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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:** Expanding your answers in the IELTS Speaking. Hello there. My name is Ben Worthington and in this tutorial, I'm quite excited because we're going to go through five ways on how to expand your answers.

Before we do that, let me tell you who I am. My name is Ben Worthington. I'm from England. I'm from the north of England. I no longer have such a thick accent. Being outside of the UK for the last 18 years or so has kind of reduced my accent down to Standard English.



However, the sharp ones among you may hear some vocal sounds that are different from what you've probably been taught at your school. If you did recognize those vocal sounds and you were able to place them well done you. If not, no worries. It's nothing important.

It's just one of those I guess a kind of bonus you know when you're learning a language and you can start picking out certain characteristics. Personally, I love it. I love it when somebody's speaking English-- like just the other day I was like to a Hungarian friend-- not a friend, just this new acquaintance.

I was like do you speak German or have you spent some time in Germany? And she was like what? How did you know? And I was like yeah, I think you've got some heavy German influence. And she's like well I used to live there when I was a kid, but I'm Hungarian and occasionally I'll speak there with some family members, but I haven't been there for a long time. But I could just hear the German element coming through her English. But anyway, that's just a side story-- a side note.



Let's get into today's class. As you know, my name is Ben Worthington. I'm from England. I started off teaching IELTS because I wanted to specialize in an area where we can measure results. If you're teaching five-year-old kids, the only kind of measurement is their happiness, you know. That's what the academies say. Just keep the kids happy and their parents will enroll them next year.

And that wasn't good enough for me. I like the competitive nature of the IELTS exam where if the techniques we teach don't work, the student fails. We realize they get upset. We have to refund and it's not productive. So, that's why we make sure our techniques are productive, our techniques do work and this is why we offer the guarantee of jump to band 7 or it's free and this helps.

We've got a system. It's based on feedback. It's based on improvements and we get results. Otherwise, we'd be bankrupt a long time ago. So, have a look at that if you are interested in



passing IELTS. And if you've been struggling with that, we can definitely help you and that's what we're here to do.

By the way, if you've got your exam around the corner or you're on the fence, if you are on the fence, if you have not decided yet about joining us, then now is probably a good time to get off the fence and join us because there's going to be a price increase very soon in the next couple of weeks. So, start moving.

If you go to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com), you'll see at the top of the site there will be a price increase soon or if not, you'll see it on the sales page. So, have a look at that. We would love you to join us. If you're still a little bit undecided, then you can sign up to our newsletter and on the newsletter, you'll get a special offer for some essay correction package-- a single essay correction just to see if we are a good fit; if we like working with you and if you like working with us.

Now, let's jump into today's class about expanding your answers. In this tutorial, we're going to look at expanding your answers so there's no more uncomfortable silence. We're going to look at



how to impress the examiner with interesting details. We're going to use a system for delivering high scoring answers that interest the examiner, that make the examiner sit up, smile, and give you a band 9.

No. It's not. Unfortunately, I can't give you a system so effective. It doesn't exist at the moment, but we can make your answers interesting for the examiner. And just think about it from the examiner's point of view. Imagine you've got 20-30 students a day you've got to listen to. They're all giving standard answers, textbook answers. So, your ability to make your answers interesting would definitely help you. It's like a little ray of light, a little shining star for the examiner.

I'm going to give you a system whereby you can use your fingers to help you remember the structure and very importantly, we're going to aim to make your answers compelling; compelling and unique.



What does compelling mean? The best definition I've ever heard of compelling is when you're driving in your car on the motorway and you see a car accident and you have to turn your head to see it. You just have to. That's compelling, okay?

Now obviously, our answers don't have to be so gripping and so compelling, but we do want to make them unique. We do want to make the examiner interested. And I will tell you exactly how to do that now.

So, the first technique is working on enriching your answers. How do we do this? Well, we look at standard questions that you're very likely to get such as are you working or are you a student? Do you live at home with your parents or do you live away from home? Or why did you move to the city? Or why are you taking IELTS?

These kind of standard questions which we're likely to see in Part 1. What you need to do is write out your answers and then review your answers and look for opportunities to upgrade your vocabulary and upgrade your answer.



Now, we don't want to go overboard with this because it's going to sound a little bit memorized, a little bit forced, but if you can jump online and do some research about the city where you're from-- ideally, you're going to do your research in English. Just find some unique details, something interesting.

For example, if I was doing this I would say, for example, a standard answer which has had zero research and zero effort-- a standard answer for the question of are you working or are you student would be I'm a student at the moment. I'm studying linguistics. I study at the University of Manchester and I also work at the student union as a waiter.

That's okay. Grammatically, it's perfect obviously because I'm a native English speaker. However, it's boring. Every other student before me and after me is going to give a standard answer like this because they haven't really put the effort in, they're probably nervous and you're probably going to put your time into focusing on the cue card or focusing on Part 3 which is okay, but if you just spend a little time on Part 1, there are some untold benefits.



