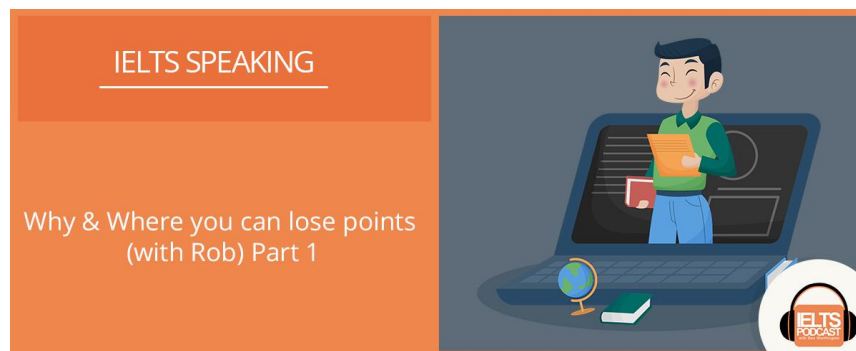
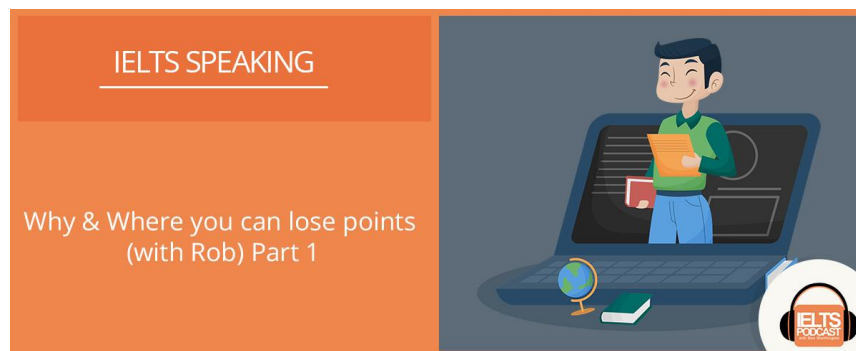




Ben: And before we start with today's tutorial, let me just share a quick word from our sponsor ELSA Speak. ELSA Speak is a pronunciation app available for iPhone or for android and with this app, you can get instant feedback on your pronunciation. So, if you've got your speaking exam coming up and maybe you're in lockdown or maybe there's restrictions or maybe you can't find a tutor, then have a look at this app because you're going to get instant feedback.

There's a host of tutorials. They've got over 3,000 lessons in the pro plan, there's no adverts in the pro plan, and what I find pretty interesting is the detailed speech analysis. They've got AI technology that shows you where you're not pronouncing certain words correctly and why you're pronouncing certain words correctly as well.

And not just that, after you've been using the app, you start to get a customized learning plan together which is developed specifically for your needs and as you heard me say before, the app



will just track your progression. And what I wanted to say was that tracking your progression helps you advance because you can see the progress you've made.

So, if you're struggling with your speaking, then have a look at the app and you can work on your pronunciation and what I've seen students do is work on their pronunciation and almost I wouldn't say immediately, but very soon after they've got confidence with their pronunciation, this spills over into other areas of their speech and their overall confidence increases. So, have a look at that.

And remember if you go to elsaspeak.com/inf/ieltspodcast, there you'll get 40% off a year-long membership and 85% off the lifetime membership. So, have a look at that link. And also remember on our site there's a special link where you can get seven days of pro membership for free. So, it's worth a test run especially if you've got your exam coming up soon.

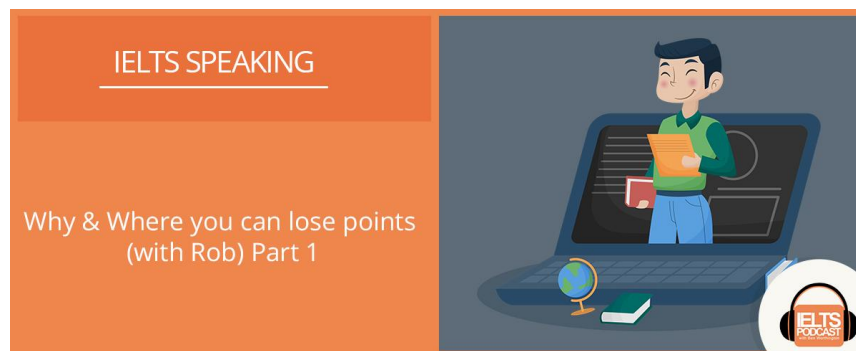
IELTS SPEAKING

Why & Where you can lose points
(with Rob) Part 1



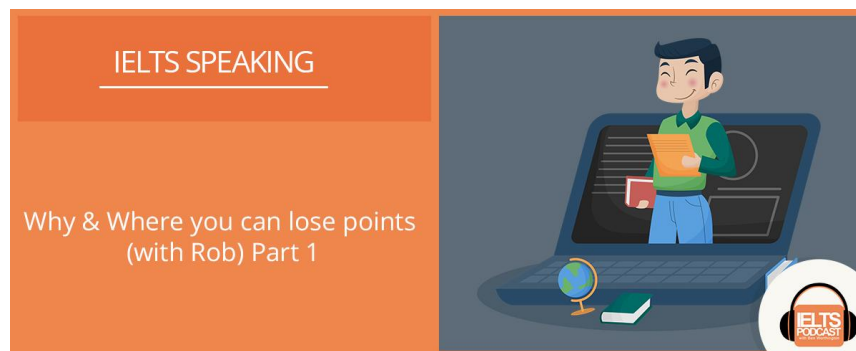
Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we're going to be speaking with Robert Buckinghamshire and he's going to be giving us a full overview of IELTS Speaking Part 1. Now, Robert is an ex-IELTS examiner and he's been working with IELTS for quite a long time. Robert just before we get started, could you give us an overview of like who you are and how you got into teaching, please?

