

FROM THE MASTERS OF IELTS

**HOT!**

340 PAGES

**179**

**IELTS SPEAKING PART 2**

**BAND 8+**

**SAMPLES**

**ZIM** School of  
English and Test  
Preparation



ZIM School of English and  
Test Preparation

# 179 IELTS Speaking Part 2

## Band 8 Samples

### Mục lục

1. Describe your favorite season of the year.....	1
2. Describe a public place that you think needs improvements.....	4
3. Describe a city or country you want to live the most in the future.....	7
4. Describe something you learned in a place/from a person.....	10
5. Describe an occasion where you received a good service from a company or shop.....	13
6. Describe a toy that you received when you were a child.....	15
7. Describe a famous person that you are interested in.....	17
8. Describe a photo you have taken.....	19
9. Describe an interesting event in your school.....	22
10. Describe a situation where you have to be polite.....	24
11. Describe a visitor in your home.....	25
12. Describe a place in your city you want to go to.....	26
13. Describe an important river/lake in your country.....	28
14. Describe a person you know.....	30
15. Describe an impressive story you heard from other people.....	32
16. Describe a recent development in your city.....	34
17. Describe an unforgettable dinner.....	35
18. Describe a historical era you are interested in.....	37
19. Describe a special day out (A day out which does not cost too much).....	39
20. Describe a sports person you admire.....	41
21. Describe an experience where you were late for an event.....	43
22. Describe a piece of technology you like using except computers.....	45
23. Describe something special that you saved money to buy.....	48
24. Describe a holiday you would like to take in the future.....	50
25. Describe someone who is a good parent.....	52
26. Describe a rule at your school that you agree or disagree with.....	53
27. Describe an achievement that you are proud of.....	54
28. Describe a car journey you went on.....	56
29. Describe something you bought recently that made you happy.....	57

30. Describe a dream house or apartment you want to live in. ....	58
31. Describe an activity you do to keep fit. ....	59
32. Describe a science subject you learned in your school.....	60
33. Describe a difficult decision that you once made .....	61
34. Describe a garden/park you have visited .....	62
35. Describe an occasion where somebody gave you positive suggestions. ....	63
36. Describe an occasion when you helped a person. ....	64
37. Describe a traditional product in your country.....	65
38. Describe a leisure facility (cinema, theater, sports center) you would like to have in your home town.....	66
39. Describe a place people can listen to music. (such as a theatre or a music hall) .....	68
40. Describe a piece of furniture you like. (in your home) .....	69
41. Describe an important letter you received.....	71
42. Describe an exciting book you have read.....	72
43. Describe an interesting person from another country.....	73
44. Describe a businessman that you admire. ....	74
45. Describe an experience that you taught a friend or a relative. ....	75
46. Describe an interesting place that few tourists visit. ....	76
47. Describe something you bought according to an advertisement you saw. ....	77
48. Describe a time you felt happy that you used your cellphone.....	78
49. Describe a person who knows a lot/is knowledgeable.....	79
50. Describe an advertisement you have seen recently.....	80
51. Describe a TV program.....	81
52. Describe something you enjoy doing with an old person in your family .....	83
53. Describe a situation when you had to be polite .....	85
54. Describe a time when someone visited your home.....	87
55. Describe an unusual dinner that you had .....	91
56. Describe an important event that you celebrated .....	94
57. Describe an important skill which cannot be learned at school.....	96
58. Describe a couple you know who have a happy marriage .....	98
59. Describe a helpful person at work or school.....	100
60. Describe a new friend you`ve made recently .....	102
61. Describe a polite person you met.....	104
62. Describe a family member who has had an important influence on you .....	106
63. Describe an invention that changed people`s lives.....	108

64. Describe your favourite piece of clothing .....	110
66. Describe a city or town you have been to.....	114
67. Describe a place you visited .....	116
68. Describe a café you like or dislike .....	118
69. Describe a lesson that you enjoyed .....	120
70. Describe a leisure activity near or on the sea .....	122
71. Describe a TV program you enjoy .....	124
72. Describe a service from a company or shop .....	126
73. Describe an interesting conversation you had with someone .....	128
74. Describe a change in your life.....	130
75. Describe a time when you worked in a team.....	132
76. Describe a piece of good news you heard.....	134
77. Describe a trip you took by bike.....	136
78. Describe a decision that you disagreed with .....	138
79. Describe an enjoyable experience you had in the countryside.....	140
80. Describe a type of weather you like .....	142
81. Describe an interesting talk or speech you heard.....	144
82. Describe an experience when you spent time with a child.....	146
83. Describe a piece of artwork that you have seen before.....	148
84. Describe a useful website that you often visit. ....	150
85. Describe one of your best friends.....	152
86. Describe a street you know well .....	155
87. Describe a time when you saw an interesting animal .....	157
88. Describe a famous person that you are interested in .....	160
89. Describe an interesting neighbour you know. ....	162
90. Describe a family member that made you proud.....	164
91. Describe two people from the same family .....	166
92. Describe an important plant in your country .....	168
93. Describe a foreign food you would like to try. ....	170
94. Describe a crowded place .....	172
95. Describe a popular place .....	173
96. Describe a newly-opened shop .....	175
97. Describe a place where you want to work .....	177
98. Describe a time that you arrived early .....	178
99. Describe an interesting event .....	179

100. Describe a plan .....	181
101. Describe a special trip in the near future .....	183
102. Describe a kind of music or a song.....	185
103. Describe a time when you were not allowed to use your cell phone.....	187
104. Describe a TV series you enjoy watching.....	189
105. Describe an interesting advertisement.....	191
106. Describe someone you admire who is much older than you .....	193
107. Describe a person who has apologized to you.....	195
108. Describe a dinner you enjoyed with your friends.....	197
109. Describe a time when you had to work hard to achieve a goal.....	199
110. Describe a holiday or vacation you have been on.....	201
111. Describe a happy family event that you remember well.....	203
112. Describe a long journey you travelled by car .....	205
113. Describe a short trip that was special to you .....	207
114. Describe an environment law .....	209
115. Describe a recent happy event.....	211
116. Describe a long walk you had .....	213
117. Describe a situation when someone made noise.....	215
118. Describe a difficult choice that you made.....	217
119. Describe what you would do if you were given a day off .....	218
120. Describe an ideal house .....	220
121. Describe a book you liked to read in your childhood .....	222
122. Describe a success in your life.....	224
123. Describe a time when you were looking at the sky .....	226
124. Describe an article you read about healthy life.....	228
125. Describe a new skill you would like to learn.....	230
126. Describe one activity stopped by the weather .....	232
127. Describe a person who gave a clever solution to a problem.....	234
128. Describe a time when you had a problem with a piece of equipment .....	236
129. Describe an outdoor meal or picnic that you had.....	237
130. Describe a project or a piece of work you did together with someone.....	238
131. Describe an important stage of your life .....	240
132. Describe an occasion that someone or something made noise.....	242
133. Describe something you do to keep healthy. ....	244
134. Describe what you would do if you had a day off.....	245

135. Talk about something that makes you excited.....	246
136. Describe an experience that you had when you left home .....	247
137. Describe a positive change that you made to your life. ....	249
138. Describe a person you know who is beautiful or handsome.....	251
139. Describe an old friend you enjoy talking with.....	253
140. Describe a place where people go to listen to music.....	256
141. Describe a shop that has opened in your hometown .....	258
142. Describe a movie you would like to watch again.....	260
142. Describe a special cake you had.....	261
143. Describe a subject you would like to study that you never had the opportunity to study. .....	263
144. Describe a situation where you have to be polite .....	264
145. Describe a memorable story told by someone.....	267
146. Describe an art and craft activity you did at school.....	269
147. Describe a visitor in your home.....	271
148. Describe a historical period that you are interested in.....	274
149. Describe an unusual meal you had .....	276
150. Describe your favorite season of the year .....	279
151. Describe something you learned in a place or from someone .....	282
152. Describe an interesting song you like .....	284
153. Describe a recent change in your life.....	285
154. Describe a person who has apologized to you.....	287
155. Describe a leader or politician who you admire.....	289
156. Describe a person who does well in work.....	291
157. Describe an adventurous person who you know. ....	292
158. Describe a famous athlete you know.....	293
159. Describe something you enjoy doing with an old person in your family .....	295
160. Describe an interesting person from another country .....	297
161. Describe a time when someone helped you.....	299
162. Describe a shopping street you would like to go.....	300
163. Describe a city or country you most want to live in the future .....	302
164. Describe a tall building in your hometown you like or dislike.....	304
165. Describe an important river/ area of water in your country .....	305
166. Describe a place where you can read and write. ....	308
167. Describe a place where you often visit with your friends or family .....	309

168. Describe a public place that you think need improvements .....	311
169. Describe a good place where people go to swim. ....	314
170. Describe a book that you would like to read again. ....	315
171. An electronic machine you want to buy .....	317
172. Describe a toy that you received when you were a child .....	318
173. Describe a piece of technology (not computer–related) you like to use .....	320
174. Describe something you made yourself. ....	322
175. Describe a film that you did not enjoy. ....	323
176. Describe your favorite flower. ....	326
177. Describe an advertisement that you saw or heard or liked .....	327
178. Describe an important letter you received .....	329
179. Describe a comedy TV series that you watch. ....	331



## 1. Describe your favorite season of the year.

You should say:

- What the weather is like.
- Why you like this season.
- What activities you usually do during this season.
- How different kinds of weather in this season affect people.

### Sample

Today, I am going to tell you about my favourite season. Honestly, I love all the seasons but I think my favourite is spring. Usually, it starts at the end of December in our country and lasts till the middle of March.

The weather in Vietnam is the best during spring because you will not **suffer from** the **excessive** heat of summer or the freezing wind of winter. The temperature is **tolerable** both day and night. One of the best things about spring is that, during this poetic season, nature displays itself in beautiful green and flowers are noticed everywhere. Fruit trees, such as cherry and apricot trees are **in full blossom**, and colourful flowers such as daffodils and marigolds bloom in parks and gardens. The sounds of spring are wonderful too. A typical spring day will begin when some birds start their **morning chorus** as they look for a mate. We also celebrate Tet, one of the most anticipated holidays by the Vietnamese people. This is an occasion for **pilgrimages**, family reunions and many festivals. Parties full of delicious traditional dishes are the main theme for the whole holiday of Tet.

I am of the opinion that different kinds of weather can affect people's health. Even among those **in the prime of** health, an excessively hot or cold day can lead to illness or injury, let alone the elderly, who can be more **susceptible** to extreme weather conditions. Weather can also make a huge impact on people's lives. Obviously, the weather **dictates** what you are going to wear for the day, often depending on the time of year. Also, winter snow storms in Western countries can cancel school or make your morning commute a **hassle**.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **suffer from:** be badly affected by
- **excessive:** greater than what seems reasonable or appropriate
- **tolerable:** moderate, acceptable
- **in full blossom:** with the flowers fully open
- **morning chorus:** early morning bird songs
- **pilgrimage:** a journey to a holy place for religious reasons
- **in the prime of:** in the best, most successful, most productive stage
- **susceptible:** very likely to be influenced, harmed or affected
- **dictate:** decide, determine
- **hassle:** irritating inconvenience

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do you think weather has an influence on people's mood?**

Well definitely yes. Most people have a big preference for mild or windy weather due to the fact that it is the most favorable time to go out and do something outdoors. However, when the weather is a little rainy and humid, people have a tendency to stay at home and watch a movie or something like that.

- **Do you like to go outside when winter comes?**

Well, I have to admit that I hate having to leave the house in the winter because there's often a thick fog every morning and we sometimes get bitterly cold winds as well. Such things prevent me from going to work and study.

- **How you feel about the climate in recent years?**

Well, that is an intriguing question. From my personal perspective, the climate on Earth is becoming more and more changeable, which unfortunately results from climate change. As you can see, normally, in summer there would be no rainfall at all in nearly 3 or 4 months, but nowadays, in that particular season, the rain can come any time, which even contrasts the weather forecast.

- **What can we do to stop greenhouse effect?**

There are several ways that can put an end to greenhouse effect. Firstly, industrial countries like the US and China need to have a consensus on the amount of Co2 emissions released into the air every year. Therefore, it can help reduce such bad effects on the air people breathe in every day. Another possible solution is to cut down on the number of vehicles using fossil fuels on a global scale. Instead, people should be encouraged to use public transport.

- **What are the possible results if temperature continues going up?**

If that continues to happen, it is obvious that people especially those from low-income households cannot stand the boiling hot weather and then spend more money installing costly air-conditioning systems. This would reduce the amount of budget that can be spent on other educational and recreational activities

## 2. Describe a public place that you think needs improvements.

You should say:

- What the place is.
- When you visit the place.
- What do you like and dislike about the public place

### Sample

I would like to talk about a public place that I think needs improvement. Among the most popular public places where people can **socialise** and hang out with each other is Dam Sen, an amusement park in Ho Chi Minh city, considered a green **oasis** located in District 11.

Last month, I decided to take my nieces and nephews there. The park is comprised of many areas including a **roller coaster** which, to my surprise, the children **eagerly** rode. Time just flew by with the kids.

We liked everything about the park except the fact that people were throwing empty water bottles here and there. I felt there should be more bins. Well, to tell the truth, the park is rather old. Sometimes my parents used to take me there in my childhood. However, the park was a lot different from what I could remember. Some facilities at its far end were covered in moss and overgrown weeds. The **crumbling** walls gave the impression that the area had been **abandoned for ages**. One day, to our **terror**, we found some used needles laying **amidst** the **shabby greenery**, **invisible** and able to **pierce** the common light-weight shoes the children wear.

I would say that the city authority should encourage local people or voluntary groups to tidy up the park and hire more care-takers to make it a safer and more attractive playground for children. Also, a certain amount of money is needed to install new restrooms and other safety-oriented upgrades like street lighting or warning signs.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **socialise**: to meet and spend time with people in a friendly way
- **oasis**: an area in the desert where there is water and where plants grow
- **roller coaster**: a track at a fairground that goes up and down very steep slopes and that people ride on in a small train for fun and excitement

- **eagerly**: in a way that shows great interest and excitement
- **crumble**: break something into very small pieces
- **abandon**: leave somebody with no intention of returning
- **for ages**: for a long time
- **terror**: extreme fear
- **amidst**: among
- **shabby**: in poor condition
- **greenery**: green leaves and plants
- **invisible**: cannot be seen
- **pierce**: go through

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Are there many public places in Vietnam?**

I guess there's many public facilities in my country where people can enjoy themselves without paying any fees. In HCM city alone, we can find many parks and public libraries which serve the local people for free. I guess there is a budget from the government for this kind of thing, so let's enjoy the free services we have.

- **Do you like to exercise in the public places, such as parks?**

I would say yes; since I am living in the city, parks are seemingly the only place where I can truly be a part of nature. In fact I have this very healthy habit of going jogging in the park every morning at 5:30.

- **Do older people or younger people prefer exercising in the public place?**

I believe older people like going to the park more than younger people. While old people may consider parks as a good place to do some basic physical activity like going jogging or doing tai-chi, I think the young see it differently. Being relatively stronger and more flexible, gyms are a better option for young people. In fact, virtually none of my friends go to the park to exercise.

- **What measures should governments and individuals take to keep public places clean?**

Among many available solutions, I believe the change in people's awareness would play a key role in improving the cleanliness of public areas. For that reason, it is necessary for the government to carry out educational campaigns to encourage people to behave appropriately, such as putting

garbage in the right place, or even organizing events where people gather to pick up litter in public parks or gardens.

### 3. Describe a city or country you want to live the most in the future.

You should say:

- What city it is.
- Where it is located.
- Why you like it.

#### Sample

I would like to tell you about Tokyo, the city I want to live in the most in the future. It is the capital city of Japan and is the most populous **metropolitan** area in the world.

The most important reason I wish to **settle down** in Tokyo is the **co-existence** of modern and traditional values. It's the kind of city where the red gates of a centuries-old Shinto **shrine** may well be found just next door to a glass skyscraper **showcasing** the finest 21st century technology. Or where a quiet green lane lined with wooden low-rise houses and an old school tofu shop might sit just **a short stroll from** a neon-lit square packed with **flickering** billboards and rainbow-bright street fashion.

The **hectic** life in Tokyo is also an **irresistible** attraction for young people. Tokyo's railway system seems like it was designed to win world records. It's rare to find a location in the metropolitan area that can't be reached with a train ride and a short walk. It is also common knowledge that you could spend hours **drooling** over the **elaborate** pastries and picture-perfect sushi rolls in a department store.

I feel that the city is moving toward the future. I believe Tokyo will become a city that is full of surprises.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **metropolitan:** connected with a large or capital city
- **settle down:** start to have a quieter way of life
- **co-existence:** the state of being together in the same place at the same time
- **shrine:** a place where people come to worship
- **showcase:** present
- **a short stroll from:** not far from

- **flicker:** keep going on and off as it shines or burns
- **hectic:** full of activity
- **irresistible:** cannot be stopped or resisted
- **drool:** let saliva come out of your mouth
- **elaborate:** carefully prepared

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do you like to live alone or share a room with others?**

I prefer to live on my own. It offers me a sense of freedom to do whatever I like without affecting or being affected by others. Sharing a room with a mate may be more fun as you have someone to talk to, but disagreements and conflicts occurring from daily interactions may be inevitable.

- **What are the advantages and the disadvantages of living alone?**

Well living somewhere on your own has some certain pros and cons, I believe. Like, our sense of independence can improve when we have no one to rely on but ourselves. It's the main benefit of living alone. However, it would be tedious and maybe lonely when we have to sleep alone and do household chores without anybody's help.

- **What are the advantages of working abroad?**

There are numerous benefits I can think of. Firstly, people have a great chance to improve their use of a foreign language. Working in countries like England or the US, for example helps them practice their English on a daily basis, which eventually results in a better level of confidence and activeness in their English communication skills. Also, people have ample chance to broaden their horizons by learning about the progress of other countries, such as management systems or technological advancements, right in their workplace, which not only provides them with knowledge but gives them a chance to accumulate a lot of good skills and experience.

- **What are the disadvantages of living in a foreign country?**

There are many but I would like to focus on two that I believe are the biggest. One of the drawbacks relates to culture shock. You know, differences in working manner or working culture may result in employees' reluctance in processing their tasks, not to mention the difficulties in understanding others with a foreign language. Secondly, working in a foreign country can also be a challenge of one's independence. In fact, a number of people have not been able to stay in a foreign country for the long term just because they cannot suffer the loneliness.

- **Would you like to live in a developed city with a high salary, but with polluted air?**



To be honest, I am not willing to live and work in conditions where there is such imbalance. It is because the environment can directly affect my ability to work as efficient as I can. Moreover, money can be earned but the harmful consequences for one's health caused by pollution cannot be compensated. Needless to say, without health, it is hard for me to enjoy my life even when I am living in a developed country and can earn plenty of money.

#### 4. Describe something you learned in a place/from a person.

You should say:

- What you learned.
- When this happened.
- Where it was/ Who taught you.
- How difficult it was to learn.

#### Sample

I am so lucky to have the chance to learn so many things from the people around me; the list of things I have learnt would be a very long one. I would like to **emphasise** one thing that I learned from a middle-aged woman in my neighborhood, and that is the pleasure of **voluntary** activities.

We call her Ms. Lan. She was born and grew up during one of the most **turbulent** periods in Vietnamese modern history. Now, in her late 50s, she became interested in trying to make a difference – working for her own volunteer organization.

She has been running a group of **dedicated, compassionate** young people who **are all committed to** making a positive difference to the lives of **senior citizens in nursing homes** around the town. “Spending time with the elderly is very important, they don’t always have relatives to visit them so I try to fill that gap and spend a bit of time with them. I have a **rapport** with elderly people, I’m a patient person and I like to sit down and talk to them,” she once told us.

During my working under her guidance, I have learnt about the benefits of working as a volunteer. If you have ever volunteered, you may have noticed that you felt fantastic afterward. Community service can help you gain confidence by giving the chance to try something new and build a real sense of **achievement**. Besides, volunteering can help you meet different kinds of people and make new friends.

Generally speaking, volunteering can have a real and valuable positive affect on people, communities and society. Besides, I believe that we can learn much about life from those who have seen it almost to the end.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **emphasise:** give special importance to
- **voluntary:** done willingly
- **turbulent:** full of sudden change and confusion
- **dedicated to:** working hard at
- **compassionate:** feeling or showing sympathy for people who are suffering
- **be committed to:** willing to work hard and give your time and energy to
- **senior citizen:** the aged
- **nursing home:** a public or private residential facility providing a high level of long-term personal or nursing care for the elderly
- **rapprochement:** a friendly relationship
- **achievement:** a thing that somebody has done successfully

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **How to help old people to learn?**

I would admit that at the very aging state of our life, old people are resistant to absorbing new knowledge. However, if we know how to deliver the information more slowly and more frequently, I mean repetitively, they can be able to learn some new things. For example, my uncle, who is aged 54, still can learn how to use the computer, but at a much slower speed compared to youngsters.

