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INTRODUCTION

Daphne: Welcome to IELTS Podcast, everybody. This is a very special episode. I'm delighted to have with me Shiv who's all the way from Australia. Hi, Shiv. How are you doing?

Shiv: Hello, hello, hello, Daphne. I'm doing great. Thank you for having me here. I was looking forward this.

Daphne: Yes, it's our absolute pleasure and this is the first time that we've done a live speaking mock exam with a student, so I'm really grateful to Shiv for being what we say a guinea pig. So, she's being very brave and she's doing this with me and so we hope it's just going to give all of you a feel for the exam. It's quite high pressure for Shiv. Her exam is on Monday, but she's very brave when she said she's going to do this with us. So, off we go. We're going to start this exam.



I'm going to be the examiner. Shiv is obviously going to be the candidate. That's the right way around.

Okay. So, here we go. So, what is your full name?

Shiv: My name is Shiv.

Daphne: And can I see your ID?

Shiv: Yes, there you go.

Daphne: Okay. So, remember everybody you must show the ID that you register with, otherwise you're going to have a problem. Do you work or are you a student?

Shiv: I work. I work part-time as an educator with the after-school care service here in Australia and it's been almost a year with them.

Daphne: Okay. So, is that like a teacher? Is that the same as a teacher?



Shiv: Yes, but it's like-- yes, I am a teacher, but not in a formal setting as we have teachers working from morning till afternoon. It's just for two hours. We sit with them-- with the kids, but after school. So, it's like very informal way of teaching them, not exactly teaching but just spending time with them in constructive activities, just getting them involved wherever they feel like. It could be sports, arts, creative work, or just a discussion. So, this is how we engage them.

Daphne: That sounds great, yes. So, we're going to talk about homes. What do you like about the home you grew up in?

Shiv: Well, I grew up in a large family and we had a huge home which was in a village, not exactly a village but a remote place and it had almost 15 rooms and a veranda I mean open space and we all enjoyed because we had that common place where we used to sit and chit chat and nowadays, I mean where I'm living now it's quite cramped, not that big.

Daphne: So, where you live now; what kind of house is that in comparison?

Shiv: Yes, now I am in a rented apartment. It's a two-bedroom apartment in north Sydney and it's pretty airy and quite comfy though, but still if I compare it with my previous house, it's too small



for me. So, it's kind of yes, and I don't have enough room and not even an ensuite bathroom with my master bedroom. That's what I miss.

Daphne: That's always a luxury, isn't it?

Shiv: Yes, it was.

Daphne: So, what would be your dream home?

Shiv: Oh, that's a good question. My dream home would be a bungalow and maybe next to a beach where I can just have a swim or go for a stroll and just look outside and appreciate the waves and look up in the sky I mean the sunrise and the sunset and that would be great. And a bungalow-- when I say a bungalow I mean a lot of rooms maybe three or four, not more than that-- I mean not less than that though.

Daphne: Good. Okay. So, when you're older, what kind of home would you like to live in?

Shiv: When I'll be older and maybe I'll retire and my kids will be flown away from their nest, I have chopped out a plan that I may-- as I said, I may have a mansion or a bungalow, but that



time I would just be in a suburb, a common quiet place where the pace of life is not that fast. Slow-paced life and a lot of green area where I can just sit, relax and just have a good time. And the home would always-- it would be big enough, but with all the mod cons that I would always appreciate. Yes.

Daphne: Absolutely and your ensuite bathroom, of course.

Shiv: Yes, not to forget. Of course. Yes.

Daphne: So, do you like meeting new people?

Shiv: Yes, I'm quite gregarious. I love to go out though during these pandemic times, we are just sitting at home and not going anywhere, but I like to interact with new people though I'm in a new place and it's hard to get in touch with people and just to strike a conversation, but somehow I have made some friends and when I drop my kids to school then we get to see new faces and I just start conversation on maybe a common topic. That's the way I go about it and I have made some friends and this is how I like to meet them and maybe go for a cup of coffee at the nearest café.



Daphne: Perfect. So, are you able to decide quite quickly whether you like someone when you meet them?

Shiv: Hard one. I mean looks can be decisive. Sometimes when you meet a person they kind of give an impression that they are warm and quite open, but as you go along, sometimes they are not what they look like or their first impression be. So, it's hard to say-- to gather information or to know exactly how a person is. You've got to spend time; more and more time to actually get to know a person.

Daphne: I think that's very true, yes. We can make a first impression very quickly, can't we? And then sort of sometimes have to take a step back.

Shiv: Yes, taking them back.

Daphne: Yes.

Shiv: Absolutely.

Daphne: Do you care a lot what people think about you?



