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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.

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Ben: IELTS vocabulary: working from home and of course, this is relevant if you are studying from home. In fact, it's probably relevant for a lot of us as we are trapped at home right now.

Hi there. My name is Ben Worthington and I'm from England. I haven't lived there for a while. That's probably why I don't sound as English as other English people. I speak slightly slower now and I've lived outside of England for the last 15 years or so and it's a long story. It's a long story, but anyway, what I want to share with you today is a massive list of vocabulary all about working from home and then we're going to look at some sample answers for IELTS Speaking Part 1, 2, and 3.



But first, what I want to do is just make sure you get the most out of this lesson. So, what I will do is I'll encourage you to grab a pen and paper or even just write it down on your phone and perhaps just write it down in your own language the words that I'm describing and then translate them into English later just to force your brain and just to-- it's kind of like a revision exercise, but it's a little bit more fun and just to test yourself just so you get more out of this rather than casually listening while you're on the bus.

Of course, that's better than nothing or while you're at home, but if you can just write these down in your own language, scribble it down, and then write down the translation later today, you'll probably get more value from this tutorial.

So, I'll give you the first couple. We've got being able to change or being changed or be changed depending on circumstances. Begins with f. Flexibility. Next one. Work-life balance. Are you



spending all day at work or are you spending all day studying? You've got to find a balance. Work-life and then space balance. Work-life balance.

Distraction. Don't we all suffer from this? Sometimes I call it shiny object syndrome. Is it a cat video on YouTube? Is it a message from a friend? Distraction. When I'm studying seriously or when I'm working seriously, my mobile is on flight mode and I put my headphones on and we have a rule in the flat that nobody can disturb me when I've got my headphones on. Otherwise they get a growl. They get a nasty look.

Burnout. This is when you've been studying all day and you just can't do anything else and your brain is fried. That's more of a colloquial or spoken English term. Your brain is fried. The formal or the better version is burnout. Sense of community. This is probably what you get more so in an office. This is when you've got that sense of camaraderie. It's friendship. You feel like you belong there and it could be difficult to get this in a-- if you're working or studying online.



That's why there's some useful tools out there. I'm using Focusmate daily now. At the moment, we are in kind of like a lock down here where I am and I'm using Focusmate. A lot of the students on the other end, the workers I think they're also in lockdown and there's a real sense of community. Focusmate by the way just go to [focusmate.com](https://www.focusmate.com). You get five sessions free a month or you can pay \$5 a month to get the paid version as many sessions as you want and it just hooks you up-- links you up with somebody else like a Skype call or video call and you tell them what you're going to be working on and you can see them. They can see you. So, it really, really forces you to get your head down and work.

Anyway, more basic vocabulary. Colleagues and camaraderie. Colleagues. People you work with. Camaraderie. It's that sense of friendship similar to sense of community. Teamwork. We all know what that is. When you're a group and you are working together.



Isolation. So, while I'm going through these, it could be a good idea as well just to relate them to yourself. Are you a good team worker? Do you get that sense of camaraderie when you are in a team? Do you prefer isolation? Personally, I work better when I'm isolated and away from everybody most of the time, but every now and again, a good project-- a good team project is enjoyable and breaks up the isolation or breaks up the loneliness.

Productivity. How do you say productivity in your language? Write it down and then come back to this recording later, translate it back into English, and check productivity. As I was saying before, Focusmate is super useful for boosting your productivity. You just get that sense of responsibility that you should be working and not looking at cat videos or whatever else.

Workplace. Kind of non-existent nowadays, isn't it? The workplace is any location where you are actually working. So, in my case, it's my kitchen. It's my workplace. Work remotely or remote work. That's interesting. You say both of them. So, that's obviously when you work from



home or maybe a co-working office or you don't work at the actual company office. Telecommute. That's kind of an old word nowadays I think. Most people just say remote work.

Chained to a desk. That would be a good one in the speaking. Chained to a desk. So, if you're in an office and you're working 9 till 5 or 9 to 5 sometimes you can often hear it described as chained to a desk and they just feel obligated to be there at their table-- at their desk. 9 to 5 or 9 till 5. Typical working hours in the West.

