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By Anh Toan, Samuel Prior and The Academic Staff of ZIM Institute
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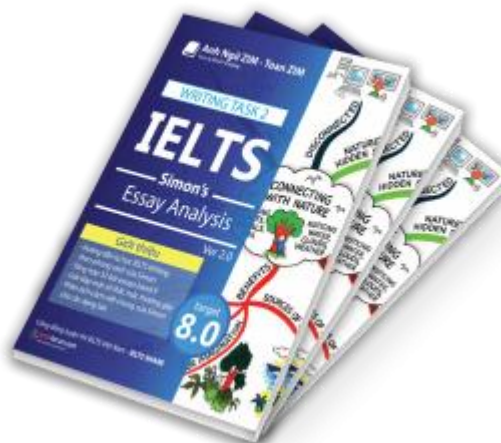


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THE COMPLETE SOLUTION

IELTS

SPEAKING

Anh Ngữ ZIM

Forewords

This book is written to assist students of foundation to advanced level who are preparing for IELTS speaking test.

This small guide only acts as a self-study material and a supplement for students' IELTS speaking courses. Therefore, it is not recommended that students only take this book, albeit helpful and valuable, as a sole source of preparation. Non-stop effort and diligence result in success in the real exam!

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

1. What is the IELTS speaking test?

The IELTS speaking test is the final part of the exam. The test lasts between 11 and 14 minutes. You will be interviewed by an examiner who will record your conversation. Timing is strictly controlled by the examiner, so do not be surprised if he or she interrupts you during an answer.

There are 3 parts to the Speaking Test:

Good morning! My name is Tony Smith; and I am your examiner for today's speaking test.

- Can you tell me your full name?
- What should I call you?
- Where are you from?
- Can I see your identification, please?

Part 0: Greeting the examiner

Great, now we shall begin.

In the first part of the test, I will ask you some questions about yourself. Let's begin:

Let's talk about where you live:

- Do you live in a house or an apartment?
- What do you like best about your house/apartment?
- What would you like to change about your house/apartment?
- In the future, would you prefer to buy a house or an apartment?

I want to move on and talk about sports:

- Do you play any sports?
- What kinds of sport are popular in your country?
- Do you think that it is important for people to play sports?

Let's talk about mathematics:

- At what age do people in your country usually have mathematics lessons at school?
- Do you think that it is reasonable to study mathematics at young age?
- What are the roles of mathematics in real life?
- Do you think that teachers should let their students use electronic devices like calculators to solve mathematic problems?

Part 1: Short interview:
around 10-12 questions in
4 to 5 minutes.

Thank you! That is the end of the first part; and now I'd like to move on to the second part. In this part, I will give you a topic. And I want you to talk about that topic for 1 to 2 minutes. Before you talk, you have 1 minute to think about what you are going to say; and you can make some notes if you wish. Do you understand? Great! Here's your paper and pencil. I want you to describe a friend that is very important to you.

Describe an important friend

You should say:

- Who this friend is
- How the two of you met
- What you have done together

And explain why this friend is important to you

Part 2: Short presentation:
talk for 2 minutes with 1
minute to prepare.

- **Possibly, the examiner may ask you 2 follow-up questions. But this doesn't always happen.**

Thank you! That's the end of the second part. I'd like to move on to our last part. We have been talking about an important friends, now I want to ask you some more general and abstract questions related to this.

- What can friends do to help each other?
- Do you have friends who are older or younger than you are?
- Do you think that it is easy to make friends with people who are older?

Let's talk about friendship:

- In your opinion, how does our friendship change when we grow up?
- What is your opinion about friends on social media, such as Facebook?
- What are the dangers when we make friends with people on social media?

Part 3: Discussion: around
5-6 questions in 4 to 5
minutes.

Thank you! That's the end of the speaking test!

=> Question to ponder: Do the 3 parts of the speaking test carry equal weighting when your score is calculated, or is one part more important?

The answer is that the 3 parts are NOT scored separately, the examiner assesses your performance as a whole. He/she will write the four sub-scores on a piece of paper during the first part, and these four scores will be reduced or boosted as the test progresses.

2. How will your performance be assessed?

There are 4 different assessment criteria:

1. Fluency & Coherence
2. Lexical resource
3. Grammatical range & accuracy
4. Pronunciation

A more detailed description might be downloaded here:

http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/IELTS_Speaking_band_descriptors.pdf

These four criteria share equal proportions in your final band score.

For example: If your scores are as follows:

Fluency & Coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range & accuracy	Pronunciation
4	4	5	5

Then your overall band score would be: $(4 + 4 + 5 + 5)/4 = 4.5$

Both whole number and half band scores are given in the speaking test. If the overall score is neither a whole number nor a half band score, it will be reduced to the next whole number or 0.5 number.

For example: If the overall band score is 4.25 or 6.75, it will be reduced to 4.0 or 6.5.

3. What are they looking for?

It's important to know what the examiner really expects from a high scorer. This is something that most students either miss out or misunderstand during their first days of preparation, which leads to certain failure in the real exam.

First, you need to know what the IELTS speaking test really is. Technically it's a normal conversation between you and the examiner. A lot of test takers unfortunately think it is a formal talk and speak in a very complicated and "academic style". The key factor to getting a high score is to speak naturally without long pauses and to use a variety of verb tenses correctly and flexibly.

During the first part of the test, the examiner expects you to give an immediate answer after hearing his/her question. This part is to test your daily vocabulary and a warm-up stage before going to part 2 and 3, so there is no need to show off good vocabulary here. You need to focus on fluency and pronunciation by giving a random and simple answer. And remember, keep your answer no longer than 3 sentences.

In the second part, the examiner expects you to give an organized response which lasts for, usually, at least 1 minute and 30 seconds to 2 minutes. You should be able to show off a little bit of your vocabulary and grammar but I advise you to focus on the coherence of your talk and always tell a story. The examiner always wants to hear stories.

The last part of the speaking section, which is a two-way discussion where the examiner can freely improvise his questions to follow up your answers, is to test your upper limit. The level of difficulty increases and the examiner will try to ask you more abstract and challenging questions. This is the part for you to show off your best vocabulary and grammar. Try to give personal examples where possible.

⇒ Question to ponder: Is accent important to achieve a high score?

The answer is no! Accent has nothing to do with pronunciation; and therefore, it will not affect the examiner's assessment on your performance. You can speak in either American, British or Vietnamese accent and still get a high score, provided that few mistakes regarding pronunciation are made.

- Points to focus on:

If you are aiming at band 6.0-6.5 or sometimes even higher, pay the least attention to grammar and vocabulary. Try to speak fluently, naturally and clearly with few pronunciation mistakes being made. Remember, “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”.

CHAPTER 2

TECHNIQUES

1. Part 0: Greeting the examiner

This is the part where you can make a friendly impression on the examiner because he/she will ask you several warm-up questions to get to know you. But there are certain things that need to be paid attention to in order to avoid creating an awkward atmosphere.

Usually the conversation would go like this:

- **Examiner:** Good morning/afternoon, my name is Tony Smith; and I am your examiner for today's speaking test.

Examinee: Good morning/afternoon Tony. Or Good morning/afternoon Mr. Smith.

- ⇒ *Do not say: Good morning/afternoon Mr. Tony for Mr. only preceded a person's family name, not first name.*

- **Examiner:** Can you tell me your full name? What should I call you?

Examinee: My full name is Nguyen Anh Toan, but you can call me Toan for short.

- ⇒ *There's no need to expand your response any further.*

- **Examiner:** Where are you from?

Examinee: I am from Hanoi.

- ⇒ *You can add some further information to this response as follows: "I was born and raised in Hanoi, but I have moved to HCMC and been living and working in District 3 for over 4 months." But do not try to expand any further. You will not lose marks if you give a short answer in this part of the test.*

- **Examiner:** Can I see your ID please?