Shiv: Not really. I don't care much about it because it's an open society and we are-- kind of have social media. We are connected with many people and if they will comment on my post or the way I look or whatever my status say and if it is not what I want them to say and if it hurts me, it's not good for me. So, I just try to kind of keep it neutral and I don't care what people say as long as I am doing my best and I know I'm not wrong. So, it doesn't matter.

Daphne: We can be very influenced by people's opinion, can't we? And sometimes negatively I agree, yes. Okay. That's lovely, thank you. So, I'm going to share my screen with you now and I'm going to find your cue card. Okay. So, here is-- the cue card is coming up here for Shiv. You can see that there. I'm going to read it to you and then we're going to give you a minute. She can start prepping. So, she's going to have a minute and prepare her answer. Let's start the minute now and then I'm just going to read it to everybody else.

So, describe a time you got lost in a place you didn't know. You should say when and where you were lost, how you got lost, and explain how you found your way back. I'll just read that again. Describe a time you got lost in a place you didn't know. You should say when and where you were lost, how you got lost, and explain how you found your way back.



So, Shiv is now writing notes. She's going to be writing some things which will just help her organize her presentation. Obviously, she can't write a lot, but she's just going to write maybe some vocabulary, maybe some ideas, maybe an example she might have. Okay. So, when you're ready. Okay.

Shiv: Is the timer on?

Daphne: Yes, I'm afraid it is. Okay. So, she's had one minute. It's not long at all, poor lady. Okay. All right. When you're ready.

Shiv: All right. So, a time when I was lost in a place was a long time back when I went with my school trip. I was about 10 or 12 years old, about 10 or 12 years old and so we went for a school trip to a hilly region in Himachal Pradesh; that's the northern India and we were too young, but my parents wanted me to go so that I can explore the world around. So, here we go. We were all 12 to 15 kids with two teachers and one guide and I was a notorious child I must tell you. I never listened to people and I've always wanted to experience things on my own and this is a tendency



in children not to listen to elders and try what they said don't try. You got to try that. That's what we are when we are kids.

So, here we were sitting and we were told-- we were given the maps and we had our buddies and how to go about with the camp. We had a tent set up next to the lake and it was quite exciting. So, I just overheard people talking about butterfly garden somewhere and our teachers told us that we will be exploring it next day and so we should be wherever we are-- in designated areas.

So, the kids were kind of watching movies, talking to each other and I had an idea-- an absurd one-- to just go on my own and I started walking and I went to this place. I kept on walking and I knew where the place would be and I happened to see this garden full of butterflies. It was plethora of butterflies all around and the colors-- different colors and I was lost. So, that was a time and I was quite mesmerized by the whole beauty of the place and I was so excited and I thought yes, I did it. I've got it.

So, and I didn't know that the time has just gone by and it was almost dusk time. I think the sun was just setting and it was getting dark and so it was the time.



Daphne: Yes, that's lovely. Thank you. No, I didn't want to stop you because that was so fantastic. I was there with you within the butterflies, yes. So, just tell me the end of the story. Did you go back on your own or did the teachers come and find you?

Shiv: Yes, they were on their way to find me and I had jitters and butterflies in my stomach now. I was feeling pretty scared and then I started walking around. I mean I was just following a path from where I came and I have good sense of direction. So, I happen to see some local villagers who guided me and at the end, obviously I could find my teachers, but they were really upset and I apologized.

Daphne: I bet they were obviously. They were probably upset and worried about you as well, yes, but that was lovely. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. That sounds an absolutely beautiful place to be. What a nice place to get lost in as well. It's a good place to get lost in. So, we're just going to have a few questions kind of connected to that. Why do you think people like visiting new places?



Shiv: Well, people have different agendas when they plan their trips. They want to explore. The first and foremost important thing is that they want to explore new places and they want to see new culture. They want to feel the whole-- the new country or new state and by now as we have internet and access to different sites which kind of attract you to visit that place and not-- I also have to-- I mean I should mention the documentaries these days which we see travel documentaries. So, they kind of you know invite us to those unexplored areas. So, I think the people want to explore. They want to experience the new place and they want to get out of their monotonous life. I mean just to unwind. That's I think--

Daphne: What sort of challenges do people face when they get somewhere new?

Shiv: Well, it can be very challenging if you haven't planned. I mean people should plan before you know heading to a new place and the challenges could be that-- the first thing could be the culture because when we cross our boundaries when we go to different place, obviously the culture is very different. It's just 360 degrees I guess. So, we need to understand the culture, language, and the ethics of that country; you know what we should do, what we shouldn't do. We should understand the laws and obviously, we don't want us to be you know in some kind of



trouble. That will be a shame I guess. So, people should understand and these are the difficulties you know challenges one should consider before traveling to other places.

Daphne: I think that's very true. You certainly don't want to break the law or misunderstand the cultures as you say. Exactly. Do you think map reading skills are still important today?