Carbon footprint. That could be useful if you're doing the speaking and you say okay, I work remotely now. I guess you could say I've reduced my carbon footprint because I'm not commuting into work. Sustainability benefits. So, this is the results of protecting the environment through less waste and less pollution. Interesting. Financially viable. It basically means like can companies or can people actually-- a person generate enough income doing what they are doing. Is it financially viable?



And then the last three, we have lockdown which I hope to high heaven we are all familiar with what lockdown is. If you are not familiar with that, where have you been during the last year? Hybrid work. It's when you work from both home and office. I was really surprised when I was talking to somebody the other day actually and she said that she misses her work colleagues now that she has to work from home. I'm surprised. That's something that never happens to me being a social person.

No, but I was surprised and then I kind of realized that some people do prefer this hybrid work. They miss their work colleagues at home and they get fed up and lonely just working from home and she wanted both. She wanted to work at home a couple of days a week and then on maybe a Wednesday and a Friday, for example, go into the office, catch up, and say hello. Autonomy. This is when you make decisions for yourself without the control of others.



Now, I'm going to give you some sample answers in a second and you're going to hear all of those phrases that I just said. Hopefully, you wrote them down in your own language and now you'll hear them in context and you will be able to remember them or maybe you can even just like say okay, that is-- if you wrote them down in Spanish, for example, and you hear the word flexibility, that's flexibilidad or whatever.

Let's go. So, typical IELTS Speaking Part 1 question. Do you prefer to work from home or at an office? I most certainly prefer working from home. It gives me flexibility I would never have in an office environment plus my work-life balance has never been better. I can get in a workout in the morning, pick my daughter up from school, plus I don't have to spend time and money commuting to an office.



There may be some added distractions at home while I should be working, but overall, working from home has kept me from office burnout. To be honest, I found more distractions when I work from an office.

I'll quickly go over. We had flexibility, work-life balance, commuting, distractions, office burnout. Also, you'll have heard hopefully kind of like a little reason-- a reasoning there. It's do you prefer to work from home or at an office. Now, I could imagine some students in my past answering that question with a yes and then looking at me with a big smile. Do you prefer to work from home or at an office? Yes, Ben.

Those students I still remember them till today and I would ask them again and they would just give me a yes and look at me as though I was crazy. Thankfully, we are not at that level and you'll have heard that we do answer and then we kind of just give a little story, a little anecdote. We give a reason why kind of like our Task 2 answers. Once we've claimed a point or taken a



position, we explain why and it makes our answer more coherent. Well, we do the same in Speaking Part 1, but we do it in a much more casual and shorter briefer way.

Next question. Why do you think some people prefer to work in an office? Well, there are definitely benefits. For one, you can develop a sense of community with your colleagues. There is the banter, the camaraderie, even the gossip. You have an atmosphere of teamwork in a conventional work environment whereas working from home can really lead to isolation.

Okay. So, we had a few different answers-- sorry-- a few different reasons there. It's another good model answer. It's not just one answer. We've got a range there. Adding a range of reasons or a few different reasons can help you build up your answer and obviously in the process, build up your vocabulary in that answer.

So, in this one we had a sense of community, we had colleagues, and then we had some really good vocabulary with banter. Banter B-A-N-T-E-R. Banter is the jokes or the back and forth that



you have with probably your friends or in this case, your workmates and that's kind of a good example of the camaraderie. And then the gossip as well. We all know what the gossip is.

So, we've got lots of reasons here. We've got the sense of community with the colleagues, camaraderie, the banter, gossip, teamwork and also the student mentions here a good comparison. We've got whereas working from home can really lead to isolation. That's another good reason for Focusmate by the way; kind of minimize that isolation and loneliness. So, yes. We've got a range of reasons and then a nice little comparison at the end.

Let's move on to Speaking Part 2. Describe your ideal job. You should say what the job is, what skills are necessary to do the job, where the job is done, and why you think this job would be interesting to do. Let's go. The job I think would be interesting to do would definitely be something involving writing. I've always loved to write, but what makes it ideal is that this job allows a tremendous amount of flexibility.