Robert: Yeah. Okay. Hi Ben. Thanks for inviting me along. I'm really happy to be here. And yes, IELTS I've been an examiner-- well, I'm not an examiner now. I gave up a few months ago actually for about eight or nine years and before that I've been teaching-- I wouldn't like to say how many years. Let's say at least 25 and that's not-- I'm being modest there. A bit longer than that. I started in the UK and then moved around different countries teaching in language schools. I've also done some university teaching and got into IELTS teaching and examining a few years ago. I still teach the IELTS, but I'm not an examiner anymore. I mean it's interesting. We were



talking the other day, weren't we, about the speaking test and Part 1 in particular and you were mentioning you know is there any way we could help students so that they don't lose points I remember I said to you I think we've got to be careful about when we talk about losing points because you know IELTS is a test of what you can do in the language. So, the examiner is listening out for positive things, always positive elements, but at the same time, there are things that you may do which won't help you in the test you know, simply won't show off you to your best abilities. So, let's look at some of those and talk about you know how we could avoid falling into those little traps. What do you think?

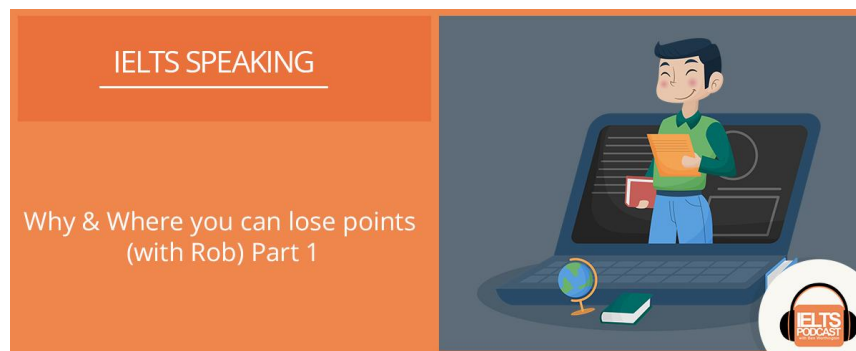
Ben: Absolutely. Yeah, yeah. It just reminds me of once an examiner said-- she said what we want to do as examiners is we're looking at opportunities to give you points. We're on your team. We're on your side.



Robert: That's right. That's right.

Ben: We're looking out and I think just reminding the students of this-- of basically what you just said I think it can help them. It can boost their confidence and it's so much healthier as well looking at it from that point of view rather than this examiner is out to get me you know.

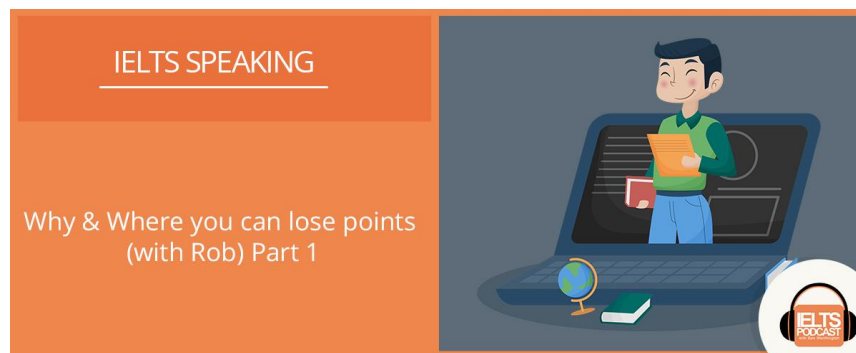
Robert: Exactly. Exactly. It's not a question of hey what did I do wrong or what can I do wrong. It's what I can do right, you know because the examiner's idea is to help you or the candidate show off your best English, to get it out of you. I mean how good are you? How can we stretch you in that-- was it 14 minutes the whole interview? 14 minutes. I mean it sounds like an eternity, but you'd be surprised how many students at the end of the exam say wow! That was quick. Yeah, that was pretty quick, wasn't it? I mean let's look at Part 1 again. I mean I said you know 14 minutes. It's the structure of it which gets me. I mean it's very clear in my head as an ex-examiner that it was you know five, four, five. Five minutes for the first part, four minutes for



the second part, five minutes for the third part. And we had to be very careful. We got to time it within seconds. You can't go over five seconds of the first five minutes and in that first five minutes in Part 1, I mean you've got to answer a series of questions. How many questions? I can tell you at least 11 questions. I mean and that's not counting the occasional follow-up question you might get you know if the examiner wants to ask you hey why or why not.

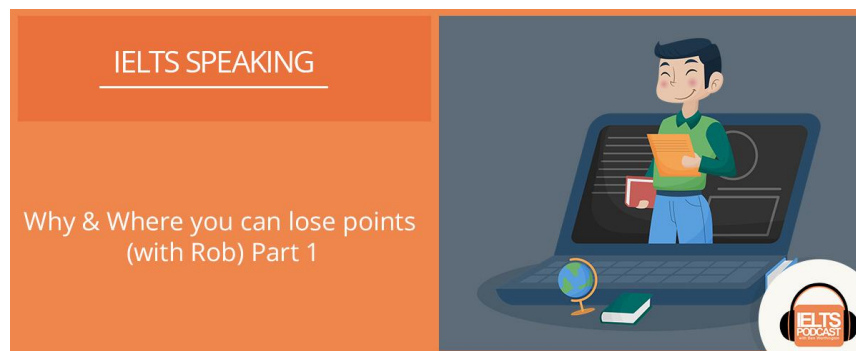
Ben: Just a quick question here. The examiner would ask a student why or why not if the previous answer was insufficient?