Shiv: Yes. We can't get away with that even though we have GPS system and the technology is really helping us, but making us handicapped I guess. Because we have GPS, we have different apps doesn't mean that we don't need that skill of reading maps because sometimes if technology doesn't you know like work, then what would we do? So, we should know how to read maps and must have a compass if we are going to a place where we can get lost. These are the things which are basic skills when we are traveling to new places and a map is always handy I guess.

Daphne: These are the skills that sometimes aren't taught in school anymore.

Shiv: Yes, absolutely.

Daphne: Do you think some people are naturally better at map reading than others?



Shiv: Yes, of course. I think that some people have good sense of direction. They understand directions. When they see map they don't get lost. They actually can understand the pictures, the direction north, west, south, east and when these people talk, they can actually visualize the whole layout and it helps them to navigate you know wherever they're going.

So, yes. Some people are better than others. Others need little hand-holding when they are you know lost or they are given a map. They need to understand more. They take more time than others.

Daphne: Do you think the internet is making us lose other important skills?

Shiv: I have a mixed feeling on that because we can't deny the benefits we have because of the internet, the technology. It has really supported us and assisted all of us. I mean we can't also say that having internet has made us-- it's like 100% reliance on the technology because it has aided in many ways. Having said that that we need to have the other skills as well as we were just talking about reading maps or knowing the direction, not just depending on the technology or GPS. So, I think we need to know. We need to make a balance because I mean at this-- I mean at



this point in time where we are right now at this present era, we need technology to move ahead. Without technology, we can't survive I guess.

Daphne: That's a very good answer. Lovely. Thank you so much, Shiv. You've done brilliantly. I really hope everybody--

Shiv: Thank you.

Daphne: I really hope everybody listening as is as impressed as I am. We did not rehearse this before. I can promise you. This is totally live. She didn't see the question before. We've worked together, haven't we? We've done some practice on the Speaking Confidence Course we've done together. So, we've done a few questions, but we have not done this live kind of work, so she's been amazing. I'm kind of like--

Shiv: Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. It's my pleasure.

Daphne: How do you feel that went? You may give me a bit of feedback. How did you feel about your performance then?



Shiv: I think I was good, but obviously you were an expert.

Daphne: Yes. No, no did you feel-- for me, I thought something that I'm sure everybody was noticed was how relaxed you sound. You sound very calm. You're kind of-- the only-- I think once you just said oh, that's a good question when you're kind of playing for time a little bit which is great. That's exactly the right thing to do and very, very natural. You sounded very fluent. You felt okay doing that?

Shiv: Yes, but I must pay my gratitude to you because obviously you really helped me, Daphne. I must say that and thank you I can see you today.

Daphne: Oh, I know.

Shiv: I always wanted to meet you honestly.

Daphne: Oh, it makes a big difference face-to-face. I think I agree with you. I think when we're doing the speaking practice together before like you do a recording for me and I feedback on the recording, maybe we should say to everybody it's much easier in the exam when you can see the examiner if hopefully the examiner is smiling at you and kind of encouraging you. The



examiners don't want to make it worse surely. They're kind of encouraging you to make you feel relaxed and that's going to help.

So, Shiv, we're going to say goodbye to you now. I'm going to just make some few comments and then I will give you some more commentary later, but thank you so much.

Shiv: Sure, sure.

Daphne: We wish you really good luck for your exam on Monday.

Shiv: Thank you so much, Daphne, for all your help and support. See you then.

Daphne: Our pleasure. Talk to you soon. Okay.

Shiv: Bye-bye

Daphne: Bye.

Shiv: Bye-bye



Daphne: So, we're going to stay online now and we're going to go through some of her amazing answers. That was a really, really impressive performance, wasn't it? Let's go back and look at the Part 1 questions that she was doing and I particularly want to comment on her language all the way through. I thought her use of lexis was absolutely fantastic and in front of me, I've got the band scores.

So, if we look at lexical resource on a band 8, we're looking at using a wide vocabulary with-- wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning and I think you'd agree with me that she's absolutely wonderful with her vocabulary. So, she talked about when we-- we're talking about the first questions. She was talking about where she grew up in what kind of house and she was talking about a huge home with lots of open spaces and a slow pace of life and then comparing that very nicely to where she lives now.

I thought that comparison is very important in that Part 1 that you can immediately make a good impression with the examiner that you can talk about-- she was comparing the big house where she was to the bungalow where she'd like to be, but she still wanted quite a luxury nice bungalow where she could appreciate the-- have some space. So, it wouldn't be that small and have an



ensuite bathroom. So, that was her dream home, wasn't it? She could go for a stroll, appreciate the waves, appreciate the sunrise.

Watch out on the grammar. When we're talking about I will be or my children will be far away, you can contract. You can go my children will be. So, you can connect the speech there. My children will be far away or they'll have left home. I'll be older. You don't need to have to say I will be older because we would naturally contract that when we're talking.