- **Examinee:** Sure/Certainly. Or Here you are

- ⇒ *Do not say: Of course or here/there you go as these phrases are rather inappropriate between you and the examiner.*

2. Part 1: Short interview

1. Overview

In the first part of the IELTS speaking section, the examiner will ask you approximately 10-12 questions (usually 3 different topics), all of which are about your life (work, study, hometown, pets, sports etc.). This part lasts for about 4-5 minutes. You can check out an example of questions in speaking part 1 in the previous section.

Note:

- Not all part 1 questions are familiar and easy. Sometimes, they can be about social issues (advertising, child education ...) which often appear in part 3 and require more advanced language skills to answer.
- You will not get a high score if you only do well in this part. It only tests your everyday vocabulary and basic grammar.
- You have to answer 10-12 questions within 4-5 minutes, which leaves you 15-20 seconds to answer each question. Long answers will lead to the examiner interrupting you.
- Feel free to speak personally. Part 1 questions are about you so it's best to talk about yourself.
- If you do not understand the question, politely ask the examiner to repeat it (he/she is NOT allowed to help you or give further explanation regarding the meaning of the questions) by saying: "I'm sorry I didn't quite catch your question. Could you repeat it for me please?"

2. How to answer part 1 questions:

- Try to give short and simple answers
- Try to answer the questions by giving at least a full sentence (3 sentences max)
- Try to add as much information as possible within 15-20 seconds.
- Don't think too much about the content of your answers. Just give an immediate answer. You will probably lose some marks if you make a long pause after hearing the question.

Example:

- **Do you live in a house or an apartment?** **Track 1.1**

⇒ I live in a very large house with my family **on the outskirts of Hanoi**.

- **What do you like best about your house/apartment?** **Track 1.2**

⇒ Probably my small garden on the fifth floor where my parents grow chilies and lettuce. It's also my favorite spot for writing my blog while sipping a cup of coffee in the morning.

- **What would you like to change about your house/apartment?** **Track 1.3**

⇒ I'd love it if my house had more bathrooms. It's a 5 story-house but there's only one shared bathroom for 6 members, so sometimes it's very inconvenient to wait for your turn.

- **In the future, would you prefer to buy a house or an apartment?** **Track 1.4**

⇒ A house for sure. I love having a garden to enjoy my writing along with **the tranquility of the atmosphere**. I don't think buying an apartment would be a great choice because it's not possible for me to have a garden in an apartment.

- **Do you play any sports?** **Track 1.5**

⇒ I used to play soccer when I was younger, maybe 9-10 years back. However, I **am totally swamped with** my teaching job and have almost no time to go out.

- **What kinds of sport are popular in your country?** **Track 1.6**

⇒ I would say it's soccer which is considered the King of sport. And whenever our national soccer team has a match with another team from abroad in our national stadium My Dinh, the tickets are completely sold out. The crowd of fans really **stirs up the atmosphere** and **goes nuts** after a victory of their home team.

- **Do you think that it is important for people to play sports?** **Track 1.7**

⇒ Yes absolutely. Playing sports is a great way to **keep fit and stay healthy**. Especially the elderly should participate in Tai Chi clubs to maintain good health condition.

- **At what age do people in your country usually have mathematics lessons at school?**

Track 1.8

⇒ Usually from an early stage, probably at 6 years of age, Vietnamese children are taught mathematics at primary school but lessons included in this level of education are only about some basic calculations. The difficulty of such lessons increases as children attend higher classes.

- **Do you think that it is reasonable to study mathematics at young age?** **Track 1.9**

⇒ No, not at all. Children should be given time to play with their parents and friends. Through playing, they learn, and that's the very natural and also the most suitable way to **foster their development**. I don't think making children sit at their desk to do homework is a good practice.

- **What are the roles of mathematics in real life?** **Track 1.10**

⇒ There are a number of values that mathematics brings to us, certainly. It helps develop our logical thinking and also our analytical ability, which contributes to our development of problem solving skills. Besides, modern technologies, such as rockets or space crafts, are invented based on mathematics.

- **Do you think that teachers should let their students use electronic devices like calculators to solve mathematic problems?** **Track 1.11**

⇒ Although calculators and other devices offer great help to students, I don't think it's a good idea to let students use them very often. Mathematics is about enhancing individual skills, not about using tools to solve a given problem.

Language focus:

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
On the outskirts of somewhere (n) /'aʊtskə:ts/	The parts of a town or a city that are the furthest from the center	After a failed attempt to kill the president, Erik Lehnsherr, also known as Magneto, decided to live on the outskirts of a small town with his loving wife and daughter, who was also a mutant.
Tranquility (n) /trən'kwɪlɪti/	The quality of being quiet and peaceful	He truly enjoyed the tranquility of the town. Perfectly suitable for the life of a retired international criminal who tried to have a clean life again.
To be swamped with work (phrase) /swɒmp/	To have more of something than one can deal with	Although he was usually swamped with his work in a local factory, he managed to spare some time with his small family.
To stir up the atmosphere (v) /stə:/	To make people feel strong emotions	Every time he came home, his daughter passionately hugged him and stirred up the family's atmosphere.
To go nuts (phrase)	To go crazy and uncontrollable	He thought his days of endless fights were finally over. The days of his mutant fellows going nuts over discrimination ended.
To keep fit and stay healthy (phrase)	To have a healthy lifestyle	However, he still went to the gym to keep fit and stay healthy. (Okay this example sucks T.T)
To foster something (v) /'fɒstə/	To encourage something to develop	He always tried to foster his relationship with his neighbors and colleagues because he didn't want them to know about his past.

3. Part 2: Short presentation

1. Overview

After you have finished the first part, you will be given a topic with 4 suggestions presented. You will be asked to speak about that topic for 1-2 minutes after 1 minute of preparation. You can make notes during this 1-minute period. Topics in the second part mainly focus on 5 major areas:

- Describe a person
- Describe an object
- Describe an experience
- Describe a place
- Describe a favorite

Note:

- The most important thing to do in the second part is to KEEP TALKING for 1 to 2 minutes.
- Don't care much about grammar, focus on the content of the presentation delivered in this part and also the fluency of your answer.
- Expand your answer by focusing on the 4 suggestions that are provided.
- You don't need to maintain eye contact with the examiner in this part of the test.
- Keep in mind that the examiner is NOT allowed to help you by any means in this part.

2. How to give an impressive presentation

- Make most use of your 1-minute period of preparation

Only write down a few key words, enough to help you remember the details of your presentation.

For example:

Describe an important friend

You should say:

- Who this friend is
- How the two of you met
- What you have done together

And explain why this friend is important to you

Your note:

High school friend Roger

Desk mate

Soccer club

Confide + school bullies

Long notes would take away too much time and you might not be able to be well-prepared in terms of the content of the presentation.

- Have an easy and logical structure

Opening

- Keep it clear, direct and simple
- You might start your presentation by simply saying: ***"I'm going to talk about ..."***. This is a simple and direct opening.

Expansion

- Try to tell a story and present real examples about yourself
- Follow the given suggestions.

Ending

- Keep the ending clear and simple.
- You could finish your presentation by saying: ***"That's all I want to talk about."***

3. Example:

Describe an important friend

You should say:

- Who this friend is
- How the two of you met
- What you have done together

And explain why this friend is important to you

Sample Track 02

I'm going to talk about my best friend Roger, whom I went to high school with.

After 9th grade, I was sent to a high school which was located in the center of Hanoi, 15 miles away from my neighborhood because my parents believed it'd be better for me. I was set up to sit next to Roger in the final row of my class. At first, I thought Roger was **a total snob** because he **bragged** too much about him and his soccer team. But later I realized that he's **a good sport** after a few days and I spent more time talking to him. We really **hit it off** quickly. He even invited me to join his soccer team as he knew I was looking for an opportunity to integrate into a new environment. We used to hang out with some other classmates at the backyard to play after class. Then we became closer and closer together, he even helped me **cram for math exams** when I knew that he was kind of **a math freak**. I was amazed that he could solve any sorts of exercise in a perfectly timed manner. This is probably not something to be proud of but he used to help me cheat during my final tests, which really helped me survive through my high school years.