Robert: Well, if they're a little bit you know quiet spoken. They don't want to come out with too much information. It might be a simple question you know. What do you like best about your job? Oh well, I really like it. It's really good because you know it helps me develop my career you know. Why? Oh, because and then you just want to get more information out of the person.

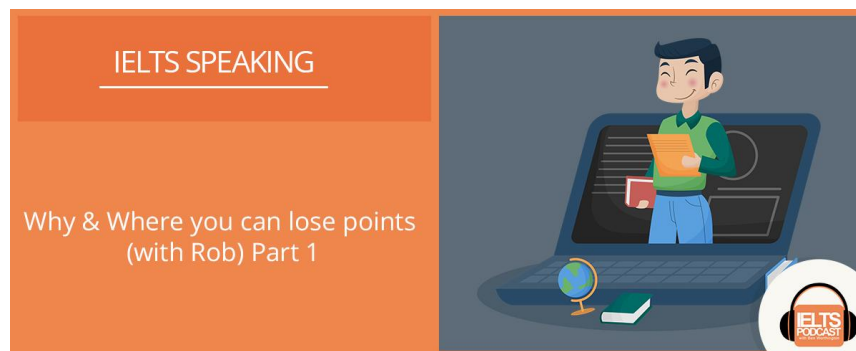


Ben: Got you. Right.

Robert: I mean of course this first part I mean you do get as I said at least 11 questions on three topics. Three topics. We'll go into more details about those topics in a moment, but please remember this everybody who is listening in. Part 1 is about you. I mean about your experiences, your feelings, and opinions. I mean the examiner even will tell you right at the start he'll say-- he or she will say now in this first part, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself. About yourself. I mean it's a development, isn't it? The exam starts off with the more personal stuff. I'm not going to say it's easier, but talking about yourself is not a bad way to start, but at the same time, I mean you know wow when we talk about an exam and we talk about having a nice conversation with the examiner, but in the first part really, let's be honest. It's not a conversation. It's just question and answer. The examiner is going to ask you a series of set questions which are written down in the examiner's booklet I mean and they cover these kind of general topics, but



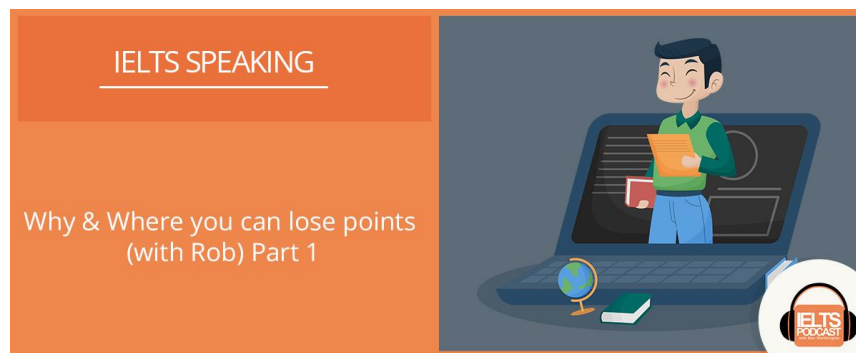
you know I mean those of you who are studying for this exam will know that the first question will either be about your work or studies or about where you live. I mean and in that choice the examiner will make, he or she will decide beforehand okay, the next one's going to be where they live or the next one is going to be-- I'm going to ask about where you study or where you work. And there are three questions that the examiner will ask you and each one is an opportunity to show off your skills. I mean and it's the same for the other two questions in Part 1 because it will go on to talk about two more topics. I mean it's all timing really. I mean let's do the arithmetic on this. It sounds a bit-- oh, I don't know-- a bit unfair to talk about a little bit. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, mechanical is the best word. That's what I was looking for actually because look, you've got 11 questions, three topics in total. In a perfect world, an examiner is trained and told during their training that in that first part talking about where you work or study or where you live, don't take more than two minutes and then take another portion of that after to talk about the other three topics, but when I say two minutes, don't forget, don't forget that the first 25 seconds or



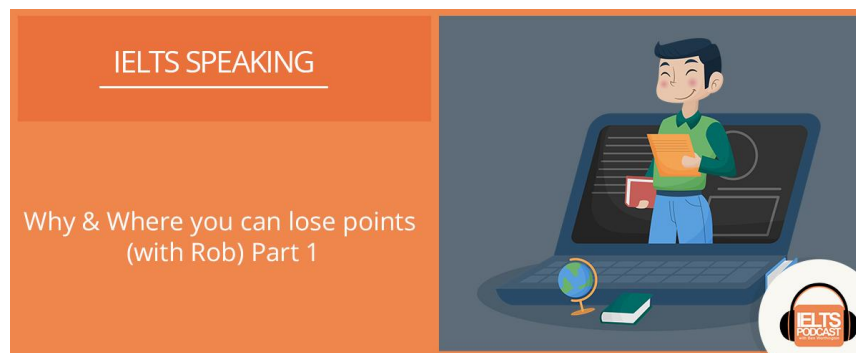
something like that of those five minutes are going to be taking up exchanging simple questions you know. My name is Robert. Can you tell me your full name, please? And you exchange-- you take up the student's identity card or passport, you check their identity, and then you say now in this first part, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself. That means in fact that you've got about one and a half minutes on the first question and one and a half minutes on the other two. It works out not including the time it takes for the examiner to ask the question which might be four or five seconds maybe. You've got about 20, 25 seconds to give an answer.