- **Do people in your country like to take online courses?**

Well, I think it really depends on where they live. If they are in big cities like Saigon or Hanoi, then they prefer offline classes which are nearer to their place of residence. But for those who reside in rural areas, they have to resort to online courses since they are the cheaper way of learning compared to relocating to major cities to learn.

- **What kinds of teaching methods are suitable for old people?**

As I was saying, the solution to teaching old learners is to reduce the pace of teaching and learning as well as increase the frequency of information's shown to them in the lectures.

- **Do you like to teach other people?**

To be honest, talking to and sharing my experience with others is just my cup of tea. I am very

willing to do it whenever someone asks me for advice. However, standing on the stage and imparting knowledge like a professional lecturer is something that I am not really into, you know. I mean I can't stand talking in front of so many people, a small audience is ok.

- **Is self-study the most effective way of learning?**

I don't think so, to be honest. Self-instruction is an extremely crucial skill you might want to possess, but studying only by yourself, especially at the very first stages, is not a wise choice. Personally, I think the best way is to have someone to guide and show you how things work rather than figuring it all out by yourself, which can be very time-consuming

### 5. Describe an occasion where you received a good service from a company or shop

You should say:

- What the service was.
- When and where it happened.
- Whom you were with.
- How you felt about it.
- Explain why you think it was good service.

#### Sample

I am going to talk about how satisfied I was when receiving good service from a music shop a couple of months ago.

One day, after watching a really **motivational** concert, I decided to start learning how to play the guitar. As I was walking along one of the main shopping streets in the city centre to look for a music shop, a large window displaying all sorts of **musical instruments** caught my eye. I decided to go in and have a look around.

A young good-looking shop assistant appeared and greeted me with a **glowing** smile. After **exchanging pleasantries**, I explained to the assistant that I had never played the guitar before in my life and that I wondered what the differences were between the various acoustic guitars on show. He talked to me about the different **makes** and models, whether they were factory or hand made, the woods and **varnishes** used, the variation in sound quality and, of course, the price range. Though I was a bit **overwhelmed** by what he said as a non-musician, I highly appreciated his attitude.

To tell the truth, it is difficult to find very smart and efficient customer service nowadays. I was quite satisfied with the service the young man provided, he was obviously well-trained, and he was patient enough to fully understand what my problem was and used his professional skills to deal with it. Besides, he was very proficient in acoustic guitar playing, and seemed **reliable** to me.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **motivational:** making somebody want to do something
- **musical instrument:** an object used for producing musical sounds
- **glowing:** giving enthusiastic praise
- **exchange pleasantries:** talk to each other politely about unimportant things
- **make:** a product made by a particular company
- **varnish:** a clear sticky liquid used for covering wood or other surfaces
- **overwhelm:** affect someone's emotions in a very powerful way
- **reliable:** that can be trusted to do something well

## 6. Describe a toy that you received when you were a child.

You should say:

- What the toy was.
- Who gave it to you.
- How you used it.
- An explanation of how you felt when you got this toy.

### Sample

Well, the first **sentimental item** that came to mind when I saw this topic was the **stuffed animal** named Marsupilami. This special toy was a birthday present. I can't remember exactly how old I was, but I was probably about 5 or 6. This toy was important to me because I **longed for** it and it was a gift from my parents.

The toy was **identical to** the **character** in the cartoon I had watched. Therefore, I felt as if he had come from the movie. Marsupilami was a black-spotted yellow monkey-like **creature** with dog-like ears. The animals were **characterized** by an **incredibly** long, strong and flexible tail, used for almost any task.

As a kid, this was a fascinating and exciting toy for me. In the beginning, I did not allow any of my cousins and friends to touch Marsupilami. Marsupilami used to sit proudly on my bed each and every day, and every night he "slept" next to my pillow.

Thanks to the toy, I experienced a happy childhood. As the saying goes, "Teddy bears don't need hearts as they are already stuffed with love." This is also true for my beloved Marsupilami.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **sentimental item:** the object whose value derives from personal or emotional associations rather than material worth
- **stuffed animal:** a toy with an outer fabric sewn from a textile and then stuffed with a flexible material
- **long for:** want very much
- **identical:** exactly the same

- **character:** a person or an animal in a book, play or film/movie
- **creature:** a living thing
- **characterize:** be typical of
- **incredibly:** in a way that is very difficult to believe

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Why do children like to have toys in their lives?**

I think toys are the instruments that allow them to discover the world they live in, which is precisely why they interact with their surroundings through toys. Plus, toys provide plenty of enjoyment and happiness, both of which help build their skills. For example, toys promote children's cognitive development by stimulating their concentration and memory skills and giving them the ability to solve problems creatively, which is key to their future autonomy.

- **Do children like to play with toys or computer games nowadays?**

I think children nowadays prefer electronic games to toys. Electronic games with audio effects engage children for long hours, and most children are not allowed outside to play without supervision, which is the main reason they choose computers or other electronic games to fulfill their gaming spirit. Also, computer games give scores and levels to motivate children to play more and elevate to higher levels in the game.

- **What can parents do if they can't afford a toy for their kids?**

I think it is better to stand firm and don't give in to a child's pestering. This is because latest toys can overstretch the family budget and many parents might feel under pressure to meet their children's demands. Therefore, cost is a consideration for most parents, and so is keeping limitations on how much they treat their children.

- **Do girls and boys like the same toys?**

No, they don't. In fact, boys tend to like "wheeled toys", such as a wagon, or trucks or cars, and play with them in a masculine fashion, while girls have a preference for "plush toys" like Barbie dolls and play with them in a feminine way.

- **What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of having too many toys at home?**

There are many advantages for children who have a lot of toys, but there are also some disadvantages. As for the advantages, children can develop visual sense and basic math skills. However, on the other hand, having too many toys can stop the development of their creativity, and they may not bother to play outside or engage in much physical activity.



## 7. Describe a famous person that you are interested in

You should say:

- Who this person is.
- How you know about this person.
- What this person is famous for.
- Why you are interested in this person.

### Sample

A famous person who I am really interested in is definitely My Tam. She is the best pop singer in Viet Nam who **embarked on** her singing career in 1999. The Da Nang-born singer has recently become Vietnam's first-ever artist to be listed on Billboard's World Albums chart, after releasing her ninth studio album 'Tam 9'.

My Tam is my biggest idol because she is a great singer with beautiful voice. Some years ago, I caught a glimpse of her on TV and was immediately **hooked** by her **outstanding** performance. I have become her loyal fan since then. I really like the way she sings and the way she expresses the feeling of the song. To my **admiration**, she has always worked seriously to give high quality music products.

My Tam is beloved for her good personality too. She is known to all her fans for her **gregariousness** and sense of humour. Besides, she has also **devoted her time to** organizing free concerts for univeristy students nationwide. Together with her fans and friends, she has been doing a lot of **charity** activities silently to help the poor, the sick and the homeless people.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **embark on:** start
- **hooked:** enjoying very much
- **outstanding:** extremely good; excellent
- **admiration:** a feeling of respect and liking
- **gregariousness:** the quality of liking to be with other people

- **devote to:** to give an amount of time, attention, etc. to something
- **charity:** an organization for helping people in need

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **What are the qualities of being popular?**

From my perspective, modesty is the most important quality of being popular. If we fail to stay modest when we become increasingly well-known, we may face a lot of troubles and scandals. Like, if sometimes we are too proud of our performance, it is very likely that we will get mocked or made fun of by the public and this will also attract more anti-fans.

- **Do you know any popular star who really likes helping other people?**

Angelina Jolie is the first one I think of when talking about a very helpful celebrity. You know, she and her husband adopted, like, 5 or 6 children from all over the world. She not only wants to give those poor kids a happy family but also to show her objection against the racism because some of the kids are European, Asian and even African

- **Do you think children should imitate their idols?**

Well it is good for children to imitate their idols' positive habits like playing sports or some musical instrument. Some celebrities also have very nice personalities so it doesn't hurt, as long as their parents are often at their side to prevent them from being affected by those famous people. I mean, if children are aware of their idols' negative habits like smoking or swearing and stay away from them, it will be fine.

- **What influences do popular stars have on teenagers?**

Popular stars are usually idols of a lot of teenage children so they are very likely to imitate their idols words or behavior. So if these stars behave in an ill-mannered way, it may negatively affect teenagers' behavior and they may want to do the same. By contrast, if those well-known figures stay modest and nice to people, so may the teenagers.

## 8. Describe a photo you have taken

You should say:

- Where you took it.
- When you took the photo.
- What/who is in the photo.
- How you felt about the photo.

### Sample

I am going to talk about a photo that I took some years ago when my family went on holiday in Phan Thiet beach. The picture **captured** the memory of a very happy family. This is a priceless **possession** to me and I would like to keep it with me for the rest of my life.

I have seen it thousands times and still I look at it with an **indescribable delight**. In the picture, everyone was smiling **cheerfully**. My father's eyes were **sparkling** and the corners of his eyes **crinkled**. To tell the truth, it was very rare to see my father's smile as he always kept a serious **facial expression**. Needless to say, my mother was standing next to him with warm happiness glowing in her face. My younger brothers and sisters were not really **photogenic** because they were bursting out laughing for a reason I could not remember clearly.

In the back ground, the sun looked like it was gradually **receding** into the waters below. The sky consisted of **an assortment of** shades, a blend of reds, oranges and yellows. The water below was **mirroring** this effect. The scene was beautiful.

I have to admit that I know very little about the **technical** aspects of camera and to be honest I take photos from my own preference rather than maintaining aspects a professional photographer would do. Though the photo was not professionally shot, it is still the most treasured photo I could have.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **capture:** catch
- **possession:** something that you own
- **indescribable:** so extreme or unusual it is almost impossible to describe
- **delight:** a feeling of great pleasure

- **cheerfully:** in a way that shows you are happy
- **sparkle:** shine brightly
- **crinkle:** form a lot of thin folds or lines
- **facial expression:** a gesture executed with the facial muscles
- **photogenic:** looking attractive in photographs
- **recede:** move gradually away from
- **an assortment of:** a variety of
- **mirror:** show the image of
- **technical:** connected with the practical use of machinery

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do you like taking photos?**

Well, if you asked me this question ten years ago, it would have been a big YES. However, it is now not really my cup of tea anymore. The reason is that as I've grown older, I have felt like I don't want to expose myself to the camera and the public. I really hate when other people judge my appearance through my pictures and underestimate me because of that.

- **Why do some people like taking photos, some don't?**

For those fond of taking pictures and crazy about it, I believe the major cause is their desire to become well-known. That is totally true when Facebook and other social networking sites have been enjoying such a boom in popularity over the past few years, which I think reinforces this trend a lot. In terms of those detesting this activity, I suppose that they have a similar feeling of annoyance and irritation when we have to stand still and adjust our facial expressions in order to have such perfect pictures.

- **Do you like taking photos with strangers?**

Definitely not, it stems from my belief that strangers at times are not safe or friendly. Moreover, taking a picture with someone that I don't know seems to be quite strange.

- **What would you say when you see an undesirable picture?**

Although I don't care much about photography or art, I do have a sense of frustration whenever I see something that is imperfect. So, in the case that I see an unsatisfactory picture, I would certainly delete it and take a new one.

- **What kind of picture would you like to hang in your bedroom?**

Well, my bedroom is vitally important to me because that is the place I have a rest after intensive working hours. Therefore, I would like to hang several magnificent nature photos including panoramic shots of mountains dimly looming in the thin veil of morning fog, which makes me feel at peace and then fall asleep easily.

## 9. Describe an interesting event in your school

You should say:

- What the event was.
- When the event was.
- Why it was interesting.
- How you felt about it.

### Sample

An enjoyable event I would like to talk here is the Sports Competition that happened in my middle school stage. At the time, my classmates and I were at most twelve or thirteen years old. The main purpose of this event was to motivate students to do more sports on the understanding that participating in sports is one of the best ways to keep fit both physically and mentally.

There were so many joyful things happening, that I cannot tell you all of them. The day started with track events. There were 50, 100 and 200 meters races. There was **tremendous applause** from the spectators, which included teachers and parents. Then the field events: tug of war, long jump, high jump and shot put were held. Every event drew cheers and applause from the **spectators**. The day went by very fast. I came in first in the long jump event, and second in the 100 metre race and shot put. At about five o'clock, our Guest-of-Honour gave away the **trophies** to the winners. My class was overall **runners-up**.

The sports day turned out to be the grandest day of the year for the school. The crowd, the music, the competition, the excitement of the game, and the liveliness and **spontaneous** actions of the spectators were **noteworthy**.

After the competition, we all realize that the necessity of sports is immense in human life. It energises people who participate in the events and the pleasures are inexpressible.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **tremendous**: great
- **applause**: the noise made by a group of people clapping their hands
- **spectator**: a person who is watching an event, especially a sports event
- **trophy**: an object such as a silver cup that is given as a prize for winning a competition
- **runner-up**: a person or team that finishes second in a race or competition

- **spontaneous**: not planned but done because you suddenly want to do it
- **noteworthy**: deserving to be noticed

## 10. Describe a situation where you have to be polite

You should say:

- What it is.
- What you do to be polite.
- Why you have to be polite.
- How you feel about it.

### Sample

I would like to start by saying that I always try to be polite in all situations, because that was how I was **brought up**. However, I have to admit that there are just some individuals out there who enjoying feeding on negative energy.

It happened when I had to work in a team with other university friends on an assignment in Economic Studies. In our group then, there was one person who I disliked because he always had **half-baked** knowledge on everything and a **perception** that he knew everything. His attitude made everyone in our group really annoyed and sometimes the teamwork became stressful.

So, regarding why I had to be polite, it was because we had to work together over a period of about four months and ensure the best outcome. Although it was difficult at first because of his **personality** and the fact that he always thought that he was right and had the best ideas, eventually we all managed to work as a team and by the end of the project he wasn't really as bad as he had been at the beginning and was more willing to **collaborate** with the rest of us in the group. And that was my experience of being nice to someone I disliked.

The incident helped me understand that it is impossible to **shield** yourself from negativity, so the only things you can do are learn how to deal with hateful people and grow thicker skin.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **bring up**: look after
- **half-baked**: not well planned or considered
- **perception**: the ability to understand
- **personality**: a person's character
- **collaborate**: work together
- **shield**: protect



## 11. Describe a visitor in your home

You should say:

- Who this visitor was.
- When he/she visited your home.
- Why he/she came to visit.
- Whether you liked him/her or not

### Sample

Today I would like to talk about one of the guests who visited my family and left a great **impression** on me. His name was Armane, a French man and my brother's business partner for more than 2 years. I heard from my mother that my brother happened to meet him at yoga and meditation class. Last week, he came to our house to say goodbye before returning to Paris.

Armane had a masculine look, with large blue eyes and a wide forehead. His sharp nose looked perfect, too. Though an European man, he seemed to have a **profound** understanding of Vietnamese culture. The way he used the chopsticks and rolled the vegetables with rice paper told me that he was deeply aware of our **customary table manners**. Armane also shared with us that at first he found it really stressful to follow such a **minefield of social no-no's**.

Within a week of his visit, Armane surprised us with a thank-you card which he **meticulously** made himself. We were really happy to hear from Armane. Although my parents were understanding of foreigners' unfamiliarity with the **norms** of Vietnamese society, they were really impressed that Armane can master many of the traditional practices. He earned our utmost respect.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **impression**: an idea, a feeling or an opinion that you get about somebody/something
- **profound**: showing great knowledge or understanding
- **customary**: be what people usually do in a particular place or situation
- **table manners**: the rules used while having meals
- **a minefield of**: a lot of
- **social no-no**: something unacceptable or impermissible
- **meticulous**: taking or showing extreme care
- **norm**: a situation or a pattern of behaviour that is usual or expected

## 12. Describe a place in your city you want to go to

You should say:

- What this place is.
- Where this place is.
- Why you like this place.
- What do you want to do there.

### Sample

Ho Chi Minh City is a popular tourist destination due to its fascinating culture, classic French **architecture**, **sleek** skyscrapers as well as **ornate** temples and pagodas. As a result, it is pretty difficult to pick out one particular place among millions of tourist attractions in Ho Chi Minh City. Personally, I believe that Bitexco Financial Tower is the most impressive **skyscraper**. It is located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City's business and entertainment district. At completion in 2010, it became the tallest building in Vietnam until January 2011.

The creative **mastermind** behind Bitexco drew **inspiration** for this skyscraper's **unique** shape from Vietnam's national flower, the lotus. To the Vietnamese, the lotus is a symbol of **purity**, **commitment** and **optimism**. This 68-storey building features many offices, shops, restaurants. The main attraction at the tower is the Sky Deck where visitors can enjoy dramatic views across the **bustling** city below.

There are lots of places I like to go in Ho Chi Minh city, depending on my mood. If you want to enjoy the hectic and modern lifestyle, Bitexco is an ideal attraction to consider.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **architecture**: the design or style of a building
- **sleek**: smooth and shiny
- **ornate**: covered with a lot of decoration
- **skyscraper**: a very tall building in a city
- **mastermind**: an intelligent person who plans and directs a complicated project or activity

- **inspiration:** the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative
- **unique:** being the only one of its kind
- **purity:** the state or quality of being pure
- **commitment:** the willingness to work hard
- **optimism:** a feeling that good things will happen
- **bustling:** full of people moving about in a busy way

### 13. Describe an important river/lake in your country

You should say:

- What this river is called.
- How you know about it.
- How long/big it is.
- Why it is important.

#### Sample

I am going to talk about the Mekong river, one of the biggest and most important rivers located in southwestern part of Vietnam. With a length of about 2,700 miles, the river is the 7th longest in Asia. Locally, it's called "River of the Nine Dragons" because the small branches of the river are, **since time immemorial**, associated with the image of nine **majestic** dragons. Needless to say, the river is mentioned in a variety of poems and songs.

In terms of **agriculture**, the **mighty** river together with its surrounding delta has been known as the agricultural heart of southern Vietnam and the 'rice bowl' of the whole country. The Mekong is also Vietnam's most important fishing region.

If you are a **discerning** tourist who really has 'wearing a conical hat in a sampan boat in Vietnam' on your **bucket list**, a trip to Mekong Delta is a must. It is carpeted in a dizzying variety of greens and is also a place where boats, houses and markets float upon the innumerable rivers, canals and streams that **criss-cross** the landscape like arteries. Embarking on a Mekong River cruise provides tourists with fascinating insight into the local rural way of life, including the opportunity to visit some of the region's best-known sites, along with plenty of hidden **gems**.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **since time immemorial**: for a very long time
- **majestic**: impressive
- **agriculture**: the cultivation and breeding of animals and plants
- **mighty**: very strong and powerful
- **discerning**: able to judge the good quality of something

- **bucket list:** a number of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime
- **criss-cross:** mark with intersecting lines
- **gem:** a person, place or thing that is especially good

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do people like that river in your country?**

I am afraid not. Rivers are really not what we Vietnamese are concerned about. Like you know, rivers aren't our first choice when we go on a tour or something. We may long for beaches, we may want to be hitch hikers, but not many think of going on a river voyage.

- **Do you like any activities on water?**

Since i do not know how to swim, I'm afraid of activities in and on water, so it's not really something that I care about. However. I do know something about parasailing and scuba diving from English textbooks, so I believe I may give it a try someday when I learn how to swim

- **Is it necessary for everyone to learn swimming?**

Of course, swimming is vitally important. It's a survival skill for people who live near rivers and oceans. There have been many reports and cases of children drowning, so I believe swimming should be a compulsory part in any PE course

- **Do people in your country go to swim in their spare time?**

I would say yes and no. Around, like, 30% of Vietnamese know how to swim, and do it whenever they have some time to spare. Lam Son pool - the biggest public pool in my city is always fraught with people swimming every summer. However, I would not say so for the other 70% who have no idea how to swim

## 14. Describe a person you know

You should say:

- Who this person is.
- How long you have known each other.
- How you got to know him/her.
- How you feel about this person.

### Sample

I'm going to talk about a friend I met in college who goes by the name Moon.

I met her during our freshman year orientation, and I personally think I was very lucky to have been introduced to her. She is a Chinese student whom everybody **adores**. I have known her for 3 years, and in all those 3 years, I have never once been bored by her or her presence. She is always energetic and fun to be with. We had a lot of classes together in our first year and she always came to help me with my homework in the weekends. I got to know her better through our reviews for exams together and our hangouts after class. **Cheerful** as she might have appeared to be, she received a lot of pressure from her parents about good grades and getting into a good graduate school. I admire the way she always tried to stay positive despite all the stress she was under.

Now that we're in our final year of university, I don't see her as often anymore. But once in a while, she sends me a message to check how I'm doing with my schoolwork and I really appreciate her for that. Either way, I know that I have **cherished our time together**, and that whether or not we can keep being in each other's lives, I will always look back on our college experiences with great fondness.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Adore**: love and respect (someone) deeply.
- **Cheerful**: noticeably happy and optimistic.
- **Cherish our time together**: valuing highly the time spent together, usually in an emotional context.



## 15. Describe an impressive story you heard from other people

You should say:

- What was this story.
- When did you hear about it.
- Who told you this story.
- Why you were impressed by it.