Meeting new people; I thought that was very good when she put that into a nice context. Yes, normally you would like to, but because of the pandemic obviously it's an awful lot more difficult and hard to get in touch with more people and she talked about looks which can be deceptive. Looks can be deceptive. That's absolutely right. On a first impression, you can get to know people or you think you know people quite well, but that isn't always the case. Very lovely grammar she's also using there quite flexibly and a lot of error-free sentences.

This is what we're aiming for in a band 8 which I know is what Shiva is after on her speaking. It is this natural talk, moving through the tenses absolutely effortlessly. So, she was talking about



when she posts stuff on social media. She's trying to keep it neutral now and being aware if people comment and I'm not worried about it. So, using a conditional, but using that absolutely perfectly and just in the right place there.

Let's move on to the Part 2. I thought she gave a wonderful description. She spoke for a little bit more than two minutes actually. You probably realized that, but she spoke incredibly well. I was absolutely there with her in this beautiful butterfly field or butterfly park. It sounded absolutely gorgeous, but she went-- if we just remind ourselves of the question. Some time you got lost, so when and where and grammatically, she was absolutely fabulous moving through those narrative past tenses.

So, she wanted to experience things, so she was using the past tense quite naturally there and then when she moved into the kind of action part of the story, we were sitting doing this and then the passive-- we were given instructions by the teachers-- So, very fluently. She was absolutely effortless using those lovely grammar structures there and then the tents were set up. They were going to go exploring, but she had an idea and she kept on walking and she happened to see a flutter of butterflies. That was most beautiful, beautiful description there.



She was mesmerized, time had gone flying by and you can hear just from me repeating some of these lovely phrases her lexical resource is absolutely excellent and fluency; she kept going the whole time. I was sort of had to wave my hands when we got to two minutes twenty saying stop there. You're amazing. She did very, very well on that. I thought that was an excellent, excellent performance.

So, in terms of vocabulary, let's just go back to that. Less common phrases definitely and quite sort of idiomatic this time talking about the flutter of butterflies and being mesmerized and being excited and also finding the space to put in a comment about kids should be able to explore. Obviously, naturally kids want to explore, so I thought there was a very, very competent Part 2.

So, now Part 3 questions were kind of connected to that, weren't they? To do with map reading, to do with traveling to new places, and here what we've been working on-- so, I've been working a little bit with Shiv doing the Speaking Confidence practice which is something new that we're doing at IELTS Podcast and we've been working on expanding these Part 3 answers, but also making them different from Part 2. So, they're more general these questions. It's not more about



what she thinks. It's more in general what society or people are thinking. So, that's a very important point to make.

So, we've worked together on collecting our comments. We've worked on using connecting phrases. We've worked on using conditionals. We've worked on speculating; this might happen if something has happened. So, these are all techniques that you will be showing the examiner on your speaking, but she was immediately-- when she was talking about the documentary do you think people like visiting new places and what things should they know and absolutely in that people should be planning before heading away. So, nice grammatical structures in there.

She talked about documentaries which I thought was a very good idea and then it showed her knowledge really on the cross-cultural. So, being aware of boundaries, being aware of laws, understanding the culture, understanding the ethics, doing that preparation before you go. So, not only is she showing her obviously vocabulary again. I keep on repeating this about excellent vocabulary, but also showing an understanding of the questions. She has absolutely no problem there on the coherence. She's speaking very fluently.



We talked about map reading skills and absolutely the GPS technology can be a handicap that we've forgotten how to use skills. It doesn't mean we don't need it if we just don't use it and children should or we should all learn to have a compass. We need to visualize the layout. I thought that was absolutely lovely.

So, she's talking in a kind of general way, not her personally. So, she's expanding, broadening the answers. This is what we're looking at. Again, she's using error-free sentences and paraphrasing as well which I think that's also something I wanted to mention. She's not repeating the same words and I think that's-- by showing a strong range of lexis, she's showing the examiner that she has this wonderful vocabulary.

We talked about losing skills on the internet. That was our final thing. So, I can't deny the internet has helped us in many ways, but we also need basic skills. I thought that was a very good sentence there and so we don't just depend on technology; another technical thing there. Very, very good use there of dependent prepositions, so not depending on something. So, that's something to note. Just a high level grammar.



So, I'm going to end this here because this has been quite long, but I just really wanted to give everybody the opportunity to hear Shiv in a full mock exam context. She's done brilliantly so congratulations to her. Best of luck to her on Monday and thank you for listening. So, if you feel anyone that you all our IELTS listeners as well as us giving you help on writing which we do, if any of you feel that you would like some extra help on speaking, build your confidence so you can sound as good as she does, then please get in touch with us. We'd love to help you with that as well. So, thank you all very much for listening today. I'm Daphne and this is ieltspodcast.com.

[Music]

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