Ben: I see.

Robert: And you know it all happens quite fast I mean, but I think preparing for the exam you can help yourself in this first part by thinking about what each question is really aiming at. What are they really asking me to do? I mean even though we can't know exactly what the question is before we get into the exam room, we can get a pretty good idea about, for example, the work or



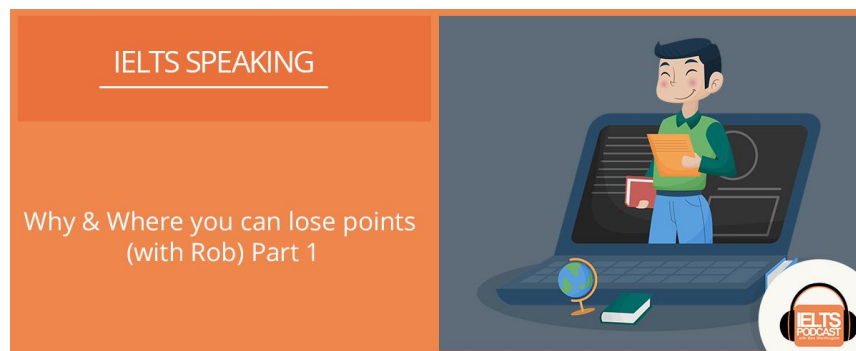
study question or the part about where you live and we can prepare for it. I mean so, at the same time, let's slow down for a second. I mean we've got these little opportunities, 20-30 second opportunities-- speaking opportunities to say something that will convince the examiner that you want to be a band 7 candidate, not a 5 or a 6. I mean and you know I mean it's true in life I guess first impressions are important and the IELTS speaking test is no exception believe me. I mean what the examiner is listening out for or paying attention to I mean you might think that he or she is just sitting there having a chat with you, but really, the examiner is fixed on your use of English and the speaking test descriptors. I mean these descriptors are on the examiner's little booklet that he's hiding under the desk somewhere. I used to leave mine on another desk and then pick it up later you know and have a good look at it after the test and think was that a 7 or an 8 or a 6? Let me think about that one. So, I mean you probably know how it goes. I mean they go from 0 right up to a maximum of 9 and they cover the four areas tested you know: fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and finally pronunciation. I mean so a band 7. I mean that's what we're



really aiming for at least, isn't it? A band 7 is very respectable very good score is described very briefly in words on the examiner's descriptor sheet and the examiner has to decide if you're at that level or another one. In other words, you know is there sufficient evidence from what you've produced to award that grade? I mean between all of us, I mean examiners are told during their training course start off thinking of a band 6. That's the normal one and then when you check what your candidate has done during their speaking test, you're thinking are they that level? Are they above it? Are they seriously a little bit below it? And that's your kind of cut-off point.

Ben: Interesting. Interesting. So, when you are getting trained as an examiner, they say approach each student or each examination session you're doing with the student assume we're starting off around a 6 and then build a case for giving them the seven or--

Robert: Yes.

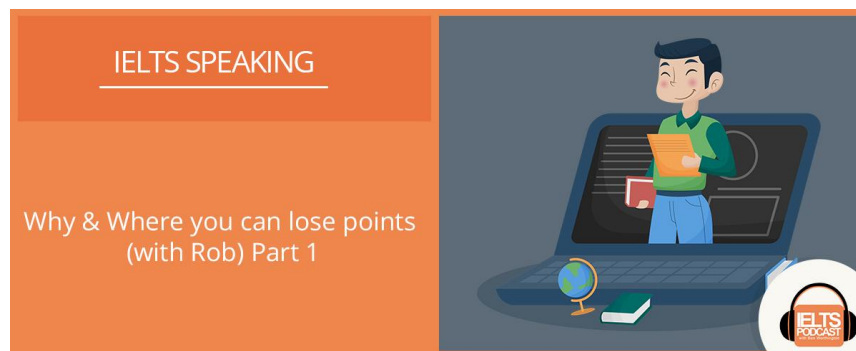


Ben: Yeah okay.

Robert: Or a 7 or an 8 or 9.

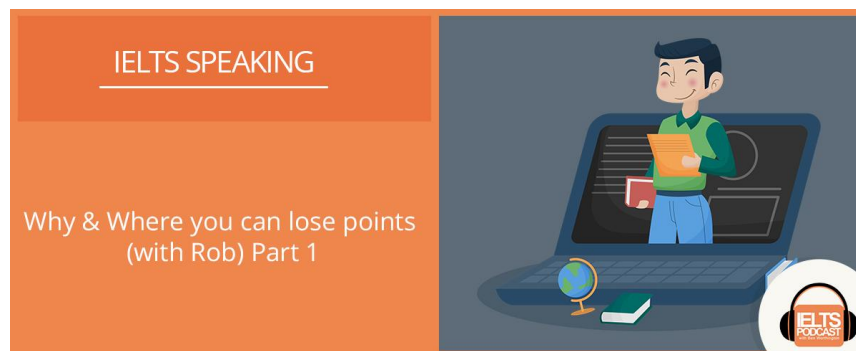
Ben: Right. Right or a 5 maybe.