For example, 1) if you see the examiner is impressed or you give a competent answer, an interesting answer, it's going to set you off on the right direction. It's going to get you off on the right foot so to speak. 2) It's going to take the stress off the beginning, you know. You can glide through the beginning. It's going to be like hey, I'm picking up momentum here. I'm doing good. And you'll be able to reflect your true ability. And the third reason is that this is easy. This is an easy opportunity for you.

And I'll share what we're going to do now. As you heard, my answer was pretty standard. It was pretty boring and there's a missed opportunity there because I could easily say well, I'm studying at Manchester University. Manchester is quite a unique location. It's the home of the industrial revolution and the architecture kind of reflects this. Also, I'm working at the student union bar and it's a part-time job, but I really enjoy it because I get to see lots of live music.

Now, how much richer was that? And all I had to do and all you have to do is write down your answers to these standard questions and then do a little bit of research and just find out



something interesting. For example, in my case, I said it's the home of the industrial revolution, yeah? Then I also mentioned the student union job as a bar man and I mentioned my feelings, okay?

I'm going to give you a little bit more of a practical framework in a second, but the point that I want to make here is that these answers are pretty standard. Therefore, there's no reason why you cannot jump online and do a little bit of research, write out your answers, look at opportunities to upgrade them. We can upgrade them in a second. I'll give you this framework and just get yourself off to the best start possible. Also, as I said, you're going to stand out.

Now then, we can take this a step further. If you get a question about your family, for example, we take it-- again, we just give the examiner-- we're doing the work so the examiner doesn't have to and it's almost like we're controlling the conversation and taking it where we want to so the examiner doesn't really have to.



For example, are you working or sorry-- do you live alone or do you live at home? Actually, I live with my family. I've lived with my family since coming back from university. My elder brother is still in the flat. He came back from Australia a few years ago. He's a marine biologist.

And also, my sister just moved out last week actually and she is also a biologist, but more on plants and nature side. So, yes. I am living with my family and I think it's quite unique. It's quite beneficial for both of us. For example, I get to keep my parents company and my mom loves cooking for me.

You see how much richer that was? And this way, because I put in a little bit of research about how to answer these questions, I can give them rich vocabulary. I can tell them exactly the job that my brother does. I can tell them exactly the job that my sister does.

And just because I wrote it down. I put in some thought before the exam and I went and found the blanks in my vocabulary and I filled them with the appropriate vocabulary. I filled them with the appropriate terms. I also could improve my answers by saying elder brother which is slightly



more sophisticated to say than older brother especially if you're getting into the habit of talking about the elderly rather than the old people. It's just a little bit more polite.

And as I said before, writing out your answers especially to the simple answers helps you uncover your blind spots and I've said this before, but I'll say it again. It's like you're in a speed boat and I could say to you hey, this boat goes 200 miles per hour and you would be like oh, wow! That is quite interesting. That's quite good. That must be exciting. And that's not the same as actually experiencing it and doing it and then in my speedboat I put it up to 200 miles per hour. Now, it's a totally different experience.

And this is the difference between thinking that I can answer this question about where I'm from. It's easy to actually doing it and then seeing that oh, there are some blank spots in my vocabulary or there are opportunities to improve it. And that's the difference between just thinking about that you can do it or thinking that you know what it's like and actually doing it. Actually doing it is 200 miles per hour in the speedboat. The wind is blowing in your face. There's saltwater in your



eyes and you're nervous and you're scared and there's the motorboat engine just roaring away. It's a completely different experience.

And the same-- it might be a small exaggeration, but it's very similar with the writing. You might think you're able to do it, but you won't be certain until you've actually done it and found out the weak spots.

Also as I said before, it's an opportunity to enrich. How do we enrich? There's a few different ways. We add lists, okay? This might be a little bit excessive for Part 1. We just need a few sentences. However, it's still just a good opportunity to get you off to the right foot and you're going to impress the examiner and it's so much better. As I said, you're going to stand out from the other students as well.

So, lists are very useful especially for Part 2. In Part 2, the cue card might say describe a friend or describe a place, describe a restaurant, describe a birthday party or whatever, and these are all perfect opportunities for a list. And what I mean is like a friend. Oh, I'm going to talk about my



friend Taylor. He is cheerful, industrious, hard-working and just a pleasure to be with. Four adjectives there. So much better than saying he's a nice friend. He's a nice friend. Please never use the word nice.

So, lists. Another one. Now, this is where it can get interesting because what I like to teach with the students is we load vocabulary onto our fingers and we load vocabulary that can enrich our answers. So, for the little finger, we're going to say feelings, okay? Feelings about a place. So, for example, if we have to talk in the cue card, for example, we have to talk about a place, on our little finger we could talk about the feelings of the place. On the next finger, we can talk about the reasons for living in this place.

In the middle finger, we could talk about the uniqueness of this place. Why is it unique? Why is it special? Why did you choose it? Because they had the course that you wanted, because it's got a good train station connection, because it's near to home, because it's near to your partner. And then on the index finger, time reference; how long you've lived there.



I'll go through it again. So, while we are talking, if we can enrich our answer by just touching our finger thinking okay the little finger; the feelings. How do I feel about this place? I love it or it's depressing. It's gray like it's always raining, it's always dark and I cannot wait to get out of here, okay? The feelings.