### Sample

I would like to share a funny story that I heard from Julie, a friend of mine, a long time ago. It was a random day that our group hung out at a coffee shop and sat at the circle table near the window, as we usually do. This was our favourite spot. But that day, instead of ordering a cappuccino as I usually do, I decided to try a completely new drink – mojito mixed with some fruit, though I can't remember exactly what.

The mojito looked good on the outside but its taste was unbearable to me. Despite my warning, Julie insisted on trying it. It turned out that she liked the drink very much and in that moment, she concluded that it tasted exactly like the toothpaste that she ate in her childhood. Learning of this incident, we were a bit shocked as to why she ate such a thing, so she continued to **elaborate on her story**. She recalled that she indeed thought that the taste of toothpaste was delicious, and even she was banned from eating it by her parents, she secretly saved money to buy one for herself a few years later. She added that she sneakily hid the tube in the room and she could finish the whole thing in one go. We were frozen and all eyes were on her for a few seconds. Then we all **burst into laughter**. I still remember laughing so hard that my tears ran down.

I was indeed impressed by her story. As the matter of fact, it wasn't the first time I had heard of someone enjoying eating toothpaste, but secretly saving money to do this was a surprise element and it was hilarious. And of course, it has become an inside joke between us since then.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Elaborate on the story:** Explain in greater detail.
- **Burst into laughter:** A spontaneous and sudden fit of laughter.



### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **What kind of stories do children like?**

In my opinion, I think most kids like to read picture storybooks that include vibrant, detailed illustrations that support the story. This is because kids of this age are becoming more aware of language, books that include rhythmic patterns, rhyming and repetition or predictable texts provide them with opportunities to memorize stories to tell to others.

- **Do you think it's important for parents to read bedtime stories for their children?**

Yes, I think reading bedtime stories is essential for children because bedtime is the calmest and quietest part of the day. So, even while we can read during other parts of the day, it's often difficult for the kids to pay attention and concentrate, especially if they're hungry, or right after an intense play time.

- **Do you think reading benefits us?**

Yes, I do think so. In fact, it can help broaden your knowledge because everything you read fills your head with new bits of information, and you never know when it might come in handy. The more knowledge you have, the better-equipped you are to tackle any challenge you'll ever face.

- **How do you keep your reading habits in your busy life?**

I usually read books at night after a hard-working day, especially on weekdays, because this is the only period of time that I have some free time for myself to read for about 30 minutes to 1 hour before going to sleep. However, on the weekend, since I don't have to go to work, I will spend about 3 or 4 hours reading.

- **What books would you recommend young people to read?**

If I have to choose, Harry Potter would definitely come out on top of my list, because there have been lots of people read it, including those who don't really like to read, so young adults will have more opportunities to talk about this series. Besides, it offers a smooth read, as the writing is clear and entertaining, and it won't take them long to burn right through the whole series.

## 16. Describe a recent development in your city

You should say:

- What this development is.
- How it could help people.
- What benefits it could bring.
- Whether it changes your life or not.

### Sample

One of the newest additions to my city that I've noticed is that the public parks are now equipped with **communal exercise equipment**.

I've seen them being installed gradually over the last few months, and now they are common enough that even small local neighborhood parks also have them. I believe that they are going to be very helpful to a lot of different people. No matter what, most people can use more exercise in their life. With these sets of equipment, now there is an extra way for them to get this much needed exercise. People who want to exercise but would normally not go to the gym now have a new way to access equipment. This will help them find more ways to work out without costing them much time or money.

In addition, this would also **serve as an encouragement** for people who normally don't think about exercise to start paying more attention to this topic. They now can try out these machines at no cost to themselves, and this can help them **gauge their interest** in different exercising routines. More importantly, this helps people get used to the idea of exercise as a necessary part of life.

I believe that this will personally benefit me. I normally spend a lot of time in the park, and this will be very helpful in allowing me to spend some of that time more productively and in a way that benefits my health.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Communal exercise equipment:** Exercise and gym equipment that everyone can use.
- **Serve as an encouragement:** Will guide and support someone in participating in an activity or achieving a goal.
- **Gauge one's interest:** Decide how interested someone is in an activity or goal.

## 17. Describe an unforgettable dinner

You should say:

- When was the dinner.
- Where was the dinner.
- Who did you dine with.
- Why is it unforgettable.

### Sample

I would like to talk about an evening meal that I will never forget.

It was last summer when my boyfriend invited me to meet his parents. I was so excited yet nervous at the same time. He was my classmate back in high school, so I had met his mom several times before but not in a role of his girlfriend. I chose to have dinner on a weekday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month to be exact because it was the date that we started dating. His parents would be home at about 6pm after their work, so it was perfect time to have dinner.

At first, we decided to go out for dinner but, on the second thought, a **home-cooked meal** would **leave a good impression** on his parents so we decided to do that. It turned out to be a stupid decision because I didn't know how to cook at all. After hours searching for recipes on Google and watch some cooking channels on Youtube, I managed to pick olive salad and roasted chicken, which I thought couldn't be messed up. In the meanwhile, my boyfriend was setting up tables and lights on the veranda to create a warm atmosphere.

Finally, as everything had just been finished, his parents came back home. We greeted and sat down together in a small round table. It was awkward for the first few minutes because I didn't know what to say. However, in the middle of the meal, his parents **paid me a compliment** on the dishes I cooked and told me some secrets about my boyfriend's childhood that eased my tension. His mom and I were on the same page and could talk for hours about any of the conversation topics. Admittedly, the food was not a great success. It was a bit salty and poorly decorated but we had great time talking. This moment really helped **strengthen our relationship** by making me feel like a member of his family.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Home-cooked meal:** Food cooked at home.
- **Leave a good impression:** Make others feel good about you, often after a first meeting.
- **Pay somebody a compliment:** Say something nice about someone, usually directly to them.
- **Strengthen our relationship:** Have a greater bond of friendship between two or more people.

## 18. Describe a historical era you are interested in

You should say:

- When this era was.
- How you learnt about it.
- What it was famous for.
- Why you are interested in this era.

### Sample

If I could go in a time machine, I would choose to go back to the **glorious time** of Hong Bang period in about 2000 BC, the very first days of my country.

At that time, this place wasn't called Vietnam, it was under the rule of Hung Kings and was named Van Lang instead. What I find fascinating about this era is the **legends and myths** which I learned from History and Literature class back in school. Van Lang was a small country yet it was frequently invaded by the mysterious people. Whenever this period of time is mentioned, people will immediately relate to hundreds of wars, some even last for decades. We, the descendants, had no idea how they could win in those wars due to the sparse population and simple weapons, so we made up stories and fables to honor the bravery of our ancestors. Some specific examples are the legend of a three-year-old boy who went to war to save the country, or the myth of the Magic Crossbow which could deliver thousands of arrows and the story of the princess innocently trusting her lover and betraying her father, and the list goes on.

Although some of the stories are imaginary, it left a mark on me and nurtured my love for my home country since I was a little girl. Moreover, many of modern Vietnamese **cultural practices** also date back to this era, like cooking sticky rice cakes and displaying five-fruit trays on Tet holiday. This era can be considered as the cradle of our culture. I am always curious about the origin of our customs, and I believe that going back to this time could provide me with first-hand experience as well as a thorough understanding of my country's tradition.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Glorious time:** A time of greatness and prosperity.

- **Legends and myths:** Traditional stories, usually historical and unauthenticated (possibly not true).
- **Cultural practice:** an action committed by people of a particular culture, tradition or nationality.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do young people like historical stories in your country?**

I am afraid not, since history is not taught very effectively here in Vietnam. Many of my friends aren't keen on history, and most of them don't even know some very common heroes in Vietnamese history, which is really a shame.

- **Which historical period do you think is important in your country?**

I would say the Nguyen Dynasty, since it witnessed our country's transition from the feudal age to the early modern era. The last Viet Emperor was a Nguyen, and he put an end to his own regime.

- **Do you think history matters in a country's future development?**

Yes. We humans reflect on history to learn from our own mistakes. Understanding our mistakes and correcting them is the solid foundation for future development.

- **What is the effective way of learning history, by reading books or watching videos?**

It really depends. For beginners, movies are a good starting point. Vivid images and fighting scenes from movies can be very inspirational. It can help inspire people to get to know more about history. However, when one wishes to have a deeper insight, books are the better option.

- **Why should we learn history?**

→ History is a good reflection of the past. By learning history, we are able to conceive how our ancestors lived, struggled against Mother Nature, and died. Knowing these facts and learning from their mistakes is a solid foundation for future development.

### 19. Describe a special day out (A day out which does not cost too much)

You should say:

- Where did you go on that day.
- What did you do.
- Who did you go out with.
- Why was it special to you.

#### Sample

I went to the park with my friend the other day. She was my good friend in high school and we haven't seen each other for almost a year. As we were both having our semester break, we wanted to meet and catch up over dinner.

We actually planned to meet each other at the park and then decide on where to go later, but my friend got there pretty late so we ended up staying there. We got two takeout milk tea glasses and kebabs from a small street vendor and found a comfortable corner to enjoy ourselves. We sat there watching people passing by, talking about random things that came up. The weather that day was pretty nice actually. It was raining in the evening all week, so we were worried that we might have to go home early. But it **turned out to be** a fine evening.

I guess what makes the day special was the fact that, despite having to wait for my friend to show up and then not going anywhere like we originally planned to, we still had a lot more fun than I had expected. We **updated** each other on what was going on in our lives and discussed our plans for the future. It was a nice feeling to know even though we couldn't meet and talk frequently, we could still **bond** easily over milk tea and kebabs. It made me realize that sometimes we only need good company and good conversations to make something memorable.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Turn out to be:** The way an event or expectation happens in reality.
- **Update:** Catch up with past events.
- **Bond:** A connection between two or more people or things.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do teenagers spend much more money than before?**

I would say yes since the cost of living these days is increasing, and families are also getting wealthier. They usually give their children quite a lot more money than in the past. For example, when I was in high school, I was given around 10 thousand dong a day, which was 50 cents at the time. However, students, at present, receive about 100 thousand dong a day on average, and this is 10 times more than what I got before.

- **How can people save money as much as possible?**

Well, there are only two ways, either to work more or to spend less. I find the first way is much more viable since restricting your budget from using or enjoying something can be a bit uncomfortable.

- **Have you ever had a bad shopping experience?**

I have to admit that I'm not a wise buyer, so I make shopping mistakes all the time. But the one that I remember the most is the time when I bought a printer without the cable to connect it with my computer. Actually, the seller was so careful to ask me twice if I wanted to get the cable, but I just ignored the question because I thought he tried to make me pay more money. That was so embarrassing.

- **Why is online shopping so popular these days?**

Well, I would say it's partly because humans are naturally lazy. They just want to stay at home and get their desired products. Besides, when shopping online, buyers can easily compare prices from one seller to another, which is very hard to do when it comes to buying at real stores.



## 20. Describe a sports person you admire

You should say:

- Who is he/she.
- What did he/she do.
- What do you know about his/her life story.
- How much do you know about sports.

### Sample

Being a big fan of basketball, I have long **idolised** the legend of this sport - Michael Jordan, also known as MJ. I first got curious about his life when I saw a logo portraying him on a product of the brand, Nike, and his life turned out to be intriguing to me.

He played in the position of shooting guard in one of the most **renowned** teams, the Chicago Bulls, and was famous for his exceptional leaping ability, illustrated by performing slam dunks from the free throw line. Early in his NBA career, while playing for the University of North Carolina, he appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated with the heading "A star is born" just over a month into his professional career. It was not only his talent but also his dedication that made him a strong clutch performer. He spent hours studying films of his opponents to improve his defense. Even when his right knee was injured, Jordan did not miss any games in the season from 1986 to 2001. Throughout his career, he led the Chicago Bulls to six championships, was awarded the NBA Most Valuable Player five times and was the first player to be honoured with both the NBA's Defensive Player of the year award and Most Valuable Player awards. All the compliments that journalists gave him were not an overstatement.

Although Michael Jordan retired in 2003, his skills and his legacy are still **a great inspiration** for any basketball player or person considering pursuing a basketball career. He is also active in charity activities. His clothing line, Jordan brand, has made donations to different organisations across America. It's difficult to describe how amazing Michael Jordan is in words, just watch a few of his videos playing in NBA games or his interviews, you'll figure it out yourself.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Idolise:** Admire, revere, or love greatly or excessively.

- **Renowned:** Known or talked about by many people; famous.
- **A great inspiration:** Someone that people aspire to be and are motivated by.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do teenagers like exercising in your country?**

I would say yes, I know many teenagers who are really keen on doing exercise like jogging or dancing. Some of them are not too busy so they can do it on a daily basis but others get occupied with their hectic studying schedule, so they can only exercise once a week or even less.

- **Would you like to stay at home or go outside for holiday?**

Well it would depend on my mood, actually. I confess that I am quite unpredictable. I mean if I feel happy I will consider going out with my friends and enjoy a movie. On the other hand, sometimes when I am in a bad mood, I'd rather stay in with lots of interesting activities to enjoy a holiday, like watching television or simply sleeping.

- **Do you think physical education is necessary? Why?**

Yes for sure, it is of great necessity I would say. Physical education can improve our immune system and keep our mind clear and active so that we can respond better to stress when we come back to work or school. Though it may sound a little exhausting, doing exercise can become addictive when we get used to it.

- **How do you think physical classes affect children's development?**

Like I just said, physical classes with a wide range of physical exercises can improve children's mental health, which allows them to absorb the lessons better. On top of that, in my nephew's physical class, I saw some exercises that really stretched her body so I believe such classes are also beneficial to children's height

- **What kind of exercises do Vietnamese people like?**

Well, we can easily catch sight of people in my country jogging along the pavement every morning. So I believe this is the most favorite exercise here because jogging is totally free-of-charge and doesn't need any special equipment. Some people jog in the early morning while others prefer the afternoon or evening, so it's quite flexible, too.

## 21. Describe an experience where you were late for an event

You should say:

- When did this happen.
- Why were you late.
- What consequence have you caused.
- How you felt afterwards.

### Sample

I am an organised person and **tardiness** is not my problem. But I'd be lying if I told you that I am never late.

As a matter of fact, there was a time that I wasn't on time for the job interview. It was just a couple of months ago when I was in search of a new part-time job to gain experience in my career. There was a position in a company whose job description perfectly suited my needs and qualifications. I truly wanted to get the job. I completed an application form online right after I was informed there was a vacancy. To my surprise, just a day after that, they called me for an interview at 9 the next morning. I was **exhilarated** to hear the news and prepared everything carefully the night before the meeting. I chose what to wear, ironed the set of clothes to leave a good impression on the interviewer, I also put a notebook and a pen in my purse in case I had to take notes during the interview.

When everything was done, I set the alarm at 7am so that I wouldn't rush having breakfast and headed to the firm. However, the problem was that I forgot to charge to phone and it ran out of battery during my sleep. Therefore, it didn't go off the next morning. I overslept and woke up at 9am in frustration. I decided that I'd rather stay at home than appear as an irresponsible **latecomer** in the eye of others. I did wonder if I should ask them to postpone the interview, but I couldn't think of a reasonable excuse, so I just let it go. The consequence was that I missed the chance to do the job that I desperately wanted. I felt ashamed of myself for making such a silly mistake, but I did learn from it. I am now much more careful when it comes to similar situations.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Tardiness:** the quality or fact of being late; lateness.

- **Exhilarated:** to feel very happy, animated, or elated.
- **Latecomer:** Someone who arrives late.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Would you forgive those who are late?**

To be honest, it is hard for me to feel any sympathy for them. It seems that those who are usually late always find an excuse for their lateness. Some of the reasons, like traffic jams or transportation breakdowns, may make sense, but they can be made up just to cope with the situation. I think, if they know how to manage their time better; the lateness can be improved easily.

- **What would you do if others are late?**

Although I often lose my temper if I have to wait for someone for more than 15 minutes, (but) I still think it is necessary to ask them for the reason. In fact, showing irritation in such situation can be an immediate reaction to the late comers, but being unable to put our emotion under control may result in worsening the relationship we have built up over a long time.

- **What are the reasons for being late?**

Well, I think such reasons can be classified into 2 groups, the external and internal ones.

The former may include the impacts from the outside such as traffic congestion, transportation breakdowns while the latter may come from the late comers themselves. You know, some people are often late just because of their poor time management or bad habits like getting up late or lagging behind in every activity.

- **Would you like to make plans or just let things happen?**

Hmm...I prefer to make plans for whatever I do. I think it helps ensure our work to be on the right track. For the most case, a good plan normally results in a desirable outcome at the end of the day. It is also a good way to minimize risks or failure and prevent wasting my time. And you know, by planning things in advance, I believe I have become a more responsible person than I used to be.

- **Do you think it's important to be punctual?**

Absolutely yes. It could be because tardiness has never been a pleasure for anyone and in any circumstance. Besides, one's punctuality also says something about who he or she is. Being frequently late for work, for example, may lead to certain judgments about somebody's poor working manner and time management.

## 22. Describe a piece of technology you like using except computers

You should say:

- What is this technology.
- How did you learn about it.
- How often do you use it.
- What difference it brings to your life.

### Sample

I consider myself a **technophile**, so it's hard for me to live a day without using technological devices, especially my smartphone.

It was a present from my parents to congratulate me on my high school graduation four years ago, and it has come in handy ever since. It was the latest Android phone at that time with lots of cool apps and functions, but no one has ever gave me proper instruction on how to use it. I had to resort to Google search to explore my phone and troubleshoot its problems when the screen suddenly went black or the application failed to run. My phone is with me most of the time and even though I know it's not good for my eyesight, I can't help but use it on a daily basis and for more than 6 hours a day. I can't deny that this **multifunctional** device has a big influence on my life, both positively and negatively. I no longer need dictionaries, notebooks, a camera, a music player or a TV because now I can look up new words, take notes, capture photos, listen to music and watch films on the screen of my phone.

In replacement of a heavy bulky laptop, my **pocket-sized** phone also allows me to create and edit documents on the move. On top of that, it saves me a lot of time and money going to stores thanks to online shopping and notifications of when there are special offers. However, the drawback is that I am somewhat **overdependent** on it. If my phone suddenly runs out of battery or I forget it at home when I am outside, I may feel vulnerable and lonely. This phone has helped me a lot with my work and study but I am thinking of reducing the time using it for my well-being.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Technophile**: very interested or obsessed with technology.
- **Multifunctional**: does many different things.
- **Pocket-sized**: small enough to fit in your pocket.
- **Overdependent**: too dependent on something; cannot work or live without it.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do you like to use new technology?**

To be honest, I am kind of a “low-tech” person. I mean I find it quite challenging to cope with anything related to new technology. I am still using my phone and laptop as indispensable items in work and study, but am only able to handle their very basic functions. You know, learning some new technological advances always takes me plenty of time and effort.

- **Does technology deeply affect people's life?**

Of course, I believe the development of technology has changed human life dramatically. Most of aspects of life have been affected, from the way people communicate to human interaction, daily habits, work and study and so on. While such technological advancements bring about benefits to support mankind better, their detrimental effects on certain aspects are undeniable.

- **Is there any difference between technology in cities and in small towns?**

Well, due to a slower-paced lifestyle, the technology in small towns may be a lower standard and develop much slower than in megacities. Also, people in big cities may have easier and quicker access to the use of modern technology, such as computers and automatic machines while it may take much longer for those in the small towns to catch up with such developments.

- **Do you agree that men are more obsessed with new technology than women?**

In my observation, I may say “yes”. Most men are curious and have passion in the discovery of the latest technology. They are often keen on looking for information about cutting-edge technology in the newspaper or on the Internet and then burst into excitement whenever they get the chance to try them. Meanwhile, most women just regard technology as a tool to support their life.

- **How to teach older generations to use new technology?**

It is quite a hard mission I think, as elderly people are usually slower to acquire something new, let alone technology that is intrinsically complicated to learn. However, introducing them to the availability of some useful technological devices such as smartphones or laptops, and instructing them to use their basic functions like sending text messages or writing emails can be done without too much time or effort.

- **Do you think that technology always has positive effects?**

Of course not, anything in this life has both pros and cons and so does technology. Besides the beneficial effects that it brings to mankind, the negative impacts are inevitable. Take smartphones and the internet as an example, they have somehow changed the way people interact with each

other. I mean, many people nowadays are no longer interested in family conversations, because each of them has their phones that contain a whole world of joy and entertainment.

### 23. Describe something special that you saved money to buy

You should say:

- What was this thing.
- Why was it special to you.
- How much did it cost you.
- How you felt after you bought it.

#### Sample

I am going to talk about a clock necklace that I gave my best friend, Julie.

It was at the end of grade 10 that she left me to continue her study abroad. For fear that I would be forgotten someday, I tried to think of a farewell gift that could make her think of me every time she saw it. It was not an easy task to find the right present; maybe it was because I was being too **picky**. She was more than a friend to me, she's more like my sister, or my soul mate. I didn't want to give her something meaningful but useless, or something useful but emotionally empty. I wanted something that was special, something that would make her say "wow" when she received it. I wandered from shop to shop to look for something, but I didn't know what.

One day, I came across something reminding me of her right away - a vintage necklace with a clock pendant. It perfectly **suit her style**, so she could wear it with any of her clothes. What I liked about the clock was that it was **custom-made**, I could design the number and write a message on it too. The thing is, when giving her the necklace, I set the clock to the local time in Vietnam, so whenever she needed to tell the time she would feel annoyed because of the difference in time zones, and I hoped that she would think of me right at the moment. The price wasn't expensive at all, about \$20, but to a high school student like me at that time **it was a fortune**. I had to skip breakfast for an entire month to purchase it, but it was totally worth it. She had no clue about how I bought it but she liked it anyway. I felt exhilarated when I could buy my bestie something beautiful that she deserved, and I hoped that this chain would tie us forever.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Picky**: being careful in making the right choice; discerning.
- **Suit one's style**: matches a person's character or personal appearance.



- **Custom-made:** made to fit a particular person.
- **It was a fortune:** it cost a lot; was expensive.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do young Vietnamese like to save money?**

Well, to be honest, I don't have much information about this. However, I guess that they do since saving money has always been a part of Vietnamese tradition.

- **Why do some people like to save money?**

In my opinion, I believe that there are 2 main reasons to save money. Firstly, some people would like to accumulate a large amount of money for some big decisions like buying a new house or investing in the financial markets with the aim of making profits. Secondly, others may just simply save for a rainy day since they would have the fear that something bad may accidentally happen to them, like being sick or getting involved in an accident, for example.

- **What is the best way of saving money?**

Well, in the past, people used to have a traditional method of saving money, which was putting all their money into a large safe or chest. However, this can't be applied in the modern world anymore. Personally, I believe that the easiest and most convenient way of saving money would be opening a "savings account" at a local bank.

- **What are the consequences of not saving money?**

I think that there would be 2 main consequences of this. First, when people suddenly encounter some accidents in their life, which makes them lose the ability to earn money, not having any kind of savings may be a great burden upon the shoulders of their relatives. Secondly, people grow old. That's nature. One day, all of us will be too old and weak to be able to work hard and make money. Therefore, not saving when we are still young would cause us to be financially dependent on our children in the future.

- **Do you agree with the idea that the more you save, the better life will be?**

To me, this idea is only true to some extent. We all agree that saving is good, but focusing too much on saving is actually not good. I know a lot of people who refuse to take part in any kind of party or even just coffee gathering since they want to save more money for their future. And the consequence is that their lives are extremely boring since they always worry about saving. In my view, it is necessary for us to save money but also need to spend some to enjoy our life.

## 24. Describe a holiday you would like to take in the future

You should say:

- When and where you would like to go
- Who you would like to go with
- What you would like to do on this holiday
- Why you would like to take the holiday

### Sample

I **have itchy feet**, so I always have a detailed plan for the next holiday trip in mind.

This time, I am going to wait for my children's summer vacation so that I can take the whole family on a trip together. I am a family person and I love to travel with my loved ones. And, you know, summer won't be complete without sun tan and beach snapshots. Therefore, my **destination** must be a seaside city and Vinh Hy bay is my ideal place. I have heard about this place a long time ago, a friend of mine highly recommended this place after her trip there. It is known for **natural scenic beauty** and delicious fresh seafood at an affordable price.

I was curious, but couldn't find time to travel there due to my tight working schedule. But this summer we are going to make it. It's only a 4-hour ride from our city to the bay, so I am going to go by bike, as if I were going backpacking. One reason luring us to this place is that it's a **pristine** island, which means it won't be crowded with tourists and the food here won't be overpriced. Unlike other beaches which offer a variety of water sports like canoeing, scuba-diving, water-skiing and skydiving, there will not be many activities to do in Vinh Hy bay apart from sun-bathing and eating seafood. But this is going to be a family time, and to me, spending time together is already enough.

In case my children get bored, so I am going to bring some family games like UNO and castle-building tools to enjoy time on the beach together. I am in dire need of this vacation as I want to escape from a stressful workload and pressure from city life for a while with my kids and my spouse. Also, I think it is a good idea to reward my children with a trip after studying hard throughout the school year.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **Have itchy feet:** have a desire to travel; don't want to stay in one place.
- **Destination:** a place that you want to travel to.
- **Natural scenic beauty:** a beautiful landscape or view characterised by trees, flowers, hills and other natural things.
- **Pristine:** picture perfect.

## 25. Describe someone who is a good parent.

You should say:

- Who the person is.
- How you know him/her.
- What the person do.
- Why you think he/she is good.

### Sample

Speaking of a role model in parenting, I would like to talk about my best friend's father.

He is working as a doctor and due to his **tight working schedule**, I don't have many chances to talk to him, even though I come over his house on a frequent basis. However, I still know him very well through stories told by my best friend. Also, her **well-educated** manner proves to me that he has done a good job raising her up. Vietnamese parents are known to be "tiger parents", but he should be considered as an exception. He respects his daughter's decisions and never forces her to do things that are not at her will. Unlike other doctors, he always encourages her to pursue her dream to be a singer rather than follow the family line of work in the medical field. Even when she causes trouble and receives bad grades at school, she isn't afraid to tell her father because she knows that he is more than a parent to her, he is truly a friend who can give her good advice and help her find possible ways of improving herself.

You know, being a doctor isn't just a **nine to five job**, he has to work on a **night shift** several times a week, but he still managed to take good care of his child. He is good at **maintaining a work-life balance**. He allocates the whole weekend apart from work and social life to spend time with his family where he often teaches his daughter cooking and survival skills. Sometimes he takes her to the cinema to watch the latest blockbusters so that they can have a discussion on movies and related life situations. All in all, he is the type of parent that I wish to become in the future.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Tight working schedule:** has to work frequently with long hours.
- **Well-educated:** has good knowledge and understanding from schooling.
- **A nine to five job:** a job that lasts from 9am to 5pm. Full-time work.
- **A night shift:** working at night.
- **Maintain a work-life balance:** working whilst having and enjoying your free time.

## 26. Describe a rule at your school that you agree or disagree with.

You should say:

- What the rule is;
- What will happen when students break the rule;
- Why school makes the rule;
- Why you agree or not.

### Sample

Vietnamese high school is known for imposing a lot of strict rules on students, and mine is not an exception.

There is one rule in my school I can't stand. This is that male and female students are not allowed to be seen together, or sit next to each other, even in class or during break time. If we violate the rule, or if we are caught standing near a student of a different gender, we will receive a warning from the **supervisor**. If it continues, we can be temporarily expelled from school for three days to a week. I know that there is a reason behind this. Rumor is that some couples skipped school to secretly hang out, and thus failed to pass the university entrance exam. The **principal** is concerned that the teenagers may fall in love and neglect their studies, so this rule is to limit the interaction between boys and girls in order not to develop an intimate relationship. However, I think that it has gone too far. I do agree that the main duty of students is to study, but it is not wrong for us, boys and girls, to spend time together. We are old enough not to let our study be interfered. Not to mention that, sometimes, it's just pure friendship. Each gender has different strengths and weaknesses, for example boys are often good at Maths and Physics while girls excel at Literature and languages. So, if we learn together, we can actually help each other to learn better.

To me, this separation is nonsense and meaningless. It not only prevents us from enjoying our high school years to the fullest but also **causes conflicts** between students and the school. The only way I believe it to be helpful to students' learning is to show them the consequences of poor learning performance and educate them in taking advantage of having friends of mixed genders.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Supervisor:** Manager or caregiver. Usually in the work place.
- **Principal:** The head of the school.
- **Cause conflicts:** Make disagreements arise.

## 27. Describe an achievement that you are proud of.

You should say:

- What you do;
- When, where, and how you do it;
- How difficult it is;
- Why you are proud of it.

### Sample

I would like to talk about one of my personal achievements that I take pride in, and that is passing my university entrance examination. This exam is known to be nerve-wracking and challenging, especially when you wish to attend the **prestigious** schools in town.

To be honest, back in high school, I wasn't much of a diligent student. I had no appreciation of hard work and self-improvement. Higher education wasn't something I aimed at, all I wished for was to graduate from high school. But in my senior year, I had a chance to study with a dedicated Literature teacher. The messages that she delivered in each lesson were **mind-opening** and **thought-provoking**, activating my desire for self-betterment. At the same time, I harbored my hope of being a teacher. I know that it was not easy for a student with bad academic results like me to get into the University of Education, but when I set my heart on something, I will go to great lengths to attain it. The exam included three core subjects, namely Maths, Literature and English. Languages were my forte, but Maths was not my thing. I started to study around the clock and took an active role in learning by doing extra algebra exercises and seeking help from my teachers with any questions that arose. There were times when I was exhausted and **disheartened**, but the encouragements from my teachers were helpful in keeping me motivated.

Finally, the hard work paid off. I was over the moon when informed to be accepted to that university. I was proud of myself for the determination and effort it took to step out of my comfort zone and make my dream come true.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Prestigious:** inspiring respect and admiration; having high status.
- **Mind-opening:** seeing something in a new way.
- **Thought-provoking:** makes you think about something.

- **Disheartened:** cause (someone) to lose determination or confidence.

## 28. Describe a car journey you went on.

You should say:

- Where did you go;
- What did you do there;
- Who you went there with;
- Why you wanted to go there for a car journey;
- How you feel about it.

### Sample

Today I would like to share with you a story about a car journey that I took part in.

It was about three years ago, when I had just graduated from university. In fact, it was in the middle of summer vacation, so my best friend and I decided to go on a trip to Nha Trang; **a coastal city** on the South-Central Coast of Vietnam. We decided to **set out** for this city very early in the morning, as it is far from my hometown. I knew that we faced **a long drive** ahead, so it would be safer to travel by car, rather than by motorbike.

After 5 hours driving, we arrived at our **destination**. We were amazed to see beautiful beaches with fine and clean sand, as well as clear ocean water with mild temperatures. We had a lot of activities to do at the time, including eating out at night and swimming near the beaches. Also, we stayed for three nights with my uncle's family and helped them with their regular tasks before setting off home on the last day.

At first, I was under the impression that this trip would be kind of boring as didn't have many friends to go with me in this trip. However, it turned out to be an amazing one, and it helped us learn more about the countryside and the way of life of those who live there. If I have opportunities in the future, I'd love to make more trips like that.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **A coastal city:** a city by the sea.
- **Set out:** the moment you go on a journey.
- **A long drive:** driving to somewhere far away.
- **Destination:** a place you intend to travel to.



**29. Describe something you bought recently that made you happy.**

You should say:

- What it is.
- When and where you bought it.
- How it was used/what it was used for.
- Why it made you happy.

**Sample**

Today I would like to talk to you about my new laptop. At the time, it made me really satisfied because of its **high performance**.

It was about 3 years ago, when I was a senior student in my university. At that time, I really needed to **purchase** a new laptop as soon as possible in order to do homework and assignments for my thesis, so I asked a lot of people about which **brand** I should buy. After considering everything, I decided to buy a laptop from the DELL brand shop.

When it comes to how I use this laptop, besides doing homework and assignments, I like watching movies as well as playing games for **recreational purposes**, which have brought me a sense of fun until now.

There are so many reasons why I really love this laptop. Firstly, I bought it for a reasonable price. Unlike other famous laptop brands like ASUS and Lenovo, which usually **cost an arm and a leg**, this DELL laptop is suitable for people who are **not well-off** like me. Besides that, when using this laptop, I can ease my mind by doing a range of recreational activities after a long day at school and **get away from daily routine**. In the future, I would like to keep this laptop as long as possible as I am extremely happy to own it.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **high performance:** works to a high standard.
- **purchase:** buy
- **brand:** a logo or name of a company attached to the product it sells.
- **recreational purposes:** used for fun and free time.
- **cost an arm and a leg:** costs a lot of money.
- **not well-off:** don't have a lot of money.
- **get away from daily routine:** have time away from usual daily life.

### 30. Describe a dream house or apartment you want to live in.

You should say:

- Where it is
- What your dream home is like
- Why you like this dream home
- What you would do to get it.

#### Sample

Today I'm going to talk about my vision of an ideal home that I want to live in in the future.

My long-term goal is to be able to settle down in one of the **villas** in District 7, or any other **upscale neighborhood** in HCMC. This is because I don't want to **settle** for anything less when it comes to housing, and District 7 has good access to all kinds of **infrastructure facilities**, such as good international schools for my children, good hospitals, good roads and many shopping centers.

In this area, there is a 3-storey villa with a big garden, and it also has a small pond next to a big tree, which I would really love to have. I'll plant different types of trees and maybe have a small pond for some fish as well. I love pets, so I'll definitely keep some cats and dogs, and they can play around in the garden area. As for the **interior**, to give the space a modern style, I'll have it painted in bright colors like yellow and white – which are my personal favorites and hang up paintings from local artists as well as some **pot plants** around the home.

Part of the reason why I want to live in a villa is because I want to have a big family. I'll definitely bring my parents to live here with me and my wife, and together we'll bring up my future children. This villa is going to be the symbol of my hard work and I firmly believe that if I focus on this goal, I can make it a reality.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **villas**: Large, luxurious houses.
- **upscale neighborhood**: an area with expensive and luxurious housing.
- **settle**: decide to stay in a place.
- **infrastructure facilities**: good facilities, roads and public services.
- **interior**: the inside design.
- **pot plants**: plants for decoration.

### 31. Describe an activity you do to keep fit.

You should say:

- What you do.
- When and where you usually do it.
- How you do it.
- Why it can keep you fit.

#### Sample

Today I would like to talk about jogging; my favourite activity that I usually do to **stay healthy**. It's a kind of running at a slow or leisurely pace that helps to **build up your physical fitness**.

I much prefer to go jogging in open spaces, like parks or lakesides, because you can enjoy fresh air and watch people doing various types of **physical activity** such as running, aerobic exercises or playing badminton. I normally go jogging in the morning with my close friend **on a daily basis** for about 30 minutes to 1 hour in order to keep fit.

There are many reasons why it can keep me fit. Firstly, this activity is a good way to **gain an attractive appearance** and **keep in good shape**, which is really beneficial to my health. Also, we can **improve our immune system** and **lower the risks of modern diseases**, like diabetes or obesity, by jogging regularly. Unlike other forms of exercise, jogging is quite easy to do and it allows me to observe people and things as I pass by. The second important reason is that doing this activity also allows me to ease my mind and get away from daily routine, the effects of which are limitless.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **stay healthy**: to have and maintain good health.
- **build up your physical fitness**: increase your bodily strength and physical abilities.
- **physical activity**: an activity with the body.
- **on a daily basis**: every day.
- **gain attractive appearance**: achieve a good or appealing look.
- **keep in good shape**: stay physically fit.
- **improve our immune system**: improve one's ability to fight sickness.
- **lower the risks of modern diseases**: make it less likely that you will get sick.

### 32. Describe a science subject you learned in your school.

You should say:

- What do you learn about
- How about the teacher
- What do you think of the teacher
- How you feel about it.

#### Sample

There were many science subjects that I used to learn a long time ago, but today I would like to talk about Biology, which was one of the subjects that I had a chance to learn at school.

It was about 6 years ago, when I just entered high school. It was right at the beginning of the term, and I was terribly busy studying many subjects on a weekly basis. One of these subjects was Biology because it was one of many **mandatory subjects** that I had to study. At that time, my classmates and I studied this subject with a teacher whose name was Linh. She was an experienced and **highly respected teacher** in my school.

At first, I was under the impression that Biology in high school was really complicated, as in the first lessons I couldn't even understand what my teacher taught us in class, and I even suffered from stress and bad performance in mid-term tests. However, I never surrendered and kept trying day by day, so it gradually became easier. Finally, I **passed with flying colors** at the end of the term thanks to her **sound advice** about how to study this subject more effectively. Biology would not have been easy to pass if we did not have this level of determination and perseverance when learning it.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **mandatory subjects**: subjects that you must sit.
- **highly respected teacher**: a teacher with a good reputation.
- **pass with flying colors**: pass with a high score.
- **sound advice**: advice that is accurate and helpful.

### 33. Describe a difficult decision that you once made

You should say:

- What the decision was
- How you made your decision
- What the results of the decision were
- Why it was difficult to make.

#### Sample

I have made many difficult decisions in my life, but today I would like to talk about the decision of choosing which university to study at.

It was about 2 years ago, when I graduated from high school. At that time, I was terribly busy as I had to prepare the application form for the university entrance exam. I had to make an important but difficult decision.

At that time, I was **at a crossroads**, where I had to decide which university to apply for. My interest was in English language, which was taught in many separate universities. Fortunately, my older brother, who graduated from the University of Pedagogy, gave me some **sound advice**. Having **weighed up the pros and cons** of each school, he encouraged me to choose the university specialising in my subject. Finally, I applied for this school after thinking carefully about all the options.

At present, I feel so satisfied with the **learning environment** of this university that I am always thankful for my decision as well as my brother's advice. Without his guidance, I probably wouldn't be as content with my university life as I am.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **at a crossroads**: at a time where you must make a decision
- **sound advice**: advice that is accurate and helpful.
- **weighed up the pros and cons**: thought about the positive and negative aspects of something.
- **learning environment**: somewhere to learn like a school, library or university.

### 34. Describe a garden/park you have visited

You should say:

- Where it was
- What it looked like
- What you did there
- Why you liked it there.

#### Sample

Today I would like to talk about Tao Dan Park, which is one of the most well-known public parks in Ho Chi Minh City, and it is also the place that I usually visit.

Tao Dan Park is a public park located **in the heart of the city**, and it is most commonly known for many beautiful flowers as well as big trees, which gives you a sense of peace and **tranquility** whilst being able to do some physical activities, like jogging or walking.

I have become a frequent guest there and usually go on the weekend. My favorite activities in this park are playing badminton and going jogging with some of my friends, if they have free time, or simply sitting on the bench and enjoying the view. Despite being popular, this park is still able to maintain a quiet and soft **atmosphere**. Also, other guests there are usually quite respectful and generally don't disturb other people by talking or laughing too loudly.

It's rare to find a place like this in Ho Chi Minh and I always recommend it to my friends when they need a break from the busy city life.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **in the heart of the city**: the center of the city
- **tranquility**: peaceful
- **atmosphere**: the feeling or mood of a place, situation, or work of art.

### 35. Describe an occasion where somebody gave you positive suggestions.

You should say:

- When you received
- Who gave you the suggestions
- What you did
- Why the suggestions were positive/how you felt.

#### Sample

Today I would like to talk about an occasion that I received positive suggestions from my friend about how to overcome **procrastination**.

It was about 3 years ago, when I was a senior student in my university. It was right before my **dissertation**. I used to have a serious procrastination problem as my **word document** was still blank even though it was only a month before the due date. In fact, I was not worried at all because I was overconfident that I would eventually complete it no matter what happened. If this went on, I would probably have failed my dissertation.

Fortunately, my best friend that was in the same group as me (something I found really frustrating) did not give up on me. He suggested that we could divide the dissertation into small projects and **set a deadline** for each one. I did exactly what he advised and submitted my work successfully. As a result, I graduated with flying colors. Now that I work, I also follow this procedure, which turned out to be quite useful. I feel grateful to his suggestion as, without it, my life would have followed a different path and it would not be a better one.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **procrastination**: wasting time when you have work to do.
- **dissertation**: final assignment in a degree course.
- **word document**: a file for a word processing program e.g Microsoft Word.
- **set a deadline**: the latest time to submit the task.

### 36. Describe an occasion when you helped a person.

You should say:

- What the situation was
- Who you helped
- How you helped
- How you felt after giving help.

#### Sample

There are many times I ask myself what I have to do to be able to provide support for others. However, when I got a thank you from a stranger, a little boy, I realised helping was such a simple thing to do. I helped him without even knowing it.

I can't recall the exact time and date. **To the best of my recollection**, I had a day off work, and I saw a boy selling balloons and other toys at a street fair. He looked at the crowd in **despair**, since no one showed any interest in his stuff. I went over to him and I saw his eyes **light up**. I bought a few toys and asked him some questions. From his answers, I knew that he was **having a hard time**, which can drive anyone to tears. His mother was in shock after his father had walked out on the family **out of the blue**. She could not work anymore due to her **state of mind**. He had to earn money for him, his mother and his younger sister to live.

When I got back from holiday, I took a picture of the toys and posted it on my Facebook page with a caption about the boy's story. I also named the street where he was selling and called on my friends to buy his stuff if possible. It's hard to imagine the effect of a social networking site like Facebook. However, tons of people came to buy his stuff and offer him help. After some months, I returned to visit him. He and his mother showed me great appreciation and said that my simple action had changed their life. They couldn't have asked for more, and I couldn't be happier.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **To the best of my recollection**: trying to remember something to the best of your ability.
- **despair**: the complete loss or absence of hope.
- **light up**: look amazed and happy.
- **having a hard time**: a time of difficulty.
- **out of the blue**: from nowhere.
- **state of mind**: mental health and wellbeing.



### 37. Describe a traditional product in your country.

You should say:

- What it is;
- When was the first time you tried it;
- How to make it;
- How you like it.

#### Sample

I'd love to talk about rice, the most important agricultural plant in my country.

Ever since I was in my early elementary years, the rice plant has appeared in almost every subject, from literature to natural science to geography. And even in real life, the rice plant can be spotted all across the countryside around Vietnam.

**It never ceases to amaze** me how such a simple plant could support a whole nation's economy. Up to this day, millions of Vietnamese families are still dependent on the cultivation of rice to **make ends meet**. And the fact that Vietnam has become one of the world's leading rice exporters is more solid proof of the relevance of this plant in my country. Besides this, rice has been an indispensable part of the main meal of most families for centuries and children practice the habit of eating rice from a very young age, and as for the older generation, they **cannot go a day without** rice in some form or another.

Over thousands of years, the rice plant has played a really important role in Vietnamese culture and many traditions and ceremonies originate from the farmers hopes for an **abundant crop**, and many of these traditions are considered important established customs to foreign visitors. I think that the rice plant has become one of the greatest symbols for the Vietnamese spirit and deserves large appreciation from all generations.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Never cease to amaze me:** always amazes me.
- **Make ends meet:** make enough money to support yourself and your family.
- **Go a day without something:** don't have something for a day.
- **An abundant crop:** a large harvest from a crop of plants.

**38. Describe a leisure facility (cinema, theater, sports center) you would like to have in your home town.**

You should say:

- What it is;
- Why you would like to have this facility in your home town;
- When will you go there;
- How the facility changes your life;
- How you felt about it.

### Sample

So, today I am going to talk about an outstanding swimming pool called, the Four Seasons, which attracts around a thousand people a day and which many consider to be the most popular pool in the city.

Four Seasons is an indoor public pool located in my local **sports complex**. The reason why the pool is called Four Seasons is because it's a heated pool and people can go there to enjoy the warm water all year round.

As you may know, swimming is now becoming quite a popular exercise and **recreational activity** for people of all ages in Ho Chi Minh city, and I also took swimming lessons through my time at school. However, it was not until about a year ago that I started to pay regular visits to this pool. I am grateful to my best friend for introducing me to this wonderful place.

I think that Four Seasons is such a popular place for several reasons. Firstly, safety is their highest priority, and there's always a well-trained lifeguard there to enforce the pool safety rules and **perform any water rescues** if necessary. Secondly, the quality of the facilities is excellent. The pool is nicely heated and regularly **sanitised**. There are also clean changing rooms with showers and big lockers for all your clothes and other belongings. I think that all of this creates the best experience for the people that go there to swim. I believe that the Four Seasons swimming pool totally deserves its great reputation.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Sports complex:** An area for sports activities.
- **Recreational activity:** Something you do in your free time, usually for pleasure.
- **Perform any water rescues:** help someone who is unable to swim to safety.
- **Sanitised:** Made clean.



**39. Describe a place people can listen to music. (such as a theatre or a music hall)**

You should say:

- Where it is;
- What kind of music is performed there;
- What types of people go there;
- Why people go there;
- How you feel about it.

**Sample**

There are plenty of places that people living in my city could visit in order to be entertained by listening to music. Amongst them, I prefer Hoa Binh performing arts center; the most popular one.

Hoa Binh performing arts center is located in Ho Chi Minh City, near the city centre and I happened to have a chance to visit there a year ago. As far as I recall, the performing arts center was shaped like a circle in order to improve the acoustics.

In the theater, all sorts of performances take turns to be carried out. And many **influential orchestras** and **troupes** from home and abroad have performed there. When coming to this theater, you get a chance to listen to various **genres** of music, ranging from pop and rock music to folk songs free of charge. A lot of professional musicians and singers have their music performances there and I'm constantly having my mind blown by how talented and skillful the artists are.

The theater is also open to visitors for sightseeing. I strongly recommend you to visit there. Even if you are not to attend a play or a concert, it's still worth going to the theater to appreciate its unique design or see the art exhibitions displayed there.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **happened to:** came across an opportunity.
- **influential orchestras and troupes:** popular and respected musical and theatre groups.
- **genre:** a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterised by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.

#### 40. Describe a piece of furniture you like. (in your home)

You should say:

- What kind of furniture it is;
- What it looks like;
- Who bought it;
- What the furniture are made of;
- Why you like the furniture.

#### Sample

I'm going to describe my **night lamp**, which my father gave me when I had to leave home for studying.

It is a medium-sized plastic lamp, maybe twice or three times the size of a teddy bear. It is **shaped** like a panda, with the socket hidden at the bottom of the lamp and the switch seated neatly on its head. There's a **battery holder** beside the **socket**, so you can always use the battery if you cannot find an outside electrical socket to plug it in.

It was the very first time I'd been given a **night light**. I'd never used this type of lamp before, so I felt really excited and grateful upon receiving it. My father told me that this lamp could help me sleep better. And you know what, it actually worked! The lamp gives out a nice cozy yellow light, and I am able to really **sleep soundly** with it on.

I've been sleeping with this lamp beside my bed every night since the day I received it, and this cute little thing is one of my treasures. I plan to have it with me for a long time, so I'm trying to keep it in the best possible condition.

I really like my night lamp for two reasons, firstly that is a gift which represents for my father's love for me and I owe him a lot of gratitude. Secondly, **it also offers me a feeling of warmth** and comfort when having it in my room.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Night lamp:** A bed-side lamp to use at night.
- **to be shaped:** in the shape of.
- **battery holder:** A holder for a battery.
- **socket:** A place to plug in electronics and get electricity.
- **sleep soundly:** sleep well.

- **it also offers me a feeling of:** makes me feel a certain way.

#### 41. Describe an important letter you received.

You should say:

- Who sent the letter;
- What it is about;
- Why it is important;
- How you feel about it.

#### Sample

I'm going to talk about the time when I received the official notification of my scholarship to join an exchange program in Japan. It was about three years ago. It feels like a long time ago but I can still remember the day quite **vividly**.

At that time, I was a sophomore at university and one day I came across an advertisement for a two-month **cultural exchange program** in Japan for students from Southeast Asia. I was really eager to apply for this program. Luckily my application was accepted and I was also **nominated** for a scholarship.

So, about 2 months later, I received the letter from the Scholarship Committee informing me that I had been chosen to receive a full scholarship which would cover all kinds of fees and living expenses for me during the program. I think **my heart skipped a beat** and I screamed out loud when I saw the word "Congratulations" in that email. I was really proud of myself to be chosen from hundreds of candidates to win this scholarship.

It was definitely the best news of the year. If I hadn't won the scholarship, my living expenses would have been such a heavy **financial burden** for my parents, but thanks to the generous grants that I received, I could really enjoy my time in Japan without worrying about the money. To this day I still keep this lucky email in my inbox to remind me of that special occasion.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **vividly**: in a way that produces powerful feelings or strong, clear images in the mind.
- **cultural exchange program**: studying at a different university in another country as part of your university program.
- **nominated**: Placed on a list to win a prize.
- **my heart skipped a beat**: Intense excitement that shocks you.
- **financial burden**: Something that is very expensive.

## 42. Describe an exciting book you have read.

You should say:

- When you read it;
- What type/kind of book it is;
- What it is about;
- Why you read it /Why it is exciting.

### Sample

I would like to tell you about a book called Harry Potter, a **fantasy novel**, written by the British author J. K. Rowling. It's one that I can re-read **time and time again**.

The book describes the adventure and life of a young wizard named Harry Potter and his two best friends, Ron and Hermione. Harry has to struggle to kill the Dark wizard Lord Voldemort, whose aim is to become immortal and destroy all those who stand in the way of his mission to rule the world.

The reason why this book **comes to mind** is that it is a reminder of my childhood. It was a gift from my mother to reward my achievement at school. Up until now, I can still remember clearly how fascinated I was when I received it.

Harry Potter will always be on my to-read list for a number of reasons. Firstly, I have always been a great admirer of science fiction books so I love the way that the author describes the whole magical world with the magic school, Hogwarts, and the flying brooms. Secondly, reading this book not only helps me to relax after a long day of work or study but also cheers me up whenever I am feeling **blue**.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **fantasy novel**: a fiction book set in a different reality.
- **time and time again**: something that keeps happening.
- **comes to mind**: something that I think about.
- **blue**: sad.



### 43. Describe an interesting person from another country.

You should say:

- Who this person is;
- How you know this person;
- What this person does;
- Why this person is interesting.

#### Sample

Today I'm going to tell you about an interesting person from another country that I really admire and respect. I am currently studying English at ZIM English center and there are a lot of foreign teachers who are very kind, **well-mannered** and friendly. Among them, I would pick Mr. Vincent as the loveliest one I have met.

Mr. Vincent comes from America, the most developed country in the world, and he has lived in Vietnam for 2 years. He has acquired a reputation as a profound and dedicated teacher at my English school, I usually find him leaving for work early and getting home late. He first applied to Zim a year ago and since then he has **endeared himself to** everybody in the school.

What I find most appealing about him is that he's so polite and he **has really good manners**. He uses the word "thank you" even on the slightest occasion. For instance, I've noticed that whenever we eat at a restaurant, he will thank the waiters whenever they bring a dish to the table. And another example would be that every time he gets off a bus, he will always say thank you to the driver, which a lot of people probably think isn't necessary, but I'm sure the waiters and bus drivers really appreciate it. Whenever his students ask him to help them with difficult homework, he never complains or shows any **hesitation**. And due to this, he always **maintains a good reputation** thanks to his politeness.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Endeared himself to:** liked and appreciated by.
- **Have good manners:** Polite and thoughtful character.
- **Hesitation:** pause before saying or doing something, especially through uncertainty.
- **Maintain a good reputation:** keep good beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something

#### 44. Describe a businessman that you admire.

You should say:

- Who his person is;
- How you got to know this person;
- What this person does;
- How you think of this person.

#### Sample

Today I'm going to tell you about a businessman that I really admire and respect. I live in a beautiful and peaceful street and most of my neighbors are working for companies or running their own enterprises. Among them, I would pick Mr. Vincent as the most admirable businessman I have ever met.

Mr. Vincent is 30 years old and he established his first company when he was only 26. His company trades medical equipment, and it's name is Viet Sun. He has acquired a **reputation** as a **profound** and **dedicated** person to his work, I usually find him leaving for work early and getting home late. Even on weekends, instead of hanging out with friends, he is still glued to his computer screen.

Despite being older than me by nearly 10 years but he looks really young and is always full of energy. Few people have the great passion and relevant skills to pursue to their goals. Mr. Vincent is one of those who could achieve his dream by himself at the age of 26, and this is what I find most appealing about him.

Another of his lovely traits is definitely his wise advice. Therefore, whenever I feel **discouraged**, I will seek his advice. I have learnt many useful things from him, not only in everyday things, but also in **attitudes to life**.

To me, he is not just a normal businessman, but a person whom I can share things with and learn many things from. I really **owe a lot of gratitude** to him.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **reputation**: the beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something
- **profound**: having or showing great knowledge or insight.
- **dedicated**: devoted to a task or purpose; having single-minded loyalty or integrity.
- **attitudes to life**: mentality in daily life.
- **discouraged**: having lost confidence or enthusiasm; disheartened.

**45. Describe an experience that you taught a friend or a relative.**

You should say:

- When it happened and what it was;
- Who was taught by you;
- Why you taught someone something;
- How difficult it was for you.

**Sample**

The experience I am going to tell you about is that I taught my mother how to use Facebook to send messages and keep in touch with people. My mother is an old lady marching towards her 50s. She did not attend college but went to work directly after high school, which was quite common in her era. Ever since marriage, the focus of her life has been the family. She made sure my father and I eat well and dress well, and we have a nice clean house too.

Thus she did not have much time to pay attention to the development of technology and often felt puzzled facing all those **high-tech devices** like smart-phones, laptops and smart televisions.

Last year, my mother asked me whether I knew how to post statuses and pictures through Facebook since her friends were getting used to up-to-date technology and texting due to apps like Facebook or Viber became pretty popular. I said of course and patiently showed her how to open the app, how to log in and use all the functions of the app. She was so careful that she even wrote down all the procedures. After several practice attempts, she could do this by herself. I saw a big smile appear on her face.

I didn't find it difficult to teach a woman like my mother to exploit modern **gadgets**, and using them allowed her to catch up with her friends and also what's happening in the world.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **high-tech devices:** employing, requiring, or involved in high technology.
- **gadgets:** a small mechanical or electronic device or tool, especially an ingenious or novel one.

#### 46. Describe an interesting place that few tourists visit.

You should say:

- Where it is;
- When you went there;
- What you can see there;
- Why there is a few people to go.

#### Sample

To be honest, it's really hard to think about a place which is interesting and that few people know about. And today I will talk about one of my favorite restaurants. It is actually in the suburbs of my hometown. You know, this restaurant doesn't even have a name. We always call it "Năm Grandma" because the owner as well as the chef is an old grandma, whose name is Năm and she only offers lunch.

The restaurant is on a busy street and very near to a school. It is quite a small and **hectic** place. From the outside, the restaurant doesn't look very impressive and even a little bit poor. Inside there are lots of old square wooden tables, each with about four chairs around them.

This restaurant has several dishes, and you do not need to order from the menu, just pick up what you want from the kitchen. Each of them is so delicious to me. If you go there too late, you won't get the most popular one. Whenever I was free, I'd go there with my friends or family to enjoy my favorite dishes.

You know, even though it is a small restaurant, the delicious food made everyone who has been there fall in love with it. In my mind, it should be the best restaurant in the world. However, few people know it, maybe because it didn't have a name and you know, my hometown is a small city, so, it cannot be a famous place.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

**hectic:** full of constant activity.

**47. Describe something you bought according to an advertisement you saw.**

You should say:

- What it is;
- When and where you see the advertisement;
- Why you want to buy it;
- How you feel about it.

**Sample**

About a couple of months ago I saw an advertisement on the internet for a special pair of running shoes. It was the picture that caught my attention first because the shoes looked very different from normal running shoes.

They were made from a special material and had a **synthetic sole** grafted onto the body so that they fit like a glove on my foot. The bottom was quite similar to a normal running shoe so that it **gripped well** and provided protection for your feet.

Speaking of the advertisement, there was also a video that was maybe 3 or 4 minutes long and showed a runner going up a rocky hill. The video explained how these running shoes allowed the runner to feel more of the ground underneath his feet and grip better because of the flexing motion of the bottom of the shoes.

It was more an informative ad than anything arty or creative, but it made me want to buy the shoes because I hadn't seen them before and I wanted to try them, so I ordered a pair in my size. I've tried them out a couple of times so far and they seem really good. They cost me just a little bit more than some of the normal running shoes, but I think they're worth the extra money. The running experience is quite different from normal , personally, I prefer it.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **synthetic sole:** the bottom of a shoe, made by chemical synthesis, especially to imitate a natural product.
- **to be gripped well:** maintain a firm contact, especially by friction.

**48. Describe a time you felt happy that you used your cellphone.**

You should say:

- What you do;
- When, where you do it;
- Who you do it with;
- Why you felt happy using your cell phone.

**Sample**

I'd like to share with you an unforgettable experience: when my mother gave me a smart phone.

It was when I took an entrance examination successfully which **marked a significant milestone** in my life. Therefore, in order to reward my achievement in studying, my mother gave me an Iphone, the most popular smart phone. Everyone across the globe wants to have it.

At that time, I can clearly remember how fascinated I was when I received it. I spent most of my time discovering how to use it and it helped me communicate with my friends, family members and teachers. It gets me connected with the people I care about. I use the internet on my cell phone, check my emails, update my blog, track the statistics of my website, send and receive SMS, play games, listen to music and take pictures, then share them on my Facebook and twitter profiles. Besides these I do lots of other things on my cell phone including using important apps, reading e-books, using it as a modem to use the internet on my PC. I could not imagine how my life would be without my smart phone.

I was thankful for the mobile phone that my mother gave me. Firstly, my productivity was significantly improved, I was surprised at how much I revised for my exams with my smart phone. More importantly, I must say that my life was less boring with this **amusement and recreational device** that lets me play games and listen to music. Finally, I can update my social networking profiles and **get updates from** my friends right from my cell phone.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **marked a significant milestone:** an important and memorable event.
- **bear in mind:** keep in my mind.
- **amusement and recreational device:** a gadget used for entertainment.

#### 49. Describe a person who knows a lot/is knowledgeable.

You should say:

- Who the person is;
- What the person do;
- What kinds of things he knows;
- What you learn from him/her.

#### Sample

To '**think outside of the box**' is always the term that comes to mind whenever a problem arises and its difficult to find a solution. There is one person on this planet though who always surprises me with his cleverness and ability to come up with a solution to even some of the toughest problems. His name is Nam and he's my older brother.

My mother always told us that even though we're brothers and we have a **close-knit relationship**, we're still as different as two people could possibly be. I'm quite an active person and have a tendency to make very quick decisions, while my brother is extremely calm and usually solves problems in a **level-headed** kind of way. It is for this reason that he has been a kind of savior to me on a number of occasions.

There is a time that I consider an important landmark in my life, which was when I took the entrance exam to university. And, similarly to my mother, I suffer from **hypotension** which is low blood pressure and sometimes causes dizziness when I'm hungry or tired. In certain circumstances, I just need the sugar from a couple of candy bars to recover, but actually I'm quite an **absent-minded** person so I usually forget to carry any with me. On that day, when the start of the examination was getting nearer, I was so nervous that I couldn't think clearly and my hands had begun to shake. All of a sudden, I found some tiny chocolate bars in my pocket, and they saved my life! In the end, it turned out that my brother remembered to put some in my pocket for me in order to avoid this situation. He was so thoughtful and smart to do such a thing!

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Think outside of the box:** Think in a different way; from a new perspective.
- **A close-knit relationship:** a close and long relationship.
- **Level-headed:** a decision made in sound mind.
- **Hypotension:** abnormally low blood pressure.
- **Absent-minded:** not paying attention.

**50. Describe an advertisement you have seen recently.**

You should say:

- When and where you saw it;
- What kind of advertisement it was;
- What the contents of the advertisements were;
- How you felt about it.

**Sample**

I'm going to talk about an advertisement for Blue Electronics, which is one of the biggest electronics brands in Vietnam. I've seen its advertisements everywhere, on TV commercials and even on social media networks like Facebook and Instagram.

The advertisement shows a video of people dressed as blue household appliances, smiling, staring creepily at the screen and dancing spontaneously to a really annoying yet catchy tune. I think the aim of this ad is to create a big impression on the audience and to make the products seem more **appealing** to them. I also think they are trying to **traumatise** the audience so that whenever they hear that tune, they will think of Blue Electronics. I think the advert is interesting because the company is deliberately trying to influence and attract people's attention, and they do this by trying to present the household appliances as something special, and kind of like a useful friend for everyone I guess. I think older people will probably not enjoy these kinds of advertisements because older people usually prefer more informative, serious kind of ads, whereas the younger generation seems to be crazier about this kind of advertisement, as I think they are more open and able to perceive more innovative and hilarious ideas.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **Appealing:** attractive or interesting.
- **Traumatise:** subject to lasting shock as a result of an emotionally disturbing experience or physical injury.



## 51. Describe a TV program

You should say:

- What the TV program is
- How you know it
- What it is like
- Why you like it

### Band 8 Sample:

I'm going to talk about "Who wants to be a millionaire", one of my favorite TV shows ever.

As far as I can remember, it was originally a UK TV Game Show, and it made its first **debut** in Vietnam around 10 years ago.

This was kind of a quiz show in which contestants have to go through a set of 15 questions with increasing difficulty. The first 5 questions are pretty silly really, and they always **give me and my family a good laugh**. Contestants are given 4 lifelines to aid them with difficult questions, and most of them are usually used up when the contestant reaches around question 7 or 8. The entire show is **a sea of knowledge**. Many questions from different fields are asked, ranging from trivial things like ingredients needed to make cookies to academic stuff like quantum physics and archeology.

You know, I'm quite a curious man, so back when I was a high school kid, I hardly missed an episode. When the Internet became available in Vietnam, I started to watch the UK and US version as well, and knowledge acquired from those shows were really helpful to me in many of my high school knowledge quizzes.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Debut:** The first public appearance of something
- **Give somebody a good laugh:** Make someone laugh in excitement
- **A sea of knowledge:** a lot of knowledge

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do young people like to watch TV nowadays?**

I would say no. The Internet is a much better option; everything from films and TV series to music is available on the Net, some of which are free of charge (or at least in Vietnam I think). Young people, with their smartphones in hand, no longer feel the need to watch TV.

- **What kind of TV programs do young people like?**

Mostly soap operas, I believe. More women watch TV than men do, and romances are their favorites. Also, cartoons are popular among kids, and students in Vietnam also love quiz shows.

- **Do you think TV will be replaced by computers?**

Yes, it's very likely. I can see that coming really. The Internet has been a much better option; everything from films and TV series' to music is available on the Net, some of which are free of charge (or at least in Vietnam I think). Young people, with their smartphones in hand, no longer feel the need to watch TV. I would call it the "natural" selection of technology.

- **What do you think about TV advertisements?**

TV commercials help us to know about stuff we need to buy, so I think it's pretty useful. However, at times it can be very annoying when it interrupts our favorite shows.

## 52. Describe something you enjoy doing with an old person in your family

You should say:

- What it is
- How often you do it
- Who you do it with
- Why you enjoy doing it with this person

### Band 8 Sample:

Well, now I'm going to tell you something about an activity that I am particularly keen on doing with my 80-year-old grandmother, which is watching an Indian soap opera series on TV. Honestly, the series that we like best is "8-year-old bride" and it is broadcast every day on Today TV.

The first time my grandma and I knew about this TV series was about 4 months ago after seeing the 1<sup>st</sup> episode of it. As I still remember, on that day, we were both highly impressed by a character in the film called Anadhi and since then, we have never missed even a single episode. This series mainly tells the story of a girl named Anadhi, who had to **live a miserable life** since she was in a **forced marriage** at the age of 8. After that, she also **encountered several difficulties and pains** throughout her life.

As I mentioned, this series is shown every evening at 8 pm and I always try my best to arrange my work so that I can enjoy it with my beloved grandma. During the time we watch, she also tells a lot of things about the meaningful details in each episode, which I could hardly realise if watching alone. In fact, I have learned quite a lot of wonderful lessons from both this series and my grandmother and the most important lesson would be: "Getting married too early can be the most terrible mistake that one can make".

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Live a miserable life:** to have a very unhappy and uncomfortable life
- **A forced marriage:** a marriage where the husband and wife are forced to get married
- **Encounter difficulties and pains:** to experience difficulties

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **How much time should parents spend with their children every day?**

Well, it is quite difficult to give an accurate answer to this question since I believe that this should depend on the working schedule of each person. However, everyone should consider spending time with their kids as one of the top priorities and I think that the most suitable amount of time each day would be about 4 – 5 hours (sleeping time excluded).

- **Do young people like to live with old people in your country?**

Actually, in Vietnam, taking care of old parents is the responsibility of everyone and I think that it is the moral value that we should always keep, whether we like it or not. Therefore, it is very easy to find an extended family with at least 3 generations living under one roof in Vietnam and in most cases, all family members are very happy.

- **What's the most important thing that young people can learn from old people?**

Obviously, it's experience. Old people have spent the major part of their life dealing with several challenges and difficulties. Therefore, they have a huge amount of experience in many different aspects of life. If a young person wants to solve a problem quickly, the best way will be asking for help from an elderly person.

- **Do people nowadays spend less quality time for their family?**

Unfortunately, I have to say yes. Due to the development of the society nowadays, young people are getting busier and busier, which means that they tend to have less time to spend with other members in their family. In fact, I know some people who barely see the faces their relatives, even though they are living in the same house.

- **Do Vietnamese families like to arrange indoor or outdoor activities?**

You know, parents in my country really want their children to go out more since young people are spending too much time on their mobile phones. Therefore, whenever they can arrange their free time, they would immediately organise an outdoor activity for the whole family. And actually, I think that this is a very good thing since the bond between family members can be strengthened thanks to frequent participation in these activities.

### 53. Describe a situation when you had to be polite

#### You should say:

- What situation it was
- Who were there
- Why you had to be polite
- How you showed politeness

#### Band 8 Sample:

I would like to talk about a time when I saved a bus seat for a pregnant lady.

It was a rainy day around 3 years ago when I was still a freshman at university. On a bus trip from my **dormitory** to the city center to attend a **music festival** sponsored by Heneiken, I met a pregnant lady who got on the bus at one of the stations. At that time, the bus was already **swarming with** students, and many of them even had to stand as there were not enough seats for all. In that **stuffy atmosphere**, the lady's face suddenly turned **pale** and she had to hold on to the hand rail tightly. Sweat was rolling off her forehead.

**Without hesitation**, I stood up and asked her to take my seat. Then I quickly opened the glass window, trying to release the heat from inside the bus. After taking a deep breath, the lady seemed to feel better and started to have conversation with me. She told me that she was on the way to visit her aunt who was in the hospital. She knew that the bus was full but she couldn't wait for the next one in order not to be late for the visiting hours. She also thanked me a lot for saving her the seat. Without a place to sit on the bus, she thought she would have fainted because of dizziness.

I think any person who witnessed that moment would also have the same reaction as me. For me, I did it simply because it was necessary, and my action just came from my instinct, without any hesitation. If the lady had stood for a long time, that would have affected not only her health but also her baby inside. Also, I always thought of my mom's advice to pay close attention to things around me and provide support to people at the right time as it could be very meaningful. Therefore, at the end of that day, I was still **thrilled** because I had helped not only one, but two people. I mean the mom and her baby.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Dormitory:** a building for college students to live in
- **A music festival:** a community event oriented towards live performances of singing and instrument playing

- **Swarming with:** to be full of something
- **Stuffy atmosphere:** an unpleasantly warm atmosphere without enough fresh air

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Are Vietnamese people becoming politer?**

Back a few decades ago I would say “yes”, but now it is different. In my observations, people seem to only care about themselves and do not often show their politeness toward others. I have been very surprised, you know, to realize that men are no longer courteous enough to pull out a chair for a woman in a restaurant; young people queuing at the cashier desk at the supermarket are no longer willing to save the turn for elderly people. So, it is the bitter truth.

- **In what ways do Vietnamese people show politeness?**

Like I mentioned, it is hard to see polite behavior in public places nowadays. However, in certain environments, the politeness is well preserved. For example, in school students usually save the elevator for their teachers or friends who are disabled. In the hospital, visitors have been more aware of their noise and try to walk and talk quietly when passing through the area where there are patients. These are behaviors that should be encouraged.

- **What are the uncivilized manners on public transportation?**

There are numerous of them I have to say. Some may eat and drink on the bus regardless of the smell that may annoy other passengers, or on the train some may talk too loudly and bother those who need some rest. So, to better improve the situation, I think regulations should be posted on these means of public transport so that people know how to behave appropriately.

- **What would you do when this happens?**

Well, it may depend on who they are. To young people or those the same age as me, a friendly reminder with a smile may be effective to stop their irritating behavior in peace. But for other people who look rather aggressive, to be honest, being quiet and suffering can be the only way to prevent me from further troubles.

### Should people show politeness to friends?

Why not? It is really insufficient to believe that politeness should be saved for and given to certain groups of people. Even to friends, politeness is welcomed as it is one of the factors that strengthen the friendship. Friends can then see each other as a good example and contribute together to the development of a civilized society.

#### 54. Describe a time when someone visited your home

You should say:

- Who he or she was
- When it happened
- What you did
- How you felt about the visit

#### Band 8 Sample:

So it was around 4 months ago since I invited one of my very close friends to come over to my house for dinner. It was Christmas Eve, and my friend is **an expat** living far away from home. As I didn't want him to spend his Christmas alone, I asked him to join my family for a special family dinner. My friend is an American, and since he couldn't have turkey on Thanksgiving that year, my mom decided to make turkey for him that night.

One of the funny things I remember about that night was that pretty much all the cooking appliances in my house were electrical, even the stove and all of a sudden it was a **blackout** an hour right before dinner time so by the time my friend got to my house, none of the food was ready. I was a quite embarrassed, but my friend was pretty cool about it. We lit up the candles and my dad went out to buy some bread and ham. We were talking and eating while waiting for the power to turn back on. We had an absolutely amazing time talking about **the cultural differences**, how hospitable Vietnamese people are, and how **the language barrier** didn't stop him from getting to know the locals.

Anyway, we got to eat the turkey after a 2 hour delay. Even though my mother made it quite differently from the way my friend's family did, he really enjoyed it. And I must say that my parents absolutely **adored** him after that night. Since then, he has been coming over more often and becoming a very close friend to our family.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **An expat:** a person living outside their own country
- **A blackout:** a period when there is no light as a result of an electrical power failure
- **The cultural differences:** the differences between 2 cultures
- **The language barrier:** the difficulties in communication experienced by people or groups speaking different languages

- **Adore:** love someone very much



### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do young people like to visit their friends nowadays?**

Yeah..., I guess. But I think this question is really awkwardly phrased. Like visiting here you mean visit them when they're sick, or just simply meeting up with friends? If you mean meeting up with friends, then yes. And I think not only the young but also the old also like to visit their friends as well. It's just youngsters have more time to do it. And as they do not have to spare so much of their energy or time for family, or children yet, they can spend their time with their friends.

- **What do Vietnamese people usually do when hanging out together?**

There're tons of activities we often do together like going to the coffee shop, and shooting the breeze there. Just look at the increasing number of coffee shops and tea houses here, in HCMC, we can see how much Vietnamese people like to spend their time there. We also like to go to the movie theater, catching up with some of the latest entertainment or maybe simply chilling at home and listening to music.

- **Do you think technology has brought us closer or not?**

I mean, technology is a double-edged sword. It can go both ways.

On the one hand, things like Facebook and Instagram help us to keep in touch with our friends in this hectic life. We can also find people who share the same interest on these social media platforms.

On the other hand, using phones and other devices has created a self-imposed isolation. This is proven in the most obvious way when we go to a coffee shop and see so many groups of teenagers sitting together but they all have their eyes stuck to their phones instead of talking to each other

- **What time do you think is suitable for visiting?**

Any time we are invited to come, obviously. But if we decide to show up to visit someone out of the blue then I think we shouldn't come too early in the morning or too late at night. We don't want to wake them up to open the door for us or keep them from going to bed. And another unsuitable time I can think of is meal times like lunch or dinner, as in our culture it's quite impolite to show up at someone's door around this time. You know, you never wanna interrupt people while they're eating.

- **How do you make new friends?**

Me, personally, I'm going with the conventional ways, making friends with my classmates or colleagues. I don't like making friends through social networking websites, though I know it's pretty common nowadays. I guess because I'm often paranoid about talking to strangers, and any of these

people can turn out to be serial killers maybe. Gosh, I know I'm watching too many psychological movies.

## 55. Describe an unusual dinner that you had

You should say:

- When you had this dinner
- Who you had it with
- What dishes you had
- And explain why you think this dinner was unusual

### Band 8 Sample:

Well, my family usually enjoys our dinner at home with simple and traditional dishes, but there was an occasion we had a very special meal together in a fancy restaurant.

It was around 3 years ago when I was **tied up in** revision for my final examination. After that high-pressure time, I **passed the exam with flying colors** so my dad decided to **ease my mind** by taking the whole family to a Western restaurant for enjoying a cozy meal together.

That dinner was a little unusual to my family because we had never eaten in such a luxurious restaurant, so my mother and I were very surprised at that time.

This French restaurant is located in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. Because it is situated in a **well-trodden** area, this restaurant welcomes hundreds of guests every night. The food here, therefore, wasn't very **budget-friendly**. Actually, it **cost** my family **an arm and a leg**, which made this dinner even more special to me. Even though my dad is not the kind of person who **makes a killing**, he was still willing to take my mom and me to such a restaurant as a reward for my hard work. So I really appreciated him for that.

I really enjoyed this dinner because it really helped me to relieve everyday stress and chill out after long hard-working days. Besides, this unusual meal was also a very good chance for us to strengthen our family bond because we all have been so busy for a long time.

In the future I will try to earn a lot of money to take my family to wonderful places like this to try different cuisines and outstanding dishes, like lobster, abalone and salmon.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **To be tied up in something:** to be occupied by something/too busy doing something
- **To pass the exam with flying colors:** successfully pass the exam
- **Ease my mind:** to relax

- **Well-trodden area:** an area with a lot of people traveling
- **Budget friendly:** affordable
- **Cost an arm and a leg:** very expensive
- **Make a killing:** make a lot of money quickly

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do you think having dinner at home is a good idea?**

Well, definitely yes, home-made dishes are usually cleaner because we know how and when they were processed. Eating in restaurants may be less time-consuming for people who are too busy at work or study, but if the food they eat in restaurants is not hygienic enough, it will be harmful for their health. Moreover, having dinner with family members is a very good way to reduce stress and find happiness after work. If we are living with your family, a cozy dinner at home is very important.

- **Do young people like to spend time with their families or friends?**

I believe this will depend on what kind of people we are talking about. I mean, to those with a sociable personality, spending time with friends is not only a good way to have fun but also a time to cultivate their friendships which will help them at work. On the other hand, family-oriented people prefer staying with their family members because we all know family is always the most important. There are many kinds of young people, so I think their options are varied.

- **What do you think are the benefits of having dinner together?**

Having dinner with other people brings about a great number of benefits. One of them is this is a good way to relieve stress from work or study through talks we have with our family or friends. You know, eating alone would be very silent and tedious. Besides, people usually share their happy and sad stories they experienced in their workplace or at school, so I think we can learn a lot from it during our meals. For example, stories about my friends' mistakes teach me what to do in a similar situation.

- **Do you think people are less willing to cook meals by themselves these days, compared to the past?**

Yes, I think most people nowadays lead very hectic lifestyles so they get used to fast food, meals that they can easily find at restaurants or even canned food. Many years ago, when many Vietnamese people were farmers, food like rice or other produce sometimes were abundant in their own house, so it would take them less time to prepare meals. Furthermore, cooking was a traditional activity of our ancestors, so they spent more time cooking than people in our modern

society.

## 56. Describe an important event that you celebrated

You should say:

- What it was
- Where it happened
- Why it was important
- How people felt about it

### Band 8 Sample:

I would like to talk about the time I held a birthday party for my younger sister. It was back in 2015 when she passed the university entrance examination with flying colors and immediately got admitted to three top universities in Ho Chi Minh city, which **came as a surprise to** all of my family. Therefore, to mark her **resounding success** as well as her **turning point** in life, I celebrated her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, just a few days after she received the acceptance letters.

Moving on to the details, I would say that it was more of a family dinner which only involved my own family and some of my sister's close friends. However, I still tried my best to make it become one of the most unforgettable events of her life by cooking many kinds of dishes that she adored, ranging from Bun Cha to Pho, all of which were Vietnamese **specialties**. On top of that, I also invited a music band to perform many of her favorite songs, which made the atmosphere at that particular moment become cozier than ever before. In the end, we sang the birthday song when my sister cut the cake. We congratulated her and wished her a successful college life ahead. Then we ate cake and had a good **feast** together.

After the party, my sister came to me and said that was the best birthday party she had ever had in her life. My parents at that time also felt moved because the bond between us was strengthened a lot.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Come as a surprise to someone:** to surprise someone
- **Resounding success:** a great success
- **Turning point:** a time at which a decisive change in a situation occurs
- **Specialties:** a type of food that a restaurant or place is famous for
- **Feast:** a large or special meal

### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **Do you like to plan for an important meeting or activity?**

Yes, I think it is good to plan for an essential meeting because without planning a meeting can go in any direction and people can get deviated from the actual goal of the meeting, however, if it is planned then the meeting will be much more constructive and useful.

- **What events do Vietnamese people like to celebrate?**

Well, people in my country love to celebrate various events, from formal to normal ones, such as birthdays, weddings, and even grand openings. Mostly because they do believe that such celebrations will make the events become more meaningful and strengthen the bonds between the attendants.

## 57. Describe an important skill which cannot be learned at school

You should say:

- What the skill is
- Why it cannot be learned at school
- Why it is important
- How we can learn it

### Band 8 Sample:

Today I would like to talk about making presentations, which is a skill that I learned from my mentor who used to encourage and give me many pieces of sound advice.

It was about 3 years ago, when I was studying in an English language center in order to improve my English skills to a higher level. During that time, my **peers** and I had many opportunities to make presentations in English **under the guidance of** Jimmy, who is **a born presenter** and is **head and shoulders above everyone else** in teaching students how to speak in front of the crowd. At first, I was faced with various obstacles when speaking in front of my classmates, especially the first time because I **had butterflies in my stomach**, so I really struggled with speaking in front of a lot of people confidently, and I even suffered from failures. However, I gradually overcame the difficulties and **got the hang of it**, and things became easier for me since then.

As for why this skill is essential, I believe that when studying at universities or working in companies, people have to speak publicly **on a frequent basis** in order to prove their ability in their study or their work. Therefore, by watching YouTube videos or going to learning centers, learners can improve their presentation skills to a higher degree.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Peer:** a person who is the same age or who has the same social status as you
- **Under the guidance of somebody:** to be guided by somebody
- **A born presenter:** someone who is really good at making presentations
- **Head and shoulders above everyone else:** to be better than everyone else
- **Have butterflies in my stomach:** have a nervous feeling
- **Get the hang of it:** to learn to handle something with some skills
- **On a frequent basis:** to do something frequently



### IELTS Speaking Part 3

- **What qualities do you think are the most important for work?**

When it comes to work, I think communication skills are the most important. This is because from the initial moment that applicants get in touch with interviewers when applying for a new job, those interviewers will scrutinize the way they behave. If the applicants can prove their communication skills, it is likely that they will not only communicate well with other coworkers but also with regular customers, which would allow them to broaden their knowledge and gradually become a well-rounded employee.

- **What skills do you want to learn?**

I guess that I'm really interested in technology skills because they seem to be essential in my occupation nowadays. Specifically, although I am working as a teacher, I need to use some modern devices like overhead projectors and laptops on a frequent basis, for example, in order to convey lessons to students more effectively. This will not only help students to understand lessons more thoroughly but also allow me to develop my lesson plans carefully.

- **Is it necessary for teenagers to learn to use computers?**

Yes, I think children should learn how to use computers because of two main reasons. One of which is that computer skills are mainly required in schools nowadays, which means that they need to use modern devices to search for information on the Internet in order to study as well as to do assignments and homework. For example, in Vietnam, students are allowed to use tablets and smartphones to look up new words in English when doing exercises. Another major reason is that computer skills also bring benefits in the long-term, as most companies nowadays include these skills as a compulsory requirement, regardless of the occupation.

## 58. Describe a couple you know who have a happy marriage

You should say:

- Who they are
- How you know them
- What they usually do together

And how you feel about their marriage.

### Sample

Well, I would like to talk about my own parents whose marriage is, **without a doubt**, a happy one. They have been married for 30 years now and are the perfect couple in my eyes.

Well, my mother and father are now in their 60's and they are still really busy with their **nine to five jobs** in a government office, but I think that both of them are going to **retire** later this year. During 30 years of marriage, my parents have **been through thick and thin** together but have never lost their love for each other. My parents usually just show their affection simply by always being honest with each other and sharing their **true feelings**. Their **mutual understanding** for each other is so **profound** that sometimes it only takes one look to realise what the other is thinking.

Of course they still have minor **tiffs** every now and then, you know, things like who will have to pick up the kids or who gets the TV remote. However, my dad is always the first one to **give in** and turn to comfort my mother. I think little action's like these are actually **the key** to my parents' **long lasting** relationship.

To me, mom and dad are a **perfect match** and I admire their love for each other so much. Hopefully, in the future, I will have a partner that cares for me as much as my parents care for each other.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **without a doubt** – certainly, definitely or positively
2. **a nine to five job** – a job with daytime hours starting at 9am and finishing at 5pm eg. an office job
3. **to retire** – to finish working after reaching a certain age eg. 60-65 years old
4. **through thick and thin** – through good times and bad or difficult times
5. **true feelings** – what someone is actually feeling inside
6. **mutual understanding** – when two people agree or think the same about something
7. **profound** – very great or amazing
8. **a tiff** – a small argument

9. **to give in** – to stop competing or arguing because you can't win
10. **the key** - the thing that will help to achieve or do something
11. **long lasting** – happens for a long time
12. **a perfect match** – two people that are good together

### 59. Describe a helpful person at work or school

You should say:

- Who it was
- What this person did
- How this person helped

And explain how you felt after this person helped you.

#### Sample

I would like to describe one of my teachers who taught me at high school, who **had a great influence on** me and was the person who helped me succeed in my university entrance examination. Her name is Linh and she taught me English for 3 years of high school and was also my form teacher. She was **in her late 40's** then but looked young for her age.

I was really influenced by the way she taught us in class. Her **thoroughness** in teaching inspired me to study English, even though I had not been interested in it before. We never felt bored in her classes, she always told us interesting stories about British and American culture and people, and also organized some games so that we could learn new vocabulary and grammar effortlessly.

I remember that during the three months before the university entrance exam, which was the most important exam of my life, she had delivered some free classes for the students who weren't quite **up to standard**, including myself. She patiently guided us through difficult questions and provided many useful tips to help deal with the test. Thanks to her **effective teaching method** and **great dedication**, I was able to pass the university entrance exam with almost a perfect score in English.

Although I have graduated from high school and now study in Hanoi, I often visit her on the holidays and tell her about my daily life in the big city and she's always available to give me some advice about any problems I have. I am **forever grateful** to have Mrs. Linh in my life.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **to have a great influence on someone** – to effect someone in a positive way
2. **in one's late 40's** – to be aged 47-49 years old
3. **thoroughness** – to include everything that is necessary
4. **up to standard** – to be at an average or above average level

5. **effective teaching method** – a teaching method that helps students learn easily
6. **great dedication** – a large amount of time and effort spent doing something important
7. **forever grateful** – to be thankful for a long time

## 60. Describe a new friend you`ve made recently

You should say:

- Who the person is
- What kind of person he/she is
- How you met this person

And explain why you made friends with him/her

### Sample

I am going to talk about Mrs. Kim who is a lovely lady that I recently **befriended**.

I started **college life** 3 months ago and on my first day of school I was unable to **navigate my way to** my new university where I was studying. Google Maps wasn't really as helpful as I thought it would be and I couldn't **figure out the way** by asking the locals either. So, after many hours of **wandering around**, I finally **resorted to** asking a lady who was selling noodles from a food cart near where I was standing. I asked the lady if she knew the way to the HCMC University of Education, and she just smiled and pointed at the large, five-story building across the road. **Turns out** I was there **all along!** So, after thanking the lady, we had a little chat and I found out she also came from Ninh Thuan, which is my hometown! We immediately became good friends and now her food cart has become my favourite **lunch spot** whenever I'm at university.

So I guess the main reason that Mrs. Kim and I have become good friends is basically because I think she's a really sweet lady. As I've gotten to know her better I've realized that she's had quite **a tough life**, yet she has managed to maintain a sweet and gentle personality that many other women who have been through struggles like her would have lost by now. I guess the other reason we get on so well is because we share the same hometown, and I tend **to get on well with** people from my hometown. Sometimes I think the best friendships are made so unexpectedly.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **Befriended** – to make friends with
2. **college life** – student or university life
3. **navigate my way to** – to find my way
4. **figure out the way** – to find my way
5. **wandering around** – walking around without a fixed route or destination
6. **resorted to** – to do something because there is no other option
7. **turns out** – prove to be true, what actually happened
8. **all along** – the whole time

9. **lunch spot** – a place to eat lunch like a café, restaurant or food cart
10. **a tough life** – a challenging or difficult life
11. **to get on well with** – to have a good relationship with someone

## 61. Describe a polite person you met

You should say:

- Who the person is
- How you know the person
- What the person looks like

And explain why you think the person is polite.

### Sample

Well, the person I'd like to talk to you about is a very good friend of mine, Mai. She must be one of the nicest and most polite individuals I know.

We've basically known each other **since forever** because we were in the same class from high school through to college. She is like **my partner in crime** and we can share everything together from schoolwork to our **love lives**.

You know, the first time I met her she left a **deep impression** on me because on the first day of school I **got lost** while trying to find my classroom and she really helped me out. Surprisingly, we were also arranged by the teacher to be **desk-mates**.

And the reason why I think she's so polite is simply because she has really **good manners**. She **abuses** the word "thank you" even **on the slightest occasion**. For instance, I've noticed that whenever we eat at a restaurant, she will thank the waiters whenever they bring a dish to the table. And another example would be that every time she gets off a bus, she will always say thank you to the driver, which a lot of people probably think isn't necessary, but I'm sure the waiters and bus drivers really **appreciate** it. Finally, whenever our classmates ask her to help them with difficult homework, she never complains or shows any **hesitation**. And due to this, she always **maintains a good reputation** thanks to her politeness.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **since forever** – for a long time
2. **my partner in crime** – good friends who do a lot together including getting into trouble
3. **love life** – relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife
4. **deep impression** – a strong effect or influence
5. **to get lost** – to not know where you are
6. **desk-mates** – to sit next to or share a desk with someone



7. **good manners** – to be polite and respectful
8. **abuses** – to use too much or use in a bad way
9. **on the slightest occasion** – at small, unimportant moments
10. **appreciate** – to be thankful
11. **hesitation** – to stop or pause for a short moment
12. **a good reputation** – when people have a good opinion of someone or something

## 62. Describe a family member who has had an important influence on you

You should say:

- Who the person is;
- What kind of person he or she is;
- What this person has done to influence you;

And explain why you think this person is important to you.

### Sample

I am going to talk about my mother who has played **an essential role** in my life. She is my **guardian**, my friend and my **role model**.

My mother is in her forties now, but she still **maintains a youthful look**. In terms of personality, she is an extremely **compassionate** and **kind-hearted** person who always takes care of her children. She really is a mother and a friend to me as she always gives me valuable advice and is willing to **stand by me** through all **the ups and downs** of my life. Although sometimes she **drives me crazy** due to her being a perfectionist, I still hold so much pride and respect for her.

I am also influenced by her **strong-will**. Ever since she was young, she had to learn to be **independent** as my grandparents were very busy and constantly **on the go**. She had to take care of almost everything: her younger brother, household chores and herself. Such challenges **shaped her** into the strong person that she is now.

Her **determination**, as well as her **perseverance**, are really something for us to look up to. And I keep reminding myself every day to be as strong as my mother, **a real-life “wonder woman.”**

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **an essential role** – a necessary part
2. **guardian** – someone who protects you
3. **role model** – someone to admire or look up to
4. **maintains a youthful look** – to keep looking young
5. **compassionate** – to understand and care about someone
6. **kind-hearted** – to be a kind or nice person to others
7. **to stand by someone** – to support or help someone
8. **the ups and downs** – the good and bad times
9. **drives me crazy** – to repair and improve something eg. a building
10. **strong-will** – to be determined, not give up easily

11. **independent** – to look after or think for yourself or to not be controlled by others
12. **on the go** – always doing something or going somewhere
13. **shaped her** – changed her or made her that way
14. **determination** – to not let anything stop you from doing what you have decided to do
15. **perseverance** – to continue trying to achieve something
16. **a real-life “wonder woman”** – someone who really helps you or saves you

### 63. Describe an invention that changed people's lives

You should say:

- What it was
- Who invented it
- When it was invented

And explain how it changed people's lives

#### Sample

I would like to talk about the telephone which, in my opinion, is one of the most **revolutionary creations** that has changed our lives.

As far as I know, Alexander Graham Bell was **the father of** this terrific device and he invented it in the last century through a lot of **trial and error**.

It is no **exaggeration** to say that human life has completely changed since the first telephone was **devised**. A few centuries ago people could only communicate long distances through writing letters, which could **take ages** to be delivered. And in the case of emergencies or **confidential** information, writing letters really wasn't an effective way of communicating.

So, one of the main reasons that I believe that the telephone has changed people's lives is simply by making communication between people so much faster, easier and more convenient than ever before. These days when you need **to get in contact with somebody**, all you need to do is pick up your phone, dial a few numbers and wait for them to answer. And if they don't answer, then you can usually just leave a voice message for them to let them know what it is you wanted to tell them.

Furthermore, I believe that communication is **at the core of** social development, and I think that the **advent** of the telephone has made **a great contribution** to this area of life.

So, whether the information is urgent, confidential, or even **down right** unnecessary, I think that the telephone has made a massive difference to people's lives and our societies as well.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **revolutionary creation** – something that made a big difference in people's lives
2. **the father of** – the inventor or creator of something
3. **trial and error** – trying a number of different methods and learning from the mistakes
4. **exaggeration** – to over-state something, to say it is better or worse than it really is

5. **devised** – planned or invented
6. **take ages** – take a long time
7. **confidential** – secret
8. **to get in contact with somebody** – to contact someone by mail, email, message or phone
9. **at the core of** – at the centre of
10. **advent** – the arrival or beginning of something
11. **a great contribution** – a big help
12. **down right** – absolutely or completely

## 64. Describe your favourite piece of clothing

You should say:

- Where you got it
- When you got it
- How often you wear it

And explain why it is your favourite piece of clothing.

### Sample

Well, I would like to tell you about a pair of ripped jeans that are my favorite item among all the things I have in my wardrobe.

You know, I bought them for an **unbelievably cheap** price a long time ago in a **second-hand** clothing store. **At that point**, ripped jeans were really popular and everybody in my school was **keen on** them. So, whenever I put these jeans on, I felt really **stylish** and thought I really **stood out from the crowd**. After a while though, trends started to change, but I refused to **abandon** my jeans. I wore them almost everywhere, from home to school and only changed them for formal events such as a ceremony or a wedding. Sometimes I even slept in my jeans because they were so comfortable.

Actually, it is quite easy to understand why I **fancy** these jeans so much. Firstly, they instantly create a stylish and fashionable look for the wearer. Secondly, jeans are easy to **mix and match** and I can wear them with **heaps** of different shirts without worrying about looking **ridiculous in other people's eyes**. And lastly, **denim** is so tough that it can't be torn, so I can have them for a long time and save a **great deal of** money.

All in all, I love my jeans and cannot **get through a day** without them. I think such an item should be made **trendy** again so that the youngsters nowadays can really get to know their awesomeness.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **unbelievably cheap** – really cheap
2. **second-hand** – used, not new eg. second-hand clothes or furniture
3. **at that point** – at that time
4. **keen on** – really like
5. **stylish** – looking good, fashionable
6. **stood out from the crowd** – looked different from everyone around them
7. **abandon** – to leave someone or something behind

8. **fancy** – like
9. **mix and match** – change different styles or colours
10. **heaps** – a lot of, many
11. **ridiculous** – silly or stupid
12. **in other people’s eyes** – from someone else’s perspective
13. **denim** – the material that jeans are made of
14. **a great deal of** – a large amount
15. **get through a day** – to finish a day
16. **trendy** – to look fashionable, stylish

## 65. Describe a book that you would like to read again

You should say:

- What the book was about
- Why you read it the first place
- What you learned from this book

And explain why you would like to read it again.

### Sample

Okay so I would like to tell you about the book called Harry Potter, which is a **fantasy novel**, written by the British **author** J. K. Rowling. It's one that I can reread **time and time again**.

The book describes the life of a young wizard named Harry Potter and his two best friends, Ron and Hermione. Harry has to struggle to kill the Dark wizard Lord Voldemort, whose aim is to become **immortal** and destroy all those who stand in his way of ruling the world.

The reason why this book **comes to mind** is that it is a reminder of my childhood. It was a gift for my birthday from my parents to reward my high score in an exam at school. Up until now, I can still remember clearly how **fascinated** I was when I received it.

Thanks to this book, I realized that **determination and effort play essential roles** in achieving my goals. Since then, I have always worked hard to **overcome all obstacles** and challenges in my life.

Harry Potter will always be on my **to-read list** for a number of reasons. Firstly, I have always been a great **admirer** of science fiction books so I love the way that the author describes the whole magical world with the magic school, Hogwarts, and the flying brooms. Secondly, reading this book not only helps me to relax after a long day of work or study but also **cheers me up** whenever I am **feeling blue**.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **fantasy novel** – a book that involves magic or imaginary worlds
2. **author** – someone who writes a book, story or article
3. **time and time again** – on many occasions, many times
4. **immortal** – to never die
5. **comes to mind** – an idea or thought that appears in your mind
6. **fascinated** – to be very interested
7. **determination and effort** – to focus your attention and use a lot of energy to do something



8. **play essential roles** – are important parts of something
9. **overcome all obstacles** – to get through any problems
10. **to-read list** – a list of books that you want to read
11. **admirer** – to like something
12. **cheers me up** – makes me feel better or happier
13. **feeling blue** – feeling down or sad

## 66. Describe a city or town you have been to

You should say:

- Where it is
- When you visited it
- What you did there

And explain why you like it

### Sample

I'd like to talk about Singapore, one of several cities I have visited and really enjoyed. I **vacationed** in this wonderful city last summer with my sister, Min, and we stayed there for 5 days.

Singapore is a **state-city** located to the southeast of Vietnam and it took us only 2 hours to fly there from Hanoi.

When I arrived in Singapore, I was quite **impressed by** the way the city looked. The streets were **incredibly** clean, I could walk around the city all day and come back home without any dirt on my shoes. During my stay in Singapore, I did some shopping and visited some **famous landmarks** like the Merlion statue, Singapore **zoo** and the **botanical gardens**.

For me, Singapore is **well worth visiting** for many reasons. Firstly, the public transport system in Singapore is extremely reliable. People don't have to spend hours waiting for buses or trains, and the staff are very friendly and helpful. Another thing that I miss about Singapore is its **multi-cultural nature**. During the 5 days that I spent in Singapore, I **bumped into** people from many different countries. English is the first language of this country so it was great to get the chance to practice my English-speaking skills with the local people and also other tourists. Five days in Singapore passed by so fast that I wish I could've stayed a bit longer.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **vacationed** – went on holiday
2. **state-city** – a small independent country that usually consists of a single city
3. **impressed by** – have a positive effect or influence on your feeling about something
4. **incredibly** – very
5. **famous landmarks** – popular interesting or important places in a city or country
6. **zoo** – a place where animals are kept in cages for people to see
7. **botanical gardens** – a park where plants and trees are grown for people to see and scientific study

8. **well worth visiting** – a place that is good to visit
9. **multi-cultural nature** – has a lot of culture from different countries or societies
10. **bumped into** – to meet someone accidentally

## 67. Describe a place you visited

You should say:

- where it was (or is)
- when you visited it
- what it looked like

And explain why you visited it.

### Sample

The **fast pace** of modern life in the city can be too much for an **introvert** like myself and I sometimes really need some time to **retire into my shell** and have a little **retreat**. Fortunately, I found the perfect little place called “Secret garden” which I am going to share with you now.

“Secret garden” is a garden **themed** coffee shop located on the rooftop of a building in the centre of Hanoi. The café is well-known for its **floral** and **botanical** inspired design, which gives you a sense of peace and **tranquillity** while being able to enjoy some cake and coffee at the same time.

I have become a frequent guest there and usually go on the weekend. My favourite activities in this coffee shop are reading books while listening to relaxing **instrumental music**, having a warm cup of tea with cookies or just simply sitting in the **exterior** garden and enjoying the view.

Despite being popular, the coffee shop’s still able to manage a quiet and soft **atmosphere**. **The setting** is perfect with relaxing music, and the staff are really well-trained and cater to the guests’ needs quite well. Also, other guests there are usually quite respectful and generally don’t disturb other people by talking or laughing too loudly.

It’s **rare** to find a place like this in Hanoi and I always recommend it to my friends who need a break from the busy city life.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **fast pace** – high speed
2. **introvert** – someone who prefers to be quiet and spend time alone rather than speak with people often
3. **retire into my shell** – to spend some time alone
4. **retreat** – to go to a quiet place to escape from something
5. **themed** – related to a certain idea
6. **floral** – made of flowers
7. **botanical** – of plants or trees

8. **tranquillity** – calm, peaceful and quiet
9. **instrumental music** – music that does not have any words or lyrics
10. **exterior** – the outside
11. **atmosphere** – the feeling of the surrounding area eg. quiet, peaceful atmosphere
12. **the setting** – the place or room
13. **rare** – very uncommon

## 68. Describe a café you like or dislike

You should say:

- Where it was
- When you went there
- what you ate or drank

And explain why you liked or disliked the café.

### Sample

The **fast pace** of modern life in the city can be too much for an **introvert** like myself and I sometimes desire some time to **retire into my shell** and take a little **retreat**. Fortunately, I found the perfect place called “Secret garden” which I am going to share with you right now.

“Secret garden” is a garden **themed** coffee shop located on the rooftop of a building in the centre of Hanoi. The café is well-known for its **floral** and **botanical** inspired design, which gives you a sense of peace and **tranquillity** while enjoying some cake and coffee at the same time.

I have become a frequent guest there and usually go on the weekend. My favourite activities in this coffee shop are reading books while listening to relaxing **instrumental music**, having a warm cup of tea with cookies or simply just sitting in the **exterior** garden and enjoying the view.

Despite being popular, the coffee shop’s still able to manage a quiet and soft **atmosphere**. **The setting** is perfect with relaxing music, and the staff are really well-trained and cater to the guests’ needs quite well. Also, other guests there are usually really quite respectful and generally don’t disturb other people by talking or laughing too loudly.

It’s **rare** to find a place like this in Hanoi and I always recommend it to my friends who need a break from the busy city life.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **fast pace** – high speed
2. **introvert** – someone who prefers to be quiet and spend time alone rather than speak with people often
3. **retire into my shell** – to spend some time alone
4. **retreat** – to go to a quiet place to escape from something
5. **themed** – related to a certain idea
6. **floral** – made of flowers
7. **botanical** – of plants or trees

8. **tranquillity** – calm, peaceful and quiet
9. **instrumental music** – music that does not have any words or lyrics
10. **exterior** – the outside
11. **atmosphere** – the feeling of the surrounding area eg. quiet, peaceful atmosphere
12. **the setting** – the place or room
13. **rare** – very uncommon

## 69. Describe a lesson that you enjoyed

You should say:

- When it was
- What it was about
- What happened And

explain why you liked it

### Sample:

Well, I would like to share with you about a really **pleasant** experience in an English class I had at my university.

During one of our grammar lessons, the regular teacher was sick so the school had to send in a teacher to cover her place. And the **substitute** teacher, Thomas Hall, delivered an amazing lecture in English about how he thinks we should all learn languages through watching films.

Throughout the two hours, he explained to us the process of learning a language and how films can **serve** as an effective way to **immerse** yourself in a language. Basic **elements** like vocabulary and grammar can be easily **absorbed** if we **focus** on **dialog** in a TV show, and so in **the long run**, our overall language skills can be improved. This method helps us to learn any language **effortlessly** and in a short period of time.

At first, we were all **sceptical** about the ideas he introduced, however, after watching a short video to practice and doing a **trial** test, we were all convinced that learning by watching movies was not hard at all and we could apply this to **enhance** our performance at school.

I enjoyed this lesson so much because I find this method to be particularly effective for me. I always felt **unmotivated** when learning by traditional methods and my results were never **desirable**. But when I tried learning English using my favourite movies, you know what? My English got better and better and very soon I was able to remember thousands of new words and write really complicated essays. Now, I can even proudly say that I have mastered the English language.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **pleasant** – enjoyable or nice
2. **substitute** – to use something or someone instead of something else
3. **serve** – be used
4. **immerse** – to be completely involved or surrounded by something



5. **elements** – a part of something
6. **absorbed** – very interested in something
7. **focus** – to concentrate on something
8. **dialog** – the conversation or words that are spoken
9. **the long run** – after or over a long period of time
10. **effortlessly** – easily, without trying
11. **sceptical** – to doubt something
12. **trial** – a practise test to see if something works
13. **enhance** – to make better or improve
14. **unmotivated** – to not want to do something
15. **desirable** – the result or affect that is wanted

## 70. Describe a leisure activity near or on the sea

You should say:

- What it is
- What you should prepare
- Why you have to prepare

And explain how you feel about it.

### Sample

I would like to talk about one of my favourite activities on the beach, swimming. You know, I live in Hai Phong, a **coastal city** with **golden beaches** and the nearest seashore is just fifteen minutes from my house. So, in the summer, my friends and I often go there and swim in the cool water to avoid the hot weather.

Actually, swimming is a relatively easy sport. I learned how to swim when I was about 8 years old and it took me only a week to get familiar with a number of **swimming strokes**, like breaststroke, backstroke and butterfly. Before entering the water, I often **warm up** and **stretch my muscles and joints** to avoid any **injuries**, then put on my swimsuit and jump right in.

I really enjoy swimming on the beach because of a few reasons. Firstly, unlike other water sports such as diving or windsurfing, which require **costly** equipment, swimming costs nothing. Secondly, swimming is extremely **beneficial** to our health. It provides an **all-over body workout**, as nearly all of our muscles are used during swimming. It also **builds endurance, muscle strength and cardiovascular fitness**. Lastly, going swimming is a good **means of** recreation as it allows me to **unwind, alleviate stress** and have a great time with my friends.

Summer is coming so I'll definitely make a plan to visit the beach soon. I intend to go to Nha Trang beach as it's considered as one of the most magnificent beaches in the world.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **coastal city** – a city that is located along the coast or near the ocean
2. **golden beaches** – beautiful beaches with golden coloured sand
3. **swimming strokes** – swimming styles
4. **warm up** – to get your body warm and ready for exercise
5. **stretch my muscles and joints** – to extend your muscles and body parts to help relax it
6. **injuries** – pain or damage to a part of the body eg. a cut, bruise or broken bone etc
7. **costly** – expensive
8. **beneficial** – good for you

9. **all-over body workout** – exercise that works all parts of your body
10. **builds endurance, muscle strength and cardiovascular fitness** – to improve different aspects of physical fitness
11. **means of** – a way of, or form of
12. **unwind** – to relax
13. **alleviate stress** – relax, reduce stress

## 71. Describe a TV program you enjoy

You should say:

- What it is
- When you watch it
- Who you watch it with

And explain why you like to watch it.

### Sample

Well, I would like to talk about “The Walking Dead”, which is an American television drama **series** that I have recently become **crazy about**.

As you might not know, The Walking Dead is the most popular TV show **on air** right now and everybody **across the globe** watches it. It **portrays** the world after a zombie **apocalypse**, where society has **crumbled** and there is no government to take care of the people’s **welfare**.

The show stars many talented and famous actors and actresses. Among them, I believe Andrew Lincoln, who plays the **leading role** of a police officer, leaves the most significant impression on **audiences** and myself, mainly because of his outstanding acting skills and the devotion he put into every scene.

Interestingly enough, my favourite part about this show is the **make-up** of all the different zombies. You know, all the characters are well-designed and have to go through an **elaborate** makeup process to achieve extremely realistic looks on screen.

And the reason why I am a huge fan of The Walking Dead? Well, it is quite easy to explain. I’ve held a great interest in Zombie apocalypse’s ever since I was a kid and I even dreamt about living in one. Apart from that, I think that this series has a very **stimulating plot** along with many **unexpected twists**, which raises great excitement for the viewers.

I just simply cannot get enough of this show and I can’t wait for the beginning of the next season.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **series** – a TV programme with a number of different episodes surrounding the same set of characters
2. **crazy about** – really like
3. **on air** – broadcast/shown on TV
4. **across the globe** – around the world
5. **portrays** – to represent, describe or show something

6. **apocalypse** – a serious event resulting in a lot of destruction and change to the planet
7. **crumbled** – broken apart, destroyed
8. **welfare** – physical and mental health
9. **leading role** – the main actor or character
10. **audiences** – people watching the show
11. **make-up** – cosmetics or something used to change the colour or appearance of your face
12. **elaborate** – a lot of careful detail
13. **stimulating plot** – exciting storyline
14. **unexpected twists** – changes in the story you didn't think would happen

## 72. Describe a service from a company or shop

You should say

- What the service was
- When and where you received the service
- Whom you were with

And explain how you feel about it

### Sample

Hmn, this is indeed an interesting question. Well, regarding some excellent service that I received, I must say that I was really **impressed by** a company called Traveloka, which provided me with a booking service for flight tickets and a **hotel reservation**.

Last summer, my mother and I **made up our mind** to go on a trip to Taiwan. Previously, we would just simply book a **package tour** from a **travel agent** and they would take care of all the expenses and **itinerary** for us. However, this time both me and my mom wanted to do everything on our own, from booking the plane tickets to choosing the hotel and planning the trip.

Thanks to a friend's recommendation, I tried booking flight tickets online, from a website called Traveloka.com. This website is a product of the Traveloka company, which aims to provide a **user-friendly platform** for users to search and book flight tickets and hotel rooms.

At first I **held a lot of doubt over** this website since I had never bought plane tickets online before. However, after browsing through the site for a while, I was quite impressed by the sites' **smartly designed layout** and **easy-to-follow** content, and furthermore, it only took a few minutes to find the plane tickets that I wanted. Another good point to mention about the service was how quickly and convenient the payment was. They offered a variety of payment methods, such as credit card, bank transfer or direct debit, which would suit many different customers' needs.

Thanks to Traveloka, I managed to book the plane tickets at a reasonable price and **at lightning speed**. Both my mother and I were completely satisfied with the service that we received, and we gave the website a 5 star rating on the user review page. I would also recommend this site to other friends of mine.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **impressed by** – have a positive effect or influence on your feeling about something
2. **hotel reservation** – an accommodation booking at a hotel
3. **made up our mind** – decided

4. **package tour** – a holiday you purchase with accommodation and travel together from a travel agent
5. **travel agent** – a person or business that specialises in booking holidays
6. **itinerary** – the day to day plan of a holiday or journey
7. **user-friendly** – easy to use or understand
8. **platform** – an app or program used for a service
9. **held a lot of doubt over** – to not trust or to have doubt about something
10. **smartly designed layout** – well designed
11. **easy-to-follow** – easy to use
12. **at lightning speed** – really fast

### 73. Describe an interesting conversation you had with someone

You should say

- who the person was
- where the conversation took place
- what you talked about

And explain why you found the conversation interesting.

#### Sample

I have to **admit** that I'm **not much of a social person** – I mean, I am quite shy and **inhibited**, so most of the time I tend to avoid talking to strangers. But I do remember a time when I had to talk to a complete stranger, and as I remember it was around 5 years ago, on my very first trip to Ho Chi Minh City. It was just a short conversation but I can still remember it quite well.

I was a 20-year-old freshman back then, and I was unable to **navigate my way to** the HCMC University of Education where I was about to start studying. Back then Google Map's wasn't as popular as it is nowadays, so the only way I could figure out the way was by asking a local. So after hours of **wandering around**, I finally **resorted to** asking a lady who was selling noodles at a food cart near where I was standing. I asked the lady if she would be so kind to tell me the way to the HCMC University of Education and she kindly replied by pointing to the big building across the road and saying 'it's over there'.

The university was being **renovated** back then, so I was unable to **recognise** it, but before I went off to study I decided to sit down and order some noodles from the old lady and have a chat with her. It turns out that she was also from Ninh Thuan, which is my hometown. So we ended up chatting for ages about our lives and about how and why we had come to HCMC.

You know, I think I found this conversation so interesting simply because I found Mrs Kim to be such a nice lady. As the conversation went on and I got to know her better I realized that she had had quite a **tough life**, yet she had managed to maintain such a sweet and **gentle** personality that many other women who have been through similar **struggles** to her would have lost by now.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **admit** – to tell the truth
2. **not much of** – not really
3. **social person** – someone who likes to talk with and be around other people often
4. **inhibited** – unable to relax and act natural
5. **navigate my way to** – find my way



6. **wandering around** – walking around without a fixed route or destination
7. **resorted to** – to do something because there is no other option
8. **renovated** – to repair and improve something eg. a building
9. **recognise** – to know someone or something because you have seen it before
10. **a tough life** – a difficult or challenging life
11. **gentle** – calm, kind or soft
12. **struggles** – to work hard to do something

#### 74. Describe a change in your life.

You should say:

- What the change was
- When it happened
- Why it happened

And explain how you have benefited from this change

#### Sample

I would like to talk about one of the greatest **transformations** in my life. I used to weigh around 65 kilos and after about 6 months of continuous **dieting** and **working out**, I successfully lost 15 kilos.

When I was a teenager, I mainly **subsisted on** fast foods such as fried chicken, hamburgers or crisps. And with a number of high school exams I was often forced to stay up late and eat even more. As a result, I **put on weight** rapidly and one day, when I stepped on a **scale**, it read 65 kilos, and I knew that I had to start my **weight-loss journey** or I would become overweight.

After consulting my aunt, who worked as a **nutritionist**, I understood that losing weight was all about diet and exercise. Firstly, I cleaned out my fridge of all my favourite unhealthy foods, and began cooking **homemade meals**. I also drank at least 2 litres of water a day instead of soft drink. Secondly, I **registered** at my local gym and started to workout at least three times a week. And as well as this, I started going to bed early at night and waking up at 5 am to go **biking** every morning.

After 6 months of working out regularly and **resisting** junk food, my weight dropped to 50 kilos. However, it was not only about the weight loss, but also about the changes in my health. I felt stronger and happier than ever before. I rarely got sick and my skin also looked brighter. More importantly though, I **regained my self-confidence**. I used to run and hide from cameras, but now I am much more comfortable being photographed. And the best thing is that I am now able to finally wear my old dresses and skinny jeans.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **transformation** – a complete change
2. **dieting** – eating or not eating certain foods to lose weight
3. **working out** – to exercise to improve health and fitness
4. **subsisted on** – to live or survive on
5. **put on weight** – got heavier or fatter
6. **scale** – something used to measure weight

7. **weight-loss journey** – a period of time when someone tries to lose weight to improve their health
8. **nutritionist** – an expert on what foods people should eat for good health
9. **homemade meals** – food that is cooked at home
10. **registered** – to join or signup
11. **biking** – to ride a bicycle
12. **resisting** – trying hard not to do something
13. **regained my self-confidence** – to feel confident once again

## 75. Describe a time when you worked in a team

You should say:

- what the activity was
- who you worked with you
- how easy or difficult it was

And explain how you felt about being part of this team.

### Sample

I'd like to talk about a team project that I was **involved in** during my "British and American culture" class at the Foreign Trade University in Hanoi. There were six of us on the team, and our task was to identify the differences in the **travelling habits** of British and American tourists. Our objective was to produce a report and give a presentation.

So the first thing we did was split into two groups of three. We had to **conduct a survey**, so three of us spent some time designing a **questionnaire** while the other three prepared an outline for the report. One of the difficulties we encountered was finding enough people for the survey because we needed 50 British and 50 Americans. But thanks to Facebook, we were able to reach enough people from those countries who were willing to help us out and fill in the online survey. In the end, I think it was a successful project because we were able to **figure out** the main travelling patterns of people from the US and the UK. Our group presentation also went really well.

It was really a **memorable experience** for all of us and I felt a **real sense of accomplishment** when we handed in our report and **delivered our presentation**. But what I was most proud of was how well our team worked together. There were still some minor **tiffs** between some of the team members, but overall I think each member showed a good level of responsibility and teamwork.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **involved in** – a part of
2. **travelling habits** – the common places that people go or common things they do on holiday
3. **conduct a survey** – to organise and get answers for a set of questions to find out information
4. **questionnaire** – a list of questions
5. **figure out** – to understand or to calculate
6. **a memorable experience** – an experience that you will remember for a long time

7. **a real sense of accomplishment** – the feeling when you achieve a goal or something important
8. **delivered our presentation** – to give or show something
9. **tiff** – a small argument

## 76. Describe a piece of good news you heard

You should say:

- what this news was
- when and where you heard it
- how you heard it

And explain why you think it was good news

### Sample

I'm going to talk about the time when I received the official notification of my scholarship to join an exchange program in Japan about three years ago. It feels like a long time ago but I can still remember the day quite **vividly**.

At that time, I was a **sophomore** at university and one day I came across an advertisement for a two-month **cultural exchange program** in Japan for students from Southeast Asia. I was really **eager** to apply for this program and luckily my application was accepted and I was also **nominated** for a scholarship.

So about 2 months later, I received an email from the Scholarship Committee informing me that I had been chosen to receive a full scholarship which would cover all kinds of fees and living expenses for me during the program. I think **my heart skipped a beat** and I **screamed out loud** when I saw the word "Congratulations" in that email. I was really proud of myself to be chosen from hundreds of candidates to win this scholarship.

It was definitely the best news of the year. If I hadn't won the scholarship, my living expenses would have been such a **heavy financial burden** for my parents, but thanks to the **generous** grants that I received, I could really enjoy my time in Japan without worrying about the money. To this day I still keep this lucky email in my inbox to remind me of that special occasion.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **vividly** – brightly coloured or very clear
2. **sophomore** – a student in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study at university or college
3. **cultural exchange program** – an exchange of students between two countries to learn more about the others culture
4. **eager** – to be interested or excited about doing something
5. **nominated** – to be suggested for something
6. **my heart skipped a beat** – to be very excited

7. **screamed out loud** – to yell in excitement
8. **heavy financial burden** – a large debt or large amount of money to have to pay
9. **generous** – to be helpful or to give support

## 77. Describe a trip you took by bike

You should say:

- When and where the trip was
- Who you went with
- Why you went by bike

And explain how you felt about it.

### Sample

I would like to describe a really exciting tour that I went on last Saturday, which was a bicycle trip around Hoan Kiem Lake, also known as Sword Lake, which is one of the **major scenic spots** in Hanoi.

I went on this trip with three **travelling companions**, who were all close friends of mine, and we agreed on riding our bicycles to the Ly Thai To statue at 5 am, which was our **point of departure**. I'm actually quite an **early riser** so I found it quite easy to get up that early and be there on time.

And luckily the weather that day was really nice. The air was fresh and the **tranquillity** of the morning made me feel relaxed but energetic. We biked around the lake five times until about 7am when the sun began to rise and the streets started to get crowded. After that, we **gathered** at our favourite cafe to **sip on** cups of strong coffee and to **chitchat**.

I really enjoyed that bike trip due to several reasons. Firstly, it was a great chance for me to see our city from a very different perspective, a peaceful Hanoi without traffic jams and air pollution. I was able to **escape from the hustle and bustle** of the city for a few hours and **refresh myself** to get prepared for a new week.

I think that cycling is also a really great exercise that helps me to **strengthen my health**, build up my **stamina** and **improve the immune system**. And last but not least, I think this trip was a really great opportunity for me and my friends to get together and chat about our daily lives. You know, we are often too busy to meet regularly, so times like these are really valuable.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **major scenic spots** – popular place with natural beauty
2. **travelling companions** – people to travel with
3. **point of departure** – place to begin a journey from
4. **an early riser** – someone who wakes up early every morning eg. at 5am
5. **tranquillity** – calm, peaceful and quiet



6. **gathered** – came together
7. **sip on** – to drink slowly
8. **chitchat** – to talk about unimportant things
9. **escape from the hustle and bustle** – to get away from a busy place or city
10. **refresh myself** – to get new energy
11. **strengthen my health** – to improve your health
12. **stamina** – long lasting energy
13. **improve the immune system** – to be healthier against sickness and diseases

## 78. Describe a decision that you disagreed with

You should say:

- Who made this decision
- What it was
- How you told him/her

And explain why you disagreed with the decision

### Sample

So today I am going to tell you about an important **milestone** in my life which was the first argument I had with my parents. Firstly let me explain why I took this experience so seriously. I'm usually a real **mama's boy** who always obeys my parents, especially my mom who is definitely the stricter of the two. She is so bossy and direct that it usually has to be **her way or the highway**. And also, my mother is **awfully protective** of me and never allows me to have or join in any **sleepover** whatsoever. And that leads to the main part of my story, which happened three weeks ago.

It was my best friend's birthday party and he invited me to sleep over at his house. I was so **thrilled**. I mean this was going to be my first sleepover. My excitement did not last long though as my mum immediately said no when I brought it up. Filled with anger, I found myself **raising my voice** at my mother for the first time in my life and said "Mom, I am a 21-year-old man. I can take care of myself". She was so surprised at my response and scolded me even harder. But I stood my ground. I believed it was about time I expressed my feelings and let her know how I felt. I felt that I was old enough to be responsible for myself and my mom needed to stop protecting me. Finally, she understood and let me go.

But I will never forget that day when I would **go against** my mother's decision and also the fact that I got super **wasted** that night and was grounded for the next two months.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **milestone** – an important event in someone's life or in history
2. **mama's boy** – a boy or man who is really influenced or attached to their mother
3. **her way or the highway (idiom)** – only one option ie. her way
4. **awfully protective** – to be overly worried about someone or somethings safety
5. **sleepover** – to visit a friend's house to socialise and sleep there
6. **thrilled** – very happy or excited
7. **raising my voice** – speaking loudly

8. **scolded** – to get angry at someone for doing something wrong
9. **stood my ground** – to maintain your position or defend your argument
10. **go against** – to oppose
11. **wasted** – really drunk

**79. Describe an enjoyable experience you had in the countryside.**

You should say:

- When and where you went
- Who you went with
- What you did there

And explain why you think it was enjoyable.

**Sample**

I would like to talk about last summer when I had an unforgettable opportunity to visit my hometown, which is a small village located in the north of Vietnam.

My entire family, including my parents, myself and my younger sister, decided to spend the day driving to the village. For my parents, this would be the chance for them to see their relatives who they hadn't seen in a long time. And for me and my sister, we hoped to **get a closer insight into** the life of the locals as well as **strengthen our family bonds**.

So, the four of us **hit the road** really early in the morning, at about 5 a.m. And after about 4 hours of driving, we arrived at a peaceful and tranquil village. To my **astonishment** the scenery was completely different from the neighbourhood where I currently live. We admired the **brehtaking landscapes** of green paddy fields, winding paths and small houses standing next to each other. After that we went to visit our relatives who were all really friendly and **warm-hearted** people and greeted us with great **enthusiasm**. The whole morning was spent talking and chatting about our lives and old memories. At noon, our family was treated to a **gourmet meal**, full of local and **organically grown** ingredients. In the afternoon, one of our relatives took us to see the paddy fields and the village's famous lake. My sister and I got to learn how to fish and feed the chickens, which was a **novel experience** since we had never done this before.

All of us were **over the moon** the whole day, which really was a once in a life time experience and would be **embedded** in our memory for a long time.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **get a closer insight into** – learn more about
2. **strengthen our family bonds** – improve our family's relationship
3. **hit the road** – to drive somewhere out of town
4. **astonishment** – great surprise
5. **brehtaking landscapes** – beautiful scenery of the natural environment

6. **warm-hearted** – very kind, friendly or nice people
7. **enthusiasm** – a feeling of energetic interest
8. **gourmet meal** – a meal of very high quality
9. **organically grown** – grown without the use of chemical fertiliser or pesticides
10. **a novel experience** – a new or original experience
11. **over the moon** – to be very happy
12. **embedded** – stuck deeply

## 80. Describe a type of weather you like

You should say:

- what kind of weather it is
- when this weather usually occurs
- what you usually do during this weather

And explain why you like this type of weather

### Sample

I was born in Hanoi and have been living here for pretty much my whole life. Hanoi is known for all kinds of things, from street food to crazy **rush hour traffic**. And the city is also **unique** when it comes to how **fickle** the weather is. In the summer, the mornings can be so **scorching hot** that you won't want to leave your house or office, and then all of a sudden it'll be **raining cats and dogs** in the afternoon. Perhaps for someone who has spent more than 20 years living here, I somehow know the best time of year to go out and enjoy a picnic or go on a bicycle tour with your friends: and that's late autumn.

The weather during the last two weeks of October is just **ideal** for all kinds of activities. I mean, who doesn't love looking at a **pure blue sky**? Or who doesn't love having a **change of scenery** after a **torturously hot** Summer, instead, having a good time with your family in a **gentle breeze**? And people always say that during this time of year, Hanoi is the most beautiful.

This is also when I like to spend some **quality time** with my mum and dad and other people around me. We usually invite some neighbours around and have a barbecue **out in the open**. My dad has a very old cassette player, that he seems to be very proud of, maybe because no one in the neighbourhood has this kind of thing anymore, and he always brings it out during the barbecue and listens to some sport news with his friends while **enjoying a few beers**. Other people usually turn on some music and sing along. It's just like a feast of a small Viking clan, and it is so fun to be a part of.

Living in a city where the weather can be **so harsh** and pretty much unpredictable all year round, I think having 2 weeks or so of perfect weather where I can have a **truly joyous occasion** with my family and neighbours isn't so bad.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **rush hour traffic** – when traffic is the busiest
2. **unique** – one of a kind
3. **fickle** – changing suddenly or often
4. **scorching hot** – very hot
5. **raining cats and dogs (idiom)** – raining heavily
6. **ideal** – perfect
7. **pure blue sky** – a very blue sky without a cloud
8. **a change of scenery** – to go somewhere different after being in one place for a long time
9. **torturously hot** – extremely hot
10. **a gentle breeze** – a light wind
11. **quality time** – time that you spend with someone to improve your relationship
12. **out in the open** – outdoors eg. in a park
13. **enjoying a few beers** – drinking some beer with friends
14. **so harsh** – unkind or not nice
15. **a truly joyous occasion** – a very happy occasion

### 81. Describe an interesting talk or speech you heard

You should say:

- Who gave the talk/speech
- Where and when you heard it
- What it was about

And explain why it was interesting?

#### Sample

Today I am going to talk to you about a speech that I **came across** two months ago on TV called “the power of **vulnerability**”.

The speech was **delivered by** Brene Brown who is an American **scholar**, an author and a **public speaker**. She has been involved in research on a range of topics, including vulnerability, courage, shame, and empathy.

I accidentally heard her speech when I was watching TV at home after a hard day at work. Her TED talk **touched my spirit, evoked my sympathy** and taught me many lessons. Firstly, I learnt that I cannot ignore all the negative feelings I have. If I try to avoid them, I won't be able to feel happy, grateful or joyful, and therefore, I need to **have the courage to face** and solve all the problems I have in order to live happily.

Secondly, thanks to this talk, I was able to understand how powerful it is to show other people my vulnerability, and that I should dare to **take risks** and do the things that I am not so sure about. For example, I should be the one who says I love you first, even if I know I might be rejected.

Finally, I learnt how to love myself **from the bottom of my heart** and was able to give up irresponsible behaviour such as **skipping meals** or **getting wasted** whenever I was sad. And in addition to this, once I'm able to love myself, I won't hurt other people who truly love me.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **came across** – discovered
2. **vulnerability** – being open or exposed to being physically or mentally harmed
3. **delivered by** – spoken or presented by
4. **scholar** – academic expert or specialist



5. **public speaker** – someone who gives
6. **touched my spirit** – had a deep impression or influence on me
7. **evoked my sympathy** – made me feel emotional towards someone or an idea
8. **have the courage to face** – to be brave enough to do something
9. **take risks** – to do things even though you might fail
10. **from the bottom of my heart** – to feel deeply or strongly about something
11. **skipping meals** – to not eat a meal to try to lose weight
12. **getting wasted** – getting very drunk

**82. Describe an experience when you spent time with a child.**

You should say:

- When you spent time with this child
- Who this child was
- What you did together

And how you felt about the experience.

**Sample**

So, I'd like to tell you about an experience when I spent time with a **kid**. It was when I was about 15 years old and I had to **look after** my brother's 2 year old son, who is my nephew. It was on a weekend one time when I was visiting my brother and his wife and their son. My brother's wife was at work that day and he had to go out to the shops to **pick-up** some **groceries** to cook for dinner, but instead of all of us go together, he decided that it would be much more **convenient** if he went alone and I stayed at home to look after my nephew while he was gone. At first I