Robert: Or a 5 or 5. I mean I know it sounds the wrong-- I shouldn't say this, but I mean believe me I mean you know-- that's not the right word. Your first impression sometimes is hard to shake. I mean a student or a candidate will come in, sit down, and from that very first moment that they open their mouths in that first part, you're thinking this is a 6. That sounds pretty good. This could be a 7 or very occasionally, it's happened to me not that often and to other examiners and it's neither I don't think you get the impression oh my God! This is a 9. This person is perfect. They should be the examiner and I should be the candidate.



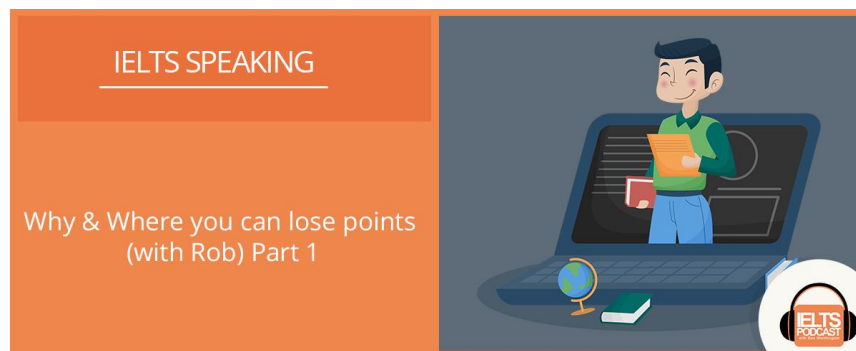
Ben: Just a few other questions, Robert. If this student comes in and they're smiling and you've been-- I don't know-- it's the end of the day and you've heard I'm sorry my English is not that good. You've heard it 20 times already and then a student comes in and they're smiling and they've got kind of like an energy, like a charisma. Do you think that could influence you?

Robert: It does. Personality does have an influence I think. I mean yes. I mean let's be honest. I mean I'll tell you a case. One of the last candidates I had I remember her because she was really fun to talk to and she was pretty good. I think I gave her 7s or an average of 7 or maybe an 8 in one area. I mean she came in and she was almost the last one of the day and it had been a pretty long day and she sat down and looked at me and as we were starting and she said even before I was just about to say hey, this exam is being recorded, so I'll just read out some information first you know. And I have to read about this is the International English Language Testing System stuff which takes about 15-20 seconds before the exam really starts. And she looked at me and



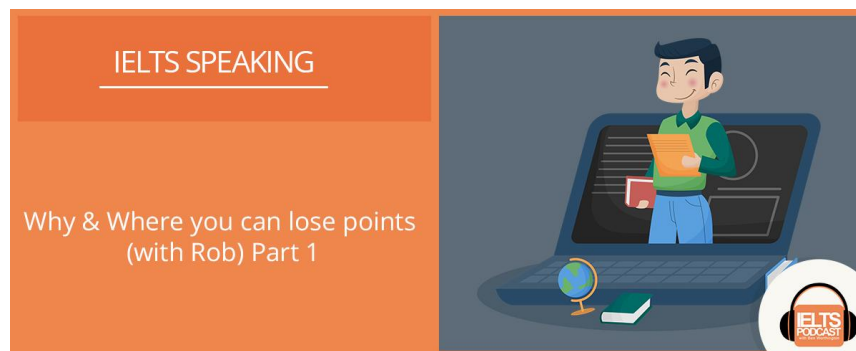
said hi, I suppose you're very bored after interviewing so many candidates, but I'm happy I'm not the last one and I laughed. And I said well, no. You're not. I said you're the next to last one, but that's fine anyway. I'm trying my best not to fall asleep and we had a laugh.

Ben: Yeah. This is what I've said to my students time and time and again in the past like these examiners they're human beings and if you go in there mumbling and apologizing, you're taking energy out of there, but if you can go in like with a positive attitude and a smile and just make it easier for them, I'm not saying like you charm them or anything like that, seduce or anything like that, but just make their job that little bit easier for them with a nice energy, a positive attitude, go in there thinking I'm going to ace this. The examiner likes me. He's on my team. And you're making it not only easier for the examiner, but yourself as well. So, yeah, yeah. And just my other question, Robert, was when you're going through these-- just to go back to the beginning



and you're going through the three areas, is there a reason-- what would be the reason that you switch from talking about the work to talking about their studies or is it just dependent--

Robert: No, no, no. It depends on their answer. In that first part, I mean remember the examiner cannot go off script. If we go off script in the first part, it's only in the third part of exam which we'll talk about another day I'm sure that you can actually engage in a relatively open conversation with the candidate. In that first part, let's say I have chosen or the examiner has chosen to do the work or studies. So, it's a simple question you're going to ask. In this first part, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself. Let's talk about whether you work or study. Do you work or are you a student? If they're a student-- I mean you get cases-- most cases people say I work. I'm a lawyer and I work and then I go on to the other questions of that first set, but I mean sometimes you may have somebody who says well, at the moment I don't do either because I've just graduated from university and I'm looking for a job or I'm waiting to take up a