Reasons-- next one. So, we've got feelings. We've got the reasons. I'm living here because... I'm living here because it's the best university for studying linguistics. I'm living in this place because my partner got a life-changing job so I had to come along too, okay?

3) The uniqueness of this place. Well, it is kind of unique for me because in this country, they serve curry sauce with chips which for me is really strange and they also add milk in their tea which is kind of odd as well. However, I do enjoy it. I'm just pretending I'm a foreign person in Manchester just get into grips with the local peculiarities of the place.



Finally, time reference. I've lived here for five years and I'll probably spend another two years. So, if we can incorporate these four aspects-- these four kind of like vocabulary groups into answers especially into our cue card, we're doing good.

And I know it can be confusing because we've also got the bullet points, but we don't have to talk about all four points for each bullet point, but if you can at least work through this while you're doing your presentation or even in Part 3 and you just like grip your little finger like okay, I'm going to talk about my feelings then the next finger I will be talking about my reasons then I'm going to talk about the uniqueness and then I'm going to talk about the time reference.

This will help you expand your answers and if you do it grammatically correctly as well, you're going to pick up points for time reference, for adjectives, for about all these different sort of like aspects of the English language that you're going to use and the contrasts and it's going to be so much more interesting.



Now, the final few points I'm just going to go through very briefly because I've talked about them before. So, it's more of just kind of a reminder and I've got full podcasts on them, but I kind of touched on it before, but another technique is just to add because. I'm living in Manchester because I'm working at the student union bar because... okay? It's very straightforward; probably more useful for the students who are at 6.5 and need to get to 7. We just got to expand it.

And then another technique which I've talked about before we just say for example, yeah? I am living in Manchester because it has a great university. For example, here after I get my qualification and graduate, there is a 90% chance that I will be recruited by one of the blue chip companies, for example.

And my final pro tip and I've already incorporated it just now is to add pauses. When you do this, you draw in the listener and it makes you sound so much more interesting. And bonus is that



it gives you time to compose the perfect answer. It gives you time to organize it in an eloquent fashion.

And if you ever go onto YouTube and look for interviews with Steve Jobs, he does this. He employs it. He never just blurts out the first answer that comes into his head. He pauses. He composes and then he produces. And it makes him sound so much more eloquent. It makes him sound so much more sophisticated and it just draws you in. Nature hates a vacuum and these pauses are a vacuum and there's no reason why you shouldn't incorporate them into your speaking.

Also, as a foreign language speaker, it sounds so much better than the, you know when you stretch the word while you're finding. Just pause, slow down and slowing down as well helps you to be understood, gives you more time to speak and again, it's one of those things that you say okay, I've got to slow down in the exam. I'll do it, but you're not going to actually be able to do it unless you've done it a few times before while you're practicing.



So, we're at the end of the tutorial now. I've just got two things more to mention. Actually, I'll do three more things to mention. One, I'll give you a summary of this class and then I'll mention the other two things.

So, we've talked about expanding our answers. How do we expand our answers? Well, we jump on to Wikipedia. We jump online and we look for unique aspects. Then we talked about lists of adjectives or lists of locations or lists of whatever. A grammatically easy component to bring into your exam just list a list of adjectives, places, sports, whatever. It gives you more to talk about expanding your answer.

And then we've got that framework which you can use for all your answers. Your little finger your feelings, the next finger the reasons. Let's just say we're talking about a location or a place. Feelings about this place, your reasons for living in this place, the uniqueness of this place, job, course, study, whatever and a time reference. Feelings, reasons, uniqueness, time reference. Then



expanding with because and developing the answer. And then the final tip was to slow down and add pauses so you have time to compose the perfect answer.

Now, we have finished. Let me just mention two more things. 1) We are looking for business partners, okay? So, send us an email. Send an email to [ben@ieltspodcast](mailto:ben@ieltspodcast). Partners as in international study agents or firms, companies, affiliates maybe to sell the course, licensing. Let's have a chat especially if you're in China. I would be more than open for a conversation. I know we're getting a ton of listeners in China at the moment.

Also, even if you have no business with China, that's fine. Get in contact. Just send me an email [ben@ieltspodcast](mailto:ben@ieltspodcast) and in the subject line just put possible partnerships or put partnerships and we can easily distinguish it from the other emails.

Second thing; there's a price increase around the corner, so get in contact. Sign up to the newsletter. You can get that special offer for your essay correction and you'll also get the newsletter with lots of powerful practical valuable advice for passing the exam. And if you've



got your exam coming up soon and you need to pass, absolutely need to pass then have a look at the Jump to Band 7 or Its Free course.

And we've also had students who are at band 7 and need to get to band 9. They've taken the course and had success as well. So, it should be Jump to Band 7, 8, or 9 or It's Free, but it doesn't have the same ring to it and I know that most of you want to get to band 7 and we can help you do it. So, thank you very much for listening. Have a great day. Keep on moving forward. You will get there in the end and all the best.

[Music]

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