free and the new feedback service for your speaking as well which is becoming really popular at the moment. We've got lots of students taking advantage of that and we've got some special pricing now-- introductory special pricing just as you get started. So, that's everything and remember just to keep going. Keep moving forward and you will get there. So, thank you very much for listening and all the best.

**Daphne:** Thanks everyone.



[Music]

**Female Voice:** Thanks for listening to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com).