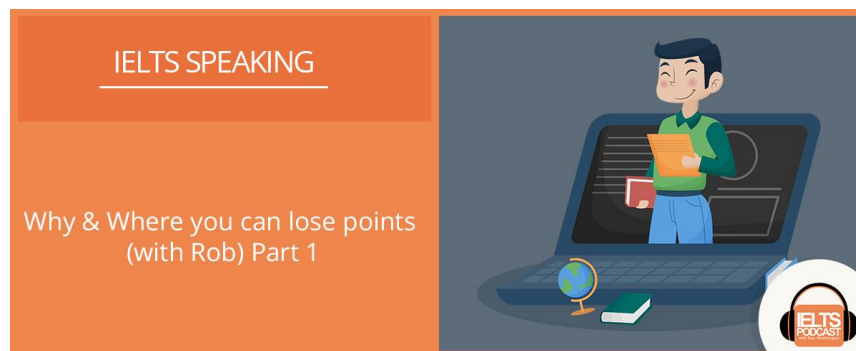
postgraduate course and that gives the examiner sometimes the chance to immediately switch to the past tense because I'm not going to say what do you study or what are you studying. I'm going to say oh. What were you studying then? Oh, I was studying mechanical engineering. So, I immediately switched from the present tense to the past tense depending on the circumstances. It's a rare event, but you know you may occasionally-- very occasionally have someone who says well I work and study, so I make a choice. Do I want to talk about their studies or work? Which would be more interesting?

Ben: Right. I see. I see. It largely depends on what the student answers where you go.

Robert: Absolutely.

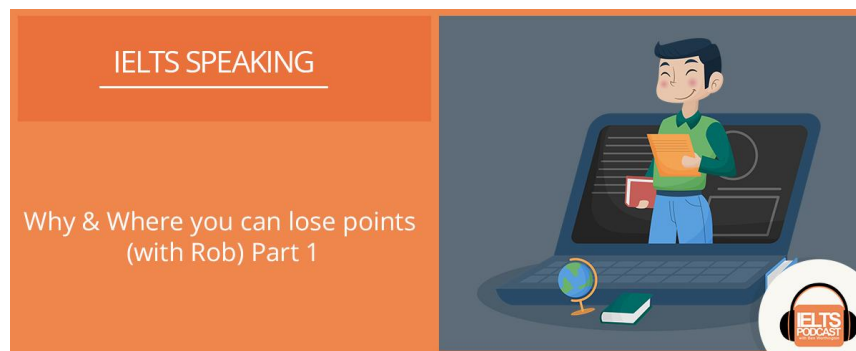
Ben: Got you.

Robert: Absolutely. Absolutely.



Ben: Right. Right. Okay. Super. Shall we move on to fluency?

Robert: Yes. Okay. I mean this is the big one, isn't it? Fluency the word that means everything and means nothing at the same time. I mean I guess you know what does it really mean? I guess it refers to the ability to sound as natural as possible, to let your language flow without any unnatural pauses or hesitations and without repeating yourself too much. What goes wrong? I mean if we thought of what could go wrong in any particular case, obviously something that goes wrong is quite a natural thing, isn't it? I mean someone is looking around for the words, searching for the right words and sometimes particularly in an exam situation the words just don't come when you want them to. I mean you get stuck and you say well, it happens in life. What's the word for... oh, I can't remember. Oh, my God. It's a question of age. I think it's a question of age. Another thing obviously it could be you know the right way to say it grammatically. And of course, the students are nervous. Of course, they get worried and of



course, they think oh, my God. I've got to say this perfectly. The only thing I would say is you know don't worry too much about it. I mean I would look at the student who's stumbling or hesitating a little bit at first and try to encourage them. I can't say anything because the examiner is not allowed to speak off script, but I would you know with a hand gesture or a smile or an invitation or you know something that suggests don't worry about it. Just carry on.

Ben: Got you. Got you. Just to like encourage them to continue.

Robert: Exactly, because part of the examiner's job is to get the student as I said on their best behavior, to get as much out of them as they can you know and making them feel comfortable is half the battle, of course. I don't like the word battle, but you know what I mean. So, another thing in the fluency thing is of course is you know the way that the examiner is trained, let's be honest, we are looking out at what you say and the way you say it. And another important point in fluency is the way we join our thoughts or ideas together. I mean you know the big word they

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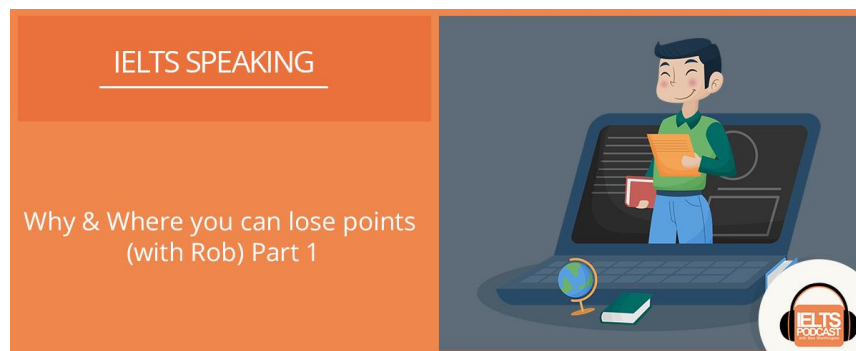
use in the books is coherence you know. The way everything just fits together perfectly or not. So, I mean that's the problem for some, isn't it? I mean you know I think all of you listening in you need to work very hard on those words and phrases that connect things you know. The simple ones you know. The ands and the buts and the sos and because right through to the althoughs and however and even in spite of and on the other hand. I mean think about them. Practice ways of dropping them into your conversation. And there's nothing better than impressing the examiner with those that show that you really are fluent and accurate even if some of them sound a bit unnatural you know. I mean let's take an instance-- I don't know-- an in spite of I don't know. Well, I don't know. I mean yeah, I'm happy in my work. I mean in spite of the terrible salaries they pay, I mean I'm happy there because I think there are career prospects for me in this area. So, you know in spite of everything. Because in spite of dramatically it is a bit of a problem sometimes you know. You know people say in spite of I don't like... no, no, no, no. Remember it's always a noun group after in spite of. So, it is a grammatical and you know