A writer can work either in an office or remotely. One day, you might be writing from Paris and the next day from New York. Your office is wherever you are and thanks to modern technology, telecommuting works like a breeze. Furthermore, you're not tied to a desk 9 till 5. A writer can create a schedule that works for him or her. Personally, I'm a night owl. So, I like working late into the night. You couldn't do that in an office job.

Okay. Not bad. What I like about this answer is that we've got kind of like a hypothetical example. One day you might be working from Paris and the next day from New York and we've got a lot of reasons and we've got the vocabulary we covered at the beginning. We have flexibility, remotely, telecommuting, tied to a desk. And then obviously, we're going to get some follow-on questions afterwards where we can further develop this line of thought so to speak. We also got a little expression-- night owl-- which I'm sure you're all aware of.



IELTS Speaking Part 3. Remember in this part of the exam, we're going to get more difficult questions or more abstract questions. These questions are going to force you to kind of like think in abstract forms or in hypothetical worlds and you've got to really give your reasons and explain. And also, it's common for the examiner to ask you a similar question as to what you've just answered, but it'll be asked in a different way. And they do this just to test your kind of range of ability about speaking about the same topic without having to repeat yourself constantly.

So, let's go. Why do you think some employees resist working from home? To be honest, it can be a challenge to feel motivated when you are working without any supervision. So, it's easy to slack off and some employees might not want that. Another issue is that there is no separation of your home and work life, so that might lead to burnout.



In some professions, working from home is difficult because they may not have the office equipment required to do their job properly. Of course, we can't forget the social component of the workplace which is paramount for lots of people.

So, excellent answer there. Lots of vocabulary. We definitely answered the question. There were obviously no grammar mistakes, but that was a very adequate-- more than adequate answer and of course, you've heard the terms we mentioned before: workplace, burnout, supervision, and we even had slack off.

And it's also a very valid point. You've heard me say before it's not a test of intelligence. It's a test of language. Language is communication, so you need to just be clear and give reasonable answers, but even with this one, there's quite an intelligent answer and of course, it doesn't hurt as long as it's communicated clearly.



If it's a complex answer and it's butchered-- if it's totally chopped up by poor grammar then you really are shooting yourself in the foot. So, go for simple answers that can be eloquently explained rather than intelligent answers that will trip you up grammatically and can really hinder what you are trying to communicate.

How do you predict work will change in the future? So, this is a great example of a typical Task 3 question. The examiner is really forcing you to give an answer in the future tense. So, listen in this answer for the future tense.

Well, I think lockdowns have taught us a number of lessons that we will take with us into the future. For example, I think we'll start seeing hybrid work become more common. This would involve working both from home and from an office on certain days of the week. For certain functions like meetings or events, if this does happen, I think it will be a wonderful development as it really embraces the needs of an employee as an individual, different personal obligations,



working styles, timetables, and so on. We are realizing that the Monday through Friday 9 to 5 model does not fit everyone. So, I think embracing hybrid work more will give people the autonomy to create a work schedule that works for them resulting in higher productivity and happier employees and happier companies.

Beautiful. So, not only there are we kind of speculating about the future, but you'll also have heard the reasoning as well. So, we're really developing those answers and once again, we've got an intelligent appropriate answer and we're ticking the boxes of vocabulary and it's coherent. We're not jumping from one thing to the next. It's all in a logical order that flows.

And any random thoughts that I might have in my head, I don't just blurt them out. I just let them sit there for a while and then maybe I can integrate them into my answer, but if not, I'll just leave them there. If I did want to integrate them, I could just say something like furthermore, it



probably is resulting in less traffic on the road also because with people working from home obviously they no longer have to commute.

Right. That's everything from me today. Thank you very much for listening and if you go to IELTS Podcast today, you'll see a big banner on the top of the page. We've got a special offer for essay corrections. We're only going to do 100 of those at that price and then it goes back to normal which is about \$20 for two essay corrections, but if you go today, you'll see a special offer. I strongly recommend you to take advantage of that. It's going to be me doing the corrections as well and I'd love to see your essays.

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