There are two main reasons why Roger is a very important person to me. First, his kindness helped me a lot when I first moved to study there. Without him, **a sense of inferiority** within me would have thrived because unlike other kids, I was from the outskirts. He even protected me from other students' **ridicule** and made me feel more confident. Second, of all people he understood me the most because he gave me a feeling that I could trust him. Whenever I had any trouble, I would always tell him first and he always **stood by my side** to offer some help.

That's all I want to share about my friend Roger.

A very simple and direct opening

Next, I'll expand my response by telling a story which is based on the first 3 suggestions.

Then I'll give more detail by explaining the last suggestion with 2 ideas, using a very simple structure like this sample.

A very simple and direct ending

Language focus:

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
To be a snob (n) /snɒb/	A person who thinks he/she is better than others	Her boyfriends turned out to be a snob after going out with her for a few weeks.
To brag about something (v) /brag/	To talk too proudly about something you own or something you have done.	He always bragged about how successful he was since the first day he ran his business in trafficking.
To be a good sport (idm)	A generous and cheerful person	She realized that her ex-boyfriend was actually a very good sport.
To hit it off (idm)	To have a good friendly relationship with someone	She remembered that her ex and she hit it off very quickly after the first date.
To be a math freak (idm)	To be extremely good at math	But she dumped him because he was a math freak and she didn't like it.
A sense of inferiority (np) /ɪnˈfɪəriˈɔːrɪti/	A feeling that other people are much better than you are	After she broke up with him, he adopted a sense of inferiority and committed suicide in his room.
Ridicule (n) /ˈrɪdɪkjʊːl/	Unkind comments to make fun of someone	Now, she is an object of ridicule among her friends.
To stand by one's side (idm)	To support someone in difficult situations	She only hopes to find someone who will always stand by her side no matter what might happen.

4. Part 3: Discussion

1. Overview

In this part of the test, the examiner will ask you a series of questions which are related to the topic in the second part. However, those questions are about more abstract ideas.

Note:

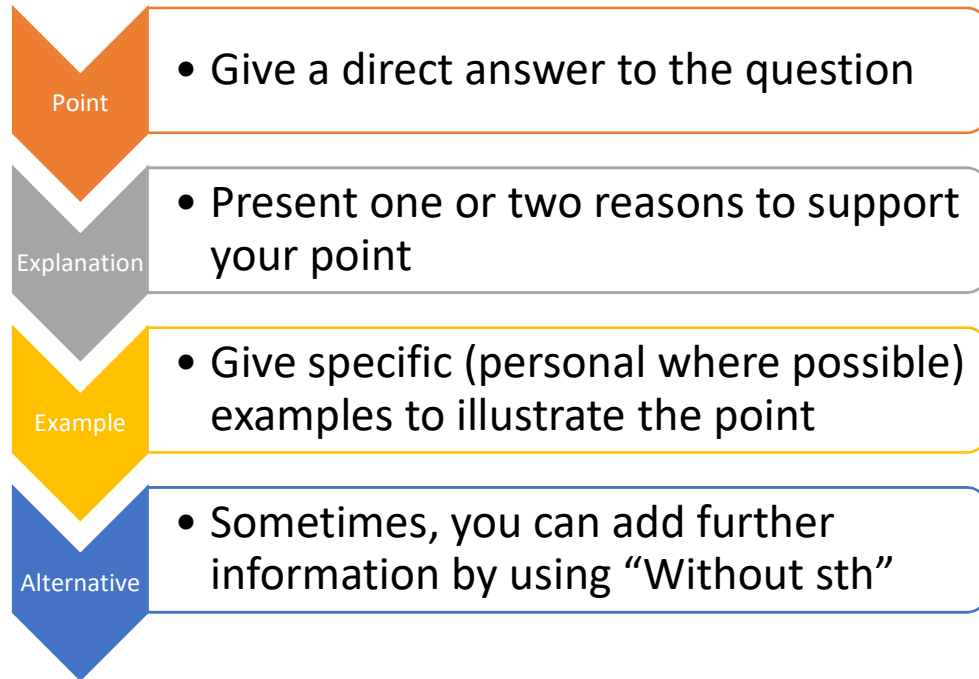
- Try to give long answers. (30-40 seconds for each question)
- You can ask the examiner to give you some time to think before giving an answer. Sometimes, questions in part 3 can be very challenging in the sense that you cannot give an immediate answer. However, with little time to think, you can give a decent answer. The examiner understands that so it's OK to ask for some preparation by politely making comments on the questions as follows: **"That's quite difficult. Let me think about that."**
- In case you don't know the answer, you can give a **"I don't know"** answer. In the speaking test, you will not lose marks if you start your answer with "I have no idea" but make sure that you give a proper explanation why you don't know the answer, or you can present your guess if possible. As long as your explanations or guesses makes sense, the examiner will not subtract your scores.

For example: How has technology affected people's lives in big cities?

Actually I have no idea because I have been living in the countryside my entire life. My village is completely untouched by modern technologies and I hardly go to any urban areas so I'm in no place to tell that technology has negatively or positively changed people's lives. But I guess machinery aids people, especially blue-collar workers, a lot in their work because my brother moved to Hanoi to work in a factory a few years ago. He never stops talking about how convenient and efficient it is to use machines in production whenever he comes home.

2. How to answer part 3 questions

- Remember, direct answers are the best.
- Expand your answers by giving real examples and facts (personal examples are preferable)
- Occasionally, follow the structure below:



3. Example

- What can friends do to help each other? **Track 3.1**

⇒ Friends can do a lot to help us in difficult times actually because being a friend means that we always look out for one another, always **stand side by side through thick and thin**. My high school friend Roger gave me a sense of trust and I was not afraid of **confiding in him** whenever something troubled my mind. Without Roger, my high school years would have been a complete nightmare because of other kids' **bullying and mockery**.

Point + explanation

Personal example

Alternative

- **Do you have friends who are older or younger than you are?** **Track 3.2**

⇒ Actually no, I don't **get on really well with** people who are older or younger than me. I have no idea why but perhaps it's my personality. One time, if I remember correctly, during a voluntary project I participated in when I was a sophomore at Foreign Trade University in Hanoi, I had to **collaborate** with some seniors. I made quite a mess because I had a huge conflict with those guys. However, I do have many friends my age. It's easy and comfortable to make friends with people at the same age, to be honest.

- **Do you think that it is easy to make friends with people who are older?** **Track 3.3**

⇒ I don't think there is any absolute answer to this question because each person has different personalities. Many prefer and find it somehow easy to get to know older people, others just don't. As for me, all of my friends are at my age and I think it's best for me because I have worked with people who are older and they are always **pretentious**. But it might **not be the case for** other people.

- **In your opinion, how does our friendship change when we grow up?** **Track 3.4**

⇒ It's hard to say for sure because it also depends on each person. But I suppose the nature of friendship would change as we grow older. When we are kids, we live in the present and play with other kids without thinking much about where our friendship would go. During adulthood, we become more calculating and some of us tend to measure our friendships based on future advantages. Of course, there are still pure relationships between friends and **this bond never changes as time passes**.

- **What is your opinion about friends on social media, such as Facebook?** **Track 3.5**

⇒ Social media like Facebook is an ideal platform to meet our demand for communication and understanding. We can make a lot of friends, but most of them are strangers. There's no guarantee that they are not trying some stratagems. Profiles users display on their private wall can be deceiving and we don't know what is true and what is not. **In this day and age**, technology is **a double-edged sword**, it **fosters relationships** and **facilitates communication** but it also harms us in very unusual and unpredictable ways as people can fake their profiles and upload **fraudulent posts**. So I think we can't trust online friends unless we know them personally.

- **What are the dangers when we make friends with people on social media?** **Track 3.6**

⇒ There have been tons of cases reported on TV and newspapers about **cyber-crimes** committed through this social online platform. I think it'd be best not to discuss anything personal, like finance, with anybody you only know through social media. Recently I have read a newspaper reporting a murder of a school girl who trusted her so-called friend that she has known on Facebook only for a couple of days. The guy murdered her **in cold blood** just to take her jewelry. It's really terrifying.

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES IN YOUR RESPONSE!

Language focus

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
To get on well with somebody (idm)	To have a good relationship with someone	I could barely get on well with Hulk and other guys in the Avenger team.
To collaborate with somebody (v) /kə'labəreɪt/	To work with someone	I mean, I tried my very best to collaborate with them to save the Earth when Loki waged war on our world.
To be pretentious (adj) /prɪ'tɛnʃəs/	To try to appear important and intelligent to impress other people	Among these guys, Thor was always pretentious and thought he's the mightiest.
As time passes (idm)		As time passes, I slowly grow tired of working with these overgrown and muscle-head dudes.
In this day and age (idm)	In this modern world	People don't need heroes in this day and age, at least not anymore.
To be a double-edged sword (idm)	Something that has both advantages and disadvantages	The government even claimed that using us in a time of war is a doubled-edged sword, especially after the Ultron incident.
To facilitate sth (v) /fə'sɪlɪteɪt/	To make a process easier	Certainly Tony Stark was only trying to facilitate his super iron robot

		manufacturing process. But he never knew that was coming.
To be fraudulent (adj) /'frɔːdʒʊl(ə)nt/	Intended to cheat someone	Everyone thought he was a fraud because he stole Loki's scepter for his own master plan.
Cyber-crimes (n)	Crime that is committed using the Internet	Sorry I don't know how to make up a sentence that both has "cyber-crimes" and matches my Avenger story ☹
In cold blood (idm)	Deliberately cruel without any pity	Okay back to the Avenger story. The government want to disband the team and end the Avenger Initiative. Captain America didn't consent to this order and decided to work alone. So the government sent his lover Iron Man to murder American first super hero in cold blood.

CHAPTER 3

TRAINING

SESSION 1: PEOPLE

Warm-up questions:

- **Who is your favorite teacher?**

.....

.....

.....

⇒ **Track 4.1:** I'd say it's my IELTS teacher Anh Toan. He taught students at various levels from basic to advanced at ZIM Academy, which is based in Hanoi and HCMC. I am a big fan of his self-written books about English skills so I decided to take part in his offline class to know more about IELTS.

- **What do you like most about his /her lessons?**

.....

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⇒ **Track 4.2:** Basically his lessons are not just about IELTS, in fact it'd be boring if they are. He really knows the way to show us how everything around us is connected to language learning and to make his lessons different. I also like his energy whenever he stands in front of the whole class.

- **What aspect does he/she has the greatest influence on?**

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⇒ **Track 4.3:** There are several, actually. Certainly he helped me improve my language skills, especially writing skills which I fear the most. He also **reignited my passion** for learning English by his **resonant stories** during each and every lesson.

Topic for practice

Topic 1 Describe a person you have just met and want to know more about <i>You should say:</i> • Who this person is • When and where you met • What you did or talked about And explain why you want to know more about this person	Topic 2 Describe a person who has a great influence on you <i>You should say:</i> • Who this person is • How she knew this person • What influence this person has on you And how you think of the influence
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There are many part 2 topics about describing a person, but you only need to find the similarities among those topics so as to make your preparation easier. For example, two different topics have been presented above but you only need to talk about one person.

Topic 1 Describe a person you have just met and want to know more about <i>You should say:</i> • Who this person is ⇒ My IELTS teacher • When and where you met ⇒ A few weeks ago at ZIM Academy • What you did or talked about ⇒ IELTS lessons and daily stuff And explain why you want to know more about this person	Topic 2 Describe a person who has a great influence on you <i>You should say:</i> • Who this person is ⇒ My IELTS teacher • How you knew this person ⇒ A few weeks ago I saw an ad about an IELTS class at ZIM Academy • What influence this person has on you
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⇒ There's so much to learn from him, both IELTS and social knowledge	⇒ Improving my English skills and gaining new perspectives on daily stuff And how you think of the influence ⇒ Positive because I can learn a lot from him, both IELTS and social knowledge
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⇒ You can do this with many other part 2 topics about describing a person.

Sample response **Track 05**

Topic 1	Topic 2
I am going to talk about my IELTS teacher Anh Toan, who is the head teacher at ZIM Academy and also the author of several IELTS writing books. A few weeks ago when I was looking for an IELTS class to study because I was planning to go abroad for my master degree in architecture in the UK. An IELTS certificate is a pre-requisite in my application form so I started to browse some Facebook pages for information. I saw an ad on IELTS SHARE and decided to enroll on an intensive class that Toan was in charge of. He taught me a lot of tips and tricks during the real test and instructed me and other students to effectively and efficiently prepare for the test. He also shared his story as an entrepreneur and all kinds of daily stuff to make his lessons more interesting. After each class I usually lingered around a bit to have a little chit chat with him, sometimes about English, sometimes about all sorts of stuff like the US president elect Donald Trump or how Mc Donald's Royal cheese burgers should be made. There are 2 main reasons why I really want to know more about him. First, his in-depth understanding of the test in general impressed me from the beginning and I think I can enhance my English skills greatly, especially my writing and speaking skills.	I am going to talk about my IELTS teacher Anh Toan, who is the head teacher at ZIM Academy and also the author of several IELTS writing books. A few weeks ago when I was looking for an IELTS class to study because I was planning to go abroad for my master degree in architecture. An IELTS certificate is a pre-requisite in my application form so I started to browse some Facebook pages for information. I saw an ad on IELTS SHARE and decided to enroll on an intensive class that Toan was in charge of. He helped me a lot to improve my English, writing skills in particular. He changed how I thought of writing which gave me a very hard time in the past. He also shared his story as an entrepreneur and all kinds of daily stuff to make his lessons more interesting so that I could learn more about life than just an English test. After each class I usually lingered around a bit to have a little chit chat with him, sometimes about English, sometimes about all sorts of stuff like the US president elect Donald Trump or how Mc Donald's Royal cheese burgers should be made. There are 2 main reasons why his influence on me is positive. First, his in-depth understanding of the test in general impressed me from the beginning and I

Secondly, his story of how he dropped out of university to embark on his journey as a very young entrepreneur has added a new perspective on society to my life. I would love to get to know him even more because in the future I want to have a company of my own too. That's all I want to share about my IELTS teacher.	think I can enhance my English skills greatly, especially my writing and speaking skills. Secondly, his story of how he dropped out of university to embark on his journey as a very young entrepreneur has added a new perspective on society to my life. I would love to get to know him even more because in the future I want to have a company of my own too. That's all I want to share about my IELTS teacher.
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Possible part 3 questions for those part 2 topics:

1. What are the key qualities a good teacher should possess?

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⇒ **Track 6.1:** I think a good teacher should be knowledgeable, not just in the field he is teaching. It's vital for a teacher to have solid understanding about social issues because I believe students always expect more from their teachers rather than just their **expertise**. On top of that, a good teacher should be able to encourage creativity and help students think independently and logically. Like my mathematics instructor back in high school, he didn't force us to cram for exams but he rather motivated us to spend more time analyzing the problem instead. Without these qualities, I don't think students can actually learn anything from their teachers.

2. Do many young people in your country want to be teachers?

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⇒ **Track 6.2:** Yes more and more people choose teaching as their lifetime profession and many of them start teaching immediately after their graduation. Some of them don't even wait until graduation, instead they run their own language classes during their time at university. For example, my college friend Amanda began teaching evening English classes while she was still a **sophomore**. Later on she dropped out to focus on her career and fortunately, she now owns and manages a language center in Hanoi.

3. What do you think of the education system in your country?

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⇒ **Track 6.3:** Personally I think there are a lot to improve when it comes to Vietnamese education system, whose approach is pretty much one-way interaction. The exam system in Vietnam also needs fixing as it gives no place for creativity to thrive which I think should be the focal priority and the ultimate goal of any education system. But it's not the case in Vietnam apparently. Besides, increasing tuition fees **keep students in remote areas at bay from** accessing high quality education.

4. How can teachers encourage creativity in students?

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⇒ **Track 6.4:** There are a number of ways to do that. I think parents and teachers should not **place too much pressure on** children about school grades but rather give them more time to relax and discover things for themselves. The exam system should also be altered and should not be considered the only way to **measure intelligence**. Creative activities and subjects such as language and music classes should be added to school curriculum nationwide. Without creativity, I think education has failed its fundamental purpose.

Language focus:

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
To reignite one's passion for sth (v) /ri:'ɪg'nʌɪt/	To make one's passion strong again	After a lifetime of killing and fighting, Logan retired from his soldier life and became a recluse who spent his days with his lover Kayla. She reignited Logan's desire for being a normal man with a normal life.
Resonant (adj) /'rɛz(ə)nənt/	Having power to bring images, feelings or memories	But even love could not fully purge him of his stain in the past. Resonant images of the massacre that happened when he was working with Stryker kept flashing back.
Pre-requisite (n) /pri:'rɛkwɪzɪt/	Something that must exist or happen before something else can happen or be done	He still remembered that being a mutant was a pre-requisite to join Stryker's team of killing machines.
To linger around (v) /'lɪŋgə/	To stay somewhere for longer because you don't want to leave	Logan knew he was different and decided not to linger around anymore. He left the team when they were on a mission of looking for indestructible metal Adamantium.
In-depth (adj) /ɪn'dɛpθ/	Very thorough and detailed	In case you didn't know, Stryker is a military scientist who had in-depth knowledge about human mutation and weaponry.
To embark on (v) /ɪm'bɑ:k/	To start to do something new	After leaving the team of super assassins, Logan embarked on a whole new chapter of his life. He decided to keep a low profile and spend the rest of his life with his loving Kayla.

Expertise (n) /ˌɛkspəːˈtiːz/	Expert knowledge or skill in a particular subject, activity or job	However, Logan still thought that he could not live a normal life since he has considerable expertise in killing.
Sophomore (n) /ˈsɒfəmoː/	A student in the second year at a university or college	Some people said that Logan had an affair with a sophomore. But it turned out to be a canard. (I don't even know what the hell this sentence means T.T)
To keep sb at bay from (v)	To prevent sb from having or accessing something	He had to settle in a remote mountain because his past kept him at bay from living with other people, except for Kayla.
To place pressure on (v) /ˈpreʃə/	To put pressure on someone	This placed great pressure on him because he had to earn a living by working as a lumberjack.

SESSION 2: OBJECTS

Topic for practice

Describe an old thing that is important to your family

You should say:

- What it is
- What material it is made of
- Who bought it and when

And explain why it is important

Note:

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Sample Track 07

Well an old thing in my home that I want to talk about is the photo of my family. It's hung on my living room's wall for ... **god knows when**. My parents are in that photo and my mom was wearing a wedding dress, standing beside was my dad in a dark suit and my grandparents were there too. I can't really know the color of their clothes because the photo is in **black and white**. But I'm pretty sure it was taken on my mom and dad's wedding. I guess that's the only picture they got back then so they really kept it in good condition and framed it with a **beautifully polished wooden frame**.

This photo's really important to my family, especially to me, because my grandparents passed away before I was born. It's like the only thing that connects me to my beloved grandpa and grandma, I didn't even have the chance to meet them in person. It's a **pity** really. And also I just love the **antique** beauty of the photo. Not many pictures nowadays have that kind of beauty even with high technology that allows you to adjust the picture in any way you want. And obviously it's some kind of **invaluable token of love** that my parents have for each other.

I think that's why such a small photo means that much to my family.

Possible part 3 questions:

1. What kinds of things do people usually keep for a long time?

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⇒ **Track 8.1:** I have a few things in mind, like family photos or graduation photos because they usually remind us of our holy bond with other family members or our **past milestones**. Also, some people like to keep antiques and display them in the living room to decorate their house. For example, my uncle loves collecting stamps that were produced in the past and keeps them in a glass cabinet in his living room. It gives people who visit his house **a sense of admiration**.

2. Why do some people like to have collections of antiques?

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⇒ **Track 8.2:** It can be their hobbies but it is only for the wealthy because antiques usually **cost an arm and a leg**. Also, it can be a way to show the owner's power and social status. I still remember visiting my friend's house and his father has built a garage just to collect and display antique cars from the 70s. Well it's quite understandable because his father work in the Ministry of Education and Training. Or sometimes people collect old things for decoration of their house because a living room **adorned** by pictures drawn from famous artist in the past would look **more luxurious** and **match with other furnishings**.

SESSION 3: EXPERIENCES

Topic for practice:

Describe a time you were very busy

You should say:

- When it was
- What you were busy with
- Why you were busy

And explain how you felt

Note:

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Sample

I am going to talk about the time when my village, the Hidden Leaf, was attacked by Pain, who was the leader of an international criminal organization.

It was on March 20th, 1888 that the disaster **fell above our heads** from nowhere. Enemy attack came from every direction and our defense system **was completely compromised**.

They really **took us by surprise**. Our police force was soon **overwhelmed** by the enemy and everyone was driven deep into the shelter where our ancestors had built a long time ago. At that time I was the leader of the village's police force and I had to order my men to fall back and protect our villagers while I was **in fierce combat with** Pain. After 3 weeks of nonstop

fighting, I, though heavily wounded, successfully pushed him out of the village's territory. I was sent to our central hospital with my arm almost torn out and **received special medical treatment** for weeks. After my recovery, I had to **put things back to normal**. It was a complete **anarchy**, and my home was in **ruin**. Casualties were unthinkable. I had to maintain security and find anyone who had survived the massacre. I **deployed** each and every person who had strength left to take care of women and children. It took us over a year to get **back on our feet**.

It was the most brutal and **spine-chilling** incident I have ever experienced.

In case you don't know, this story isn't real. It is an imaginary piece of story and I don't recommend you speak like this in the real test. If you are reading this line, I just want to say that: "Stand up and take a break😊"

This is the real practice

Warm-up questions:

- Do you enjoy travelling? **Track 9.1**

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⇒ Yes absolutely! Although I am an introvert and I love spending some **quality time** alone in my room writing my blog or reading a book, the idea of getting to know more people and try **exotic** cuisines actually seems very **tempting**. So whenever I have much time off work, I'll go on a **motorbike trip** for a day or so.

- What are the benefits of travelling?

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⇒ **Track 9.2:** There are a couple of good things. You get to try different specialties, experience new culture and see things you can't see if you only read some book. When you visit historical sites or museums, you can understand more about history and how the world has been **evolving**.

Topic for practice:

Describe an interesting trip

You should say:

- When you took the trip
- Where the place you visited was
- What you did during the trip

And explain why it was interesting

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Sample: Track 10

I love travelling, I mean, *who doesn't, right?* And if I have to talk about one of my most **memorable** trips, it will be the one to Xuan Hoa Military Camp on a cold day in the winter in my second year. I had lots of **fond memories** there with my college friends who I hardly meet any more. Yeah it's a **pity** but we all have jobs and other things to give our thoughts to. Well the trip was **mesmerizing** even though it was freezing riding around in motorcycle. We talked about all kinds of stuff and threw a party at our favorite place back when we were having classes there. Some of my friends even got **hammered** and during the whole return trip they just **rambled on** nonstop.

There're **millions of reasons** why this trip was so amazing. Well I have to mention our **little incident** with traffic police before we got to the camp. We're all careless and didn't pay attention to the traffic light and ... you know we crossed the red light. And of course, the whole group got pulled over and fined heavily. It was so unfortunate but it's actually **something to remember**, we still talk about that incident when we have the chance to meet up. It's just fun after all. Also, it was my last trip with my college friends before I decided to quit school. Every last thing is **special in some aspects**. It's like the **checkpoint** between my **old and new chapter of life**. I don't know about how others would feel about this, but to me, it just really means something.

Possible part 3 questions:

1. Did the generation of your parents enjoy travelling when they were your age?

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⇒ **Track 11.1:** Honestly I’m not sure. My parents never said anything about where they travelled and I didn’t ask. Also, there are no pictures or records of them visiting any places. I guess they loved travelling but they didn’t or maybe couldn’t because my mother was **expecting** my brother when she was very young, right after their wedding. Probably they wanted to spend all their time taking care of my brother.

2. Do you enjoy travelling alone or with others?

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Track 11.2: I don't like the idea of going somewhere far away alone because it is kind of scary and boring. When you go somewhere you are not familiar with, it's best to have some **companions**. A few years ago, I went on a trip to Thailand with some of my friends. On our second day in Bangkok, my wallet was stolen when we were **touring around** the street, all of my belongings were in there and I totally **freaked out**. If my friends hadn't helped me, I wouldn't have been able to come back to Vietnam.

3. What do you think of the tourism industry in your country?

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⇒ **Track 11.3:** Oh it's terrible! And I'm not even **exaggerating**! Prices of souvenirs are **prohibitive**. Service qualities are **substandard**. And worse, garbage everywhere! Like the time when I visited Vung Tau for the first time, and also the last. It took me at least 100 VNĐ to buy a shell which usually costed around 5 at any random market in Hanoi. And the beach was completely **packed** and people threw litter whenever they wanted. And the cuisines were **overrated** in comparison with its quality. I think the tourism industry in my country would never **have a future** if it continues to ignore visitors' expectations.

Language focus:

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
To be exotic (adj) /ɪg'zɒtɪk/	From or in another country	I love travelling to other countries because exotic cuisine is so tempting that I can't find even an ounce of strength to resist it.
To be tempting (adj) /'tɛm(p)tɪŋ/	Attractive to someone, even if wrong or unwise	
To evolve (v) /ɪ'vɒlv/	Develop from simple form to complicated one	You see. Cuisine isn't just food. It's an archive of how one nation evolved throughout history.
To be mesmerizing (adj) /'mɛzməraɪz/	Having strong effects on you that you can't give your attention to anything else	My trip to Asgard was pretty much the most mesmerizing one ever.
To be hammered (adj) /'haməd	Very drunk	During my stay at Thor's chamber, he invited me to a party where I got all hammered and kept rambling on how I defeated Thanos with my bare hands. After the party, I drove back to the palace and got pulled over by the royal guards.
To ramble on (v) /'ramb(ə)l/	Talk or write at length in a confused or inconsequential way	
To pull over (v)	To stop a vehicle	
Companion (n) /kəm'panjən/	A person who travels with you	My companions said we were just touring around the palace because we were invited.

To tour around somewhere (v)	To travel around a place	
To freak out (v) /fri:k/	To be surprised and frightened	The guards who stopped us really freaked out when I told them Thor was my disciple.
To exaggerate (v) /ɪg'zadzəreɪt/	To make something seems larger, better or worse than it really is	Later they found out that I was only exaggerating.
To be prohibitive (adj) /prə(u)'hɪbɪtɪv/	so high as to prevent something being done or bought	Suddenly a man approached me and gave me a bill of the party I went to. And holy shit it's freaking prohibitive.
To be substandard (adj) /sʌb'stændəd/	Below the usual or required standard	I refused to pay and got thrown into jail and my cell was just outrageously substandard because it's packed with other dudes.
To be packed (adj)	Extremely full of people	
To overrate something (v) /əʊvə'reɪt/	To exaggerate	I thought that I might have overrated their hospitality. I would never have a future if I were not allowed to have some words with Thor.
To have a future (idm)	There is a possibility of being successful in the future	

SESSION 4: PLACES

Warm-up questions:

- Do you often go to coffee places?

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⇒ **Track 12.1:** I used to. Along Chua Lang Street, there were many places that serve coffee like Urban Station, Star Bucks or The Coffee House, whose Cappuccino was just **stellar**. But I am all **occupied with** work so once in a while only during weekends when I have some time to spare, I'll go to one of those houses to enjoy a cup of Cappuccino.

- What is your favorite coffee place like?

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⇒ **Track 12.2:** It's a coffee shop called Bookworm's Coffee in Ho Chi Minh City. The design of the shop is quite antique with several shelves full of classic books. And each visitor gets to choose their own private space because tiny rooms, or "secret hideouts", are built all over the place. Also the coffee served in this coffee house is just **above reproach**.

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Topic for practice

Describe a coffee place that you visited

You should say:

- Where it is
- Why you went there
- What you ate or drank

And explain why you liked or disliked it

Note:

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Sample Track 13

I am going to talk about a **renowned** coffee house in Hanoi, Totoro, also known as Cat's Paradise.

It was located in a quiet neighborhood near a tiny lotus lake where local people usually fished in the early morning. The lake was surrounded by willows and the view was **breath-taking** in the summer. My first two years at university were filled with memories there because it only took me 5 minutes of walking to get there. I usually hung out with my friends at Totoro during weekends. The place served terrible coffee but the view was great and I could play with some cats. The owner of the house **adored** cats so much that she raised more than 10 cats of different kinds. They were very gentle and loved people petting their heads. I often ordered a random type of beverage then spent most of my time there with the cats because there were really cute.

I loved this place not because of the coffee, obviously, but I had so many memories with my friends there. We **lost touch** since graduation but I still keep many pictures of us. It's a symbol of our past friendship and it's a beautiful time of my life and I don't want to forget that. And it's hard to find another place that had such an amazing view and cats to play with in Hanoi.

Now I can't go to that coffee place because I am very busy but I would if I ever had time.

Language focus:

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
Stellar (adj) /'stɛlə/	To be outstanding	The dancer's performance was so stellar that the audience gave him a huge ovation.
To be occupied with (adj)	To be very busy with something	He was certainly occupied with shows around the world.
To be above reproach (phrase) /rɪ'prəʊtʃ/	To be perfect	Some critics even sent forth their compliments and said not only his dancing skills but also his vocals were above reproach.
To be renowned (adj) /rɪ'naʊnd/	To be famous	He was a renowned talent and millions of people knew and idolized him.
To be breath-taking (adj) /'brɛθteɪkɪŋ/	Astonishing or awe-inspiring in quality, so as to take one's breath away	One of his greatest hits "Lac troi" went super viral because of the breath-taking scenes in the MV.
To adore something (v) /ə'dɔː/	Like something very much	People could see that he really adored G-Dragon because his style resembled that of GD.
To lose touch with someone (v)	To no longer have any contact with someone	My friend lost touch with his daughter since she left home to join an organization whose members spent 24 hours a day spamming this singer's MV on YouTube.

SESSION 5: FAVORITES

Warm-up questions

- What do you like to do in your free time?

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⇒ **Track 14.1:** It depends on my mood. Sometimes I would go for a walk along the street near my apartment, sometimes a cup of ice tea in a quiet café. But most of the time, I would order a large-sized Domino Pizza with a thick layer of cheese and sit in my room playing DotA, a kind of video game.

- How long have you been doing that activity?

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⇒ **Track 14.2:** It has been a long time. I don't remember exactly when I first adopted this hobby, probably 7-8 years. Well there has been a time when I decided to quit and go find something good to do, like a part-time job or something. But I guess being a man with a job is not my thing after all.

- Are there many people who have the same hobby as yours?

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⇒ **Track 14.3:** Yes there are a lot. Young people in my country, especially high school and college students, are really into playing this game. I have many friends who are also game junkies who spend day in day out sticking their eyes to the computer screen.

Topic for practice

Describe an interest or hobby you particularly enjoy.

You should say

- What is it?
- How long have you been doing it?
- Who do you do it with?

And explain why this is important to you.

Note:

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Sample **Track 15**

Today I'm going to talk about my most loved game ever.

It's considered the King of E-sports ... well at least *that's what I think anyway...* it's Dota 2. It's kinda a complicated game and besides, I really don't recommend you play that game because if you don't possess a really good computer with extremely stable and fast Internet access, you're gonna get real angry and possibly punch through the screen. The game's all about teamwork, 5 players against 5 players until one team takes down the other's base. It's really brutal and sometimes **drives you nuts**. It's been 7-8 years since I started to adopt the hobby of playing DotA 2 while enjoying a large-sized Domino Pizza with a thick layer of cheese. I have many friends who are also **game junkies** who spend **day in day out** sticking their eyes to the computer screen and some of them are my teammates.

There are two reasons why I love playing Dota 2 whenever I have free time. First, it's one of the most challenging and **mind-hacking** games I've ever played. Just imagine a **newbie** has to try more than 100 characters just to get familiar, which would take nearly half a year if my counting was right. And I love to master such a game. Furthermore, the game is like what keeps my friends around, you know high school friends. We're all parted since graduation, everyone has their own path I guess. So we usually hang out at game arcades to play Dota and recall old memories.

That's why I love Dota 2 so much I think.

Possible part 3 questions:

1. How do people balance between hobbies and work in your country?

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⇒ **Track 16.1:** I think there is no absolute answer to this question. Each person has their own way to keep their work and pastimes balanced. Some only go fishing during weekends to relax and focus on working on other days while others read books whenever they have time to spare. It's important to work hard and still have time to **chill out** or else one would be very stressed out. Like my uncle, whose job involves mostly calculations and numbers, he always spend his weekends away with his family. Without this recreational routine, he would quit his job a while ago.

2. Do people have different hobbies based on their age or gender?

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⇒ **Track 16.2:** Yes they do. Old people tend to take part in activities that require less energy like reading while young people are attracted to challenging and sometimes adventurous ones like mountain climbing or skiing. And when it comes to gender, girls generally like something that needs patience and skillfulness like knitting. However, boys are into things like parkour. Sure there are exceptions but in most cases there are differences.

Language focus:

Words/phrases	Definition	Example of usage
To drive someone nuts (v)	To make someone crazy	My neighbor drives me nuts because they make love so loudly that I can't sleep at night.
A game junkie (np) /'dʒʌŋki/	Someone who is addicted to games	They have a son who is a game junkie. He usually spends at least 25 hours a day not moving his ass out of his chair.
A newbie (n)	Someone who is new to a particular activity	You know, I'm running out of idea how to tell a good story while each and every sentence in that story needs to contain a given word. Maybe I'm just a newbie and need to learn more.
To chill out (v)	To relax	Or maybe I'm just being stressed out. I need to chill out and call it a day.

CHAPTER 4

SELF-STUDY

Part 1 questions

TOPIC 1: CHOCOLATE

1. Do you like sweets or chocolate?
2. What's your favorite flavor?
3. How often do you eat chocolate?
4. When was the first time you ate chocolate?
5. Is chocolate popular in your country?
6. Why do people like chocolate?
7. Do you think people use chocolate differently now than in the past?
8. Is chocolate good for our health?
9. Have you ever given chocolate as a present to someone? Why?

TOPIC 2: WALKING

1. Do you like to walk?
2. Do you like to walk on your own or with others?
3. Would you say that your city is a good place for walking?
4. Do people in your country walk a lot?
5. Do you think walking is important?
6. Do you think walking in the countryside is better than walking in the city?
7. What could be done to improve the experience of walking in cities?
8. What could be done to improve the experience of walking in cities?

TOPIC 3: CELEBRITIES

1. Who is your favorite celebrity in your country?
2. How do celebrities influence their fans in your country?
3. Do you like any foreign celebrities?
4. Would you like to be a celebrity? Why?
5. Do you think we should protect famous people's privacy?

TOPIC 4: PUBLIC TRANSPORT

1. What form of transport do you prefer to use? Why?
2. How often do you take buses?
3. Can you compare the advantages of planes and trains?
4. How much time do you spend travelling on a normal day?
5. Would you ride bikes to work in the future?
6. What will become the most popular means of transport in your country?
7. Do you prefer public transport or private transport?

TOPIC 5: BAGS

1. Do you like bags?
2. What types of bags do you like?
3. Do you usually carry a bag (when you go out)?
4. Do you have different bags for different occasions (or, different purposes)?
5. What do you put in these bags?
6. What sorts of bags do women like to buy?

TOPIC 6: HATS

1. Do you like to wear hats or caps?
2. What kind of hats do you have?
3. Where do you like to buy hats?
4. Is wearing hats popular in your country?

TOPIC 7: ART

1. Do you like art?
2. Do you think art classes are necessary? (Why?)
3. How do you think art classes affect children's development?
4. What kind of paintings do people like?
5. What benefits can you get from painting as a hobby?
6. How often do you visit art galleries?
7. What kinds of things do you like to draw?
8. Is it easy to learn how to draw?

TOPIC 8: HOUSE

1. Do you live in a house or an apartment?
2. Which rooms do you like most in your house? Why?
3. Is there anything about your house that you would like to change?
4. Tell me something else about your house.

TOPIC 9: NOISE

1. Do you mind noises?
2. What types of noise do you come across in your daily life?
3. Are there any sounds that you like?
4. Where can you hear loud noise?
5. Do you think there's too much noise in modern society?
6. Are cities becoming noisier?

TOPIC 10: HOLIDAYS

1. What do you do in your holidays?
2. Do you think holidays are becoming more and more important?
3. What kind of places do you want to travel to?
4. Do you prefer travelling alone or in a group?

TOPIC 11: FLOWERS

1. Do you love flowers? Why?
2. Which/What is your favorite flower?
3. Do you think flowers are important?
4. Are flowers important in your culture? (Give examples)
5. Do people in your country ever use flowers for special occasions?
6. What are the occasions when people give or receive flowers?
7. In your country, do people (ever) give flowers as a gift?
8. When was the last time you gave flowers to someone?

TOPIC 12: PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Do you like to take photographs? (Why?)
2. Do you prefer to take photos alone or with other people? (Why?)
3. How long have you liked taking photographs?
4. How (why) did you become interested in photograph?

TOPIC 13: JOB

1. What do you do?
2. Why do you choose this job?
3. What are the advantages of having your own business rather than working for someone else?
4. What do you see yourself doing in the next 10 years?

TOPIC 14: HOMETOWN

1. Has your hometown changed much since you were a child?
2. How could your hometown be improved?
3. Are there any changes you would like to make in your hometown?

TOPIC 15: ADVERTISEMENT

1. Are there many advertisements in your country?
2. Why do you think there are so many advertisements now?
3. What are the various places where we see advertisements?
4. How do you feel about advertisements?

TOPIC 16: FOOD/COOKING

1. Is food important to you? (Why?)
2. What kinds of food do you particularly like?
3. Is there any food you don't like? (Why?)
4. What kinds of food are most popular in your country?
5. Do you like cooking? (Why?/Why not?)
6. Who usually does the cooking in your home?

TOPIC 17: NAMES

1. Does your name have any particular meaning?
2. What's the origin of your name? (or your surname)
3. Do you like your name?
4. What do your friends call you?
5. Did your family have a certain (nick) name that they called you when you were a child?
6. What names are popular to give to babies in your country?

TOPIC 18: LEISURE TIME

1. When do you have free time?
2. Do you think it's important to have leisure time?
3. Do your friends ever come to your home in their free time?
4. Compare the way people in your country relax today and the way they used to relax years ago.

TOPIC19: SPORT/EXERCISE

1. What sports do you like? (Why?)
2. What sports are most popular in your country?
3. Are boys and girls good at the same sports?
4. What sports do children prefer?
5. Do you like to do daily exercise? (Why?/Why not?)
6. What are the advantages of doing regular exercise?
7. Where do people in your country usually exercise?

TOPIC 20: SWIMMING

1. Do you like swimming?
2. How often do you swim?
3. Where do you swim in your city?
4. Is it difficult to learn how to swim?

TOPIC 21: WEATHER

1. What's the weather like today?
2. What's the weather (usually) like in your hometown?
3. What's your favourite weather? (Why?)
4. Do you like snow? (Why?)
5. Do you watch the weather forecasts?
6. Does the weather ever affect what you do?

TOPIC 22: RAIN

1. Does it rain much in your country? (Where? When?)
2. Is there any part of your country where it doesn't rain much? (Where?)
3. When (in what month/season) does it rain most in your hometown?
4. Can you remember any time when it rained particularly heavily in your hometown? (When?)
5. Does rain ever affect transportation in your hometown? (How?)

TOPIC 23: TELEVISION/RADIO

1. What kind of entertainment do you prefer, TV or radio? (Why?)
2. How are radio programs and television programs different?
3. What programs do you like to watch/listen to?
4. When do you watch TV/listen to the radio?
5. Has television/radio changed much in recent years?
6. How do you think TV/radio broadcasts in your country could be improved?

TOPIC 24: INDOOR GAMES

1. Do you play any indoor games?
2. Do you prefer to play indoor games or outdoor games?
3. What indoor games did you play when you were a child?
4. Is there any particular indoor game that you liked (when you were a child)?
5. What sorts of indoor games do children play now?

TOPIC 25: HISTORY

1. Do you like (to learn about) history?
2. What historical event do you find most interesting?
3. Do you think history is important?
4. Do you like to watch programs on TV about history?

5. How (or. from where) do you get information about history?

TOPIC 26: GOING OUT

1. Do you like going out with your friends?
2. Do you often go out with friends?
3. What do you do when you go out?
4. Where do you go when you go out?

TOPIC 27: PATIENCE

1. What do you think “patience” is?
2. Do you think patience is important?
3. Do you think being patient is an important part of being polite?
4. Would you say you are a patient person?
5. Have you ever lost your patience?

TOPIC 28: PLANS AND GOALS

1. When do you plan to start that?
2. How do you intend to achieve that?
3. When you go abroad, do you plan to live in the countryside or a big city? (Why?)

TOPIC 29: SHOPPING

1. Are there many shops near your home? (What kind?)
2. Do you like shopping? (Why? Why not?)
3. Who usually does the shopping in your home?
4. How often do you buy something in a shop?

TOPIC 30: BIRDS

1. How do you feel about birds? (Why do you feel that way?)
2. How do people in your country feel about birds?

3. Are there many birds near your home?
4. Have you seen many different kinds of birds?

Part 2 topics

Describe a person who visited your home.

You should say:

- Who the person was
- Why they visited your home
- How you spent the time with this visitor (or how you entertained this visitor)

And explain how you felt about the visit.

Describe an adventurous person who you know.

You should say:

- Who the person is
- How you know this person
- What this person does that is adventurous

And explain why you think this person likes to take risks. (or, explain how you feel about the risks this person takes)

Describe an interesting neighbor.

You should say:

- Who the person is
- How long you have known the person
- How you met him/her

And explain the reason why you think the person is interesting

Describe a famous person that you're interested in.

You should say:

- Who he or she is
- Why he or she is famous
- When you first heard about him or her

and explain why you are interested in him or her.

Describe a special meal that you would like to have.

You should say:

- What kind of meal it is
- Who you would like to eat it with
- Why it is special

and explain why you would like to eat it

Describe an interesting book that you read.

You should say:

- What it is
- When you read it
- What the book is about

and explain why you think it is interesting.

Describe an occasion that you spent time with a child.

You should say:

- When it was
- Who you spent time with
- What you did

And explain whether you liked it

Describe an enjoyable day that you spent in the countryside.

You should say:

- Where it was
- When it was
- What you did

and explain why it was enjoyable.

Describe an international company that you would like to work for.

You should say:

- What the company is called
- How did you know this company
- What business this company does

and explain why you want to work for this company

Describe a difficult activity that you took part in.

You should say:

- When it was
- What the activity was
- Who you joined with

and explain why it was difficult.

Describe an interesting house or apartment that you visited.

You should say:

- Where it was
- When you visited
- Why you visited

and explain why you think it was interesting

Describe a place where you learned about a new culture.

You should say:

- What the place was
- Why you went there
- What you learned

and explain why you enjoyed learning about this culture.

Describe a time when you saw a wild animal.

You should say:

- What animal it was
- Where you saw it
- What happened when you saw it

And explain why you thought it was interesting.

Describe a time when you forgot an appointment.

You should say:

- When the appointment was
- Who you should have met
- Where it was

and explain why you forgot it.

Describe an occasion when you experienced a good service in a store or in a restaurant.

You should say:

- When it happened
- Where it happened
- What the service was

and explain why you think it was a good service

Describe an important event in history.

You should say:

- What it was
- When and where it happened
- Who took part in the event

And explain why you think it was important

Describe a plan in your life that has nothing to do with your work or study.

You should say:

- What it is
- When you have the plan
- Who you have told the plan to

And explain why you want to do this.

Describe a quiet place.

You should say:

- Where it is
- How often you visit there
- What you do there

And explain the reason why you like or dislike the place.

Describe a practical skill that you have (such as driving a car, speaking a foreign language, cooking etc).

You should say:

- What this skill is
- Who taught you this skill; (how and when you learned it)
- how long you learned this skill

and explain how this skill is useful to you.

Describe a painting or work of art that you have seen.

You should say:

- When you saw this work of art
- Where you saw it
- What it looked like

and explain your impression of it.

Part 3 questions

1. Shopping

Nowadays, do people prefer to shop in big stores or in small stores?

When customers have difficulties, who would they ask for help in store?

How can customers be helped?

What should people do when they get bad services?

What are the qualities of a good service?

2. Remembering things

What should people do to help them remember things?

In which ways people can remember their ancestors?

If we can remember our ancestors, what can we learn from them?

3. Mobile phones

Are using the mobile phone much good for people?

What are the differences in the purposes when old and young people use their mobile phones?

4. Hobbies

Should young people participate in dangerous activities such as mountain climbing?

Why are there some people who like joining dangerous activities?

Is it harmful to spend too much time on a hobby?

Do you think it's important for people to have hobbies?

Can hobbies have any negative effects?

5. Stress

Do you think children in your country are facing too much stress at school?

Is it better to teach children in class or by playing outside?

Do children in your country need to have more holidays?

Why do parents want their children to learn as much as possible?

What are the advantages of having many tasks to do at the same times?

How does the time affect your work process?

How can employers reward their staff for their extra hours working?

How does the extra hours working affect family life?

6. Celebrities

In your opinion, what kinds of people can become famous?

Should celebrities let their private lives be known?

How do you think people will become famous in the future?

Do you think celebrities should appear in advertisements?

What are the good things about being famous?

Why do you think ordinary people are interested in the lives of famous people?

7. Science

Why do children tend to dislike learning science subjects?

Are there any ways to encourage people to learn science subjects?

Do you think men and women view technological devices differently?

Why do you think people spend much money on buying the latest devices?

What modern technological devices are most popular in your country?

8. Weather

Are there any differences in the weather in different parts of Vietnam?

Do you think that weather affects how we feel?

Is there anything we can do to prepare for bad weather?

Why do people live in places where the weather can sometimes be bad?

9. The countryside & cities

How has the countryside changed now compared to the past?

Why do we have to protect the countryside?

Do you think people will want to live in the countryside in the future?

Why do some people like to live in the city?

10. Café & restaurant

What are the differences between a café and a restaurant?

What type of people prefer to go to cafés?

Is a café a great place to meet friends?

Are there any problems if people spend much time at cafés?

11. Reading

What are the differences between reading books and listening to audio books?

Is reading different between now and the past?

Do you believe everything you read on newspaper?

Do you think physical libraries will be replaced by online libraries in the future?

Why do people like reading bad news?

12. Eating habits

How have eating habits of people in your country changed now compared to the past?

How can children be taught about healthy eating habits?

Is educating children about healthy eating habits the responsibility of parents or schools?

How may eating habits change in the future?

Final words

Should you have any questions regarding the content of this book and/or any materials related to IELTS preparation, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: toanzim@gmail.com or send me a message on Facebook:

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