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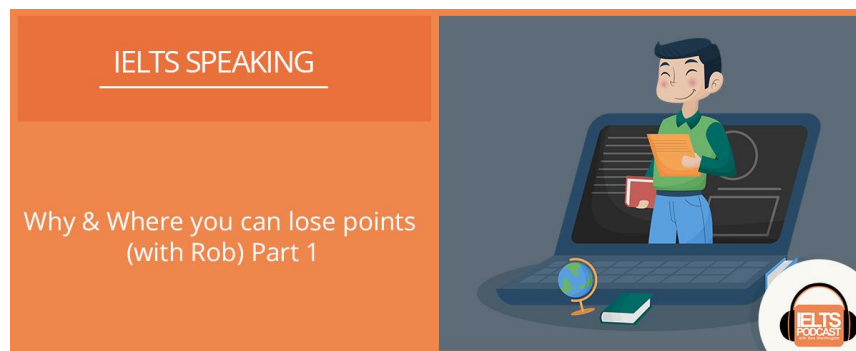


we'll come back to that later the importance of grammatical accuracy because even though we're talking about fluency, accuracy is always there under the surface in the speaking test and in all parts of the test really. I mean we've got time for this? Let's take a simple example. I mean you know I mean let's say early on in Part 1 and the examiner can ask you a question about your job you know something like this. And this is a question I've come across in my last days there as an examiner. What do you like best about your work? What do you like best about your work? I mean you got 25 seconds for this. I mean I thought of this. This took me I think about 20 seconds. If you've got a stopwatch at home everybody, say how long it takes me to say this. Okay. I'm answering the question what do you like best about your work. Okay. Well, the main thing I like about it is that it's very challenging and as I told you, I'm a production manager in an engineering company and so I have to meet monthly production figures or try if possible to you know kind of exceed them because the company can only function if we are producing and selling our products. So, it can be stressful if something goes wrong, but I enjoy the challenge.



And of course, when things go well, everyone in the team feels great you know. I've got some ifs. I've got two sentences. I've mentioned it a couple of times. I'm trying to make it-- I'm trying to expand on a simple thing you know. Don't try to complicate it as much as you can. Give an example, a real personal example. Talk about it. There's nothing easier in a sense than talking about your own experiences and your own lifestyle and the things you like, the things you don't like and I think that's the way to go. I mean be honest. Give them what you thought of it.

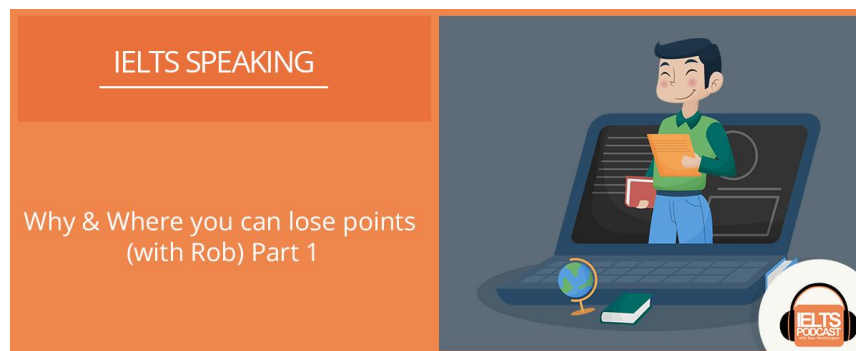
Ben: Sorry to interrupt. And adding examples as well just kind of like to foster the details there as well like in your previous example about you know hitting-- where is it-- hitting the goals, everyone in the team feels great you know and it just been stressful if things don't go well and all of this from the speaker's sort of like real world environment. And by opening up and sharing an example of what happens if it goes right and what happens if it goes wrong, we've added the details and we've expanded the vocabulary a lot as well.



Robert: And it's interesting because even if we're stretching ourselves right to the end of the exam, I think examiners with experience listen very carefully to those personal details and use them-- some of them in questions later I mean maybe in Part 2 or even in Part 3. You might say something like you mentioned earlier I think you know the problems of stress in the workplace. I mean how should companies deal with stress? I mean maybe it's a Part 3 question talking about working conditions, but I might go right back to what you said at the beginning of the test if I've got a good memory and use that. So, I'm connecting your world, your feelings, your experiences to something a lot more open, a lot more general.

Ben: Absolutely.

Robert: Would you think it would be a good idea for companies you know to have some kind of weekend breaks so that you know workers can lose their stress? And what about all that 24/7



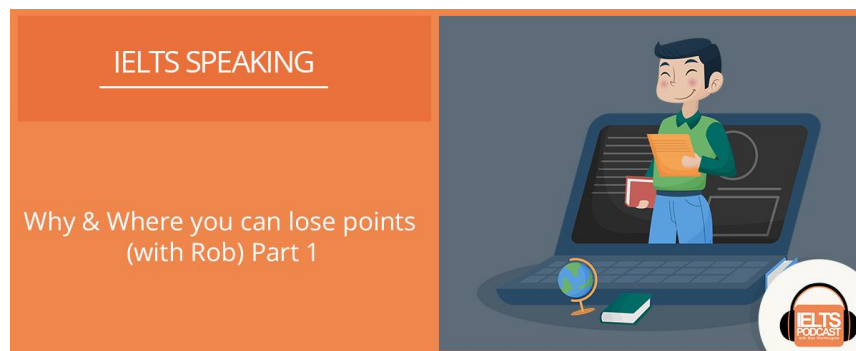
contact with your employers these days? Do you think there should be laws against that? I mean it's all connected to that idea of something somebody said really early on.

Ben: Right. Right. It's like another example of the examiner being on your side kind of like really--

Robert: Exactly, exactly because I mean it's a bit like I don't know really. It's weird. I mean you meet somebody for 20 minutes. You may never meet that person again the rest of your life, but those 20 minutes are very important for that person.

Ben: Oh, yeah.

Robert: It could mean the difference between you know getting that course, that postgraduate, or that immigration visa or not. And that's a big responsibility for the examiner as well, but if the examiner is aware of that, but tries to enter that student's or that candidate's world for 20 minutes



and engages in a conversation, I mean things can go wrong. I mean I'm not-- this is-- even in Part 1. I mean what if the examiner chooses a topic which the candidate knows very little about or really dislikes? I mean that's just bad luck sometimes, but you...

Ben: I could imagine maybe like if you start talking about the work and they hate the work, for example.

Robert: Oh, goodness me. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ben: Okay. Well, I'm sorry. I'm going to have to wrap it up.

Robert: Okay.

Ben: But what we'll do if it's all right with you is in the next podcast, we'll talk about vocabulary, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation and intonation.

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Robert: That sounds like a good idea to me. Well, time has gone quick. This is even quicker than one of those IELTS tests I think.

Ben: Yeah. Well, I had the examiner on my side so...

Robert: I'm going to give you-- I'll give you a 9, Ben. I'll give you a 9.

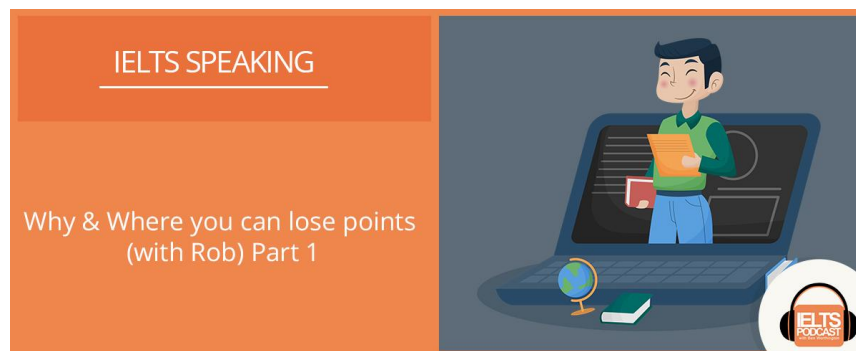
Ben: Not a 10?

Robert: 10? We don't go that far you know. Maybe I'll give you a--

Ben: 9.5

Robert: I'll think about that.

Ben: All right.



Robert: All right. I'll speak to you later.

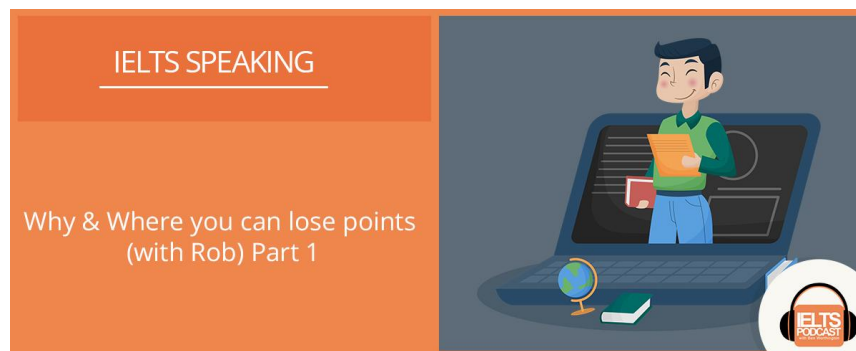
Ben: Okay.

Robert: Good to speak to you.

Ben: Thank you, Robert.

Robert: All right. Bye-bye.

Ben: Remember students, if you want more help with your speaking or with your writing, then please get in contact and we'd love to help you. We can help you with the Speaking Confidence course. We can give you feedback if you send in your answers and of course, we've got our Jump to Band 7 or It's Free online IELTS writing course available at ieltspodcast.com. Thank you for listening and have a great day.



And before we finish, I'd just like to say a quick word from one of our partners ELSA Speak. ELSA Speak is an app that helps you get pronunciation feedback and once you start improving with your pronunciation, you're going to see this increasing confidence as you know you're saying the words correctly and this just helps you. It's one of those things that you can just tick off the list. So, your pronunciations under control, you're more likely to be understood. So, there's less interruptions and you can just start getting that flow. There's no more interruptions like hey, what did you say? Okay. You said lawyer. I heard something else. And once you start pronouncing correctly, usually you'll see quite a big increase in your overall confidence especially if you've got the other areas under control. And ELSA Speak helps you do this. It's got the AI learning system, so it kind of adapts and if you're getting it all right it starts making it more difficult. And also it's that it can easily personalize your daily curriculum and this is just another one of those things like stacking the deck in your favor. We've got all these new tools at the moment available to us and especially useful during lockdown if we can't get to a teacher and

IELTS SPEAKING

Why & Where you can lose points
(with Rob) Part 1



I'd have a look at that. If you go to elsaspeak.com/inf/ieltspodcast, you will be able to get 40% off a year-long membership and even 85% off a lifetime membership. That's elsaspeak.com/inf/ieltspodcast.

[Music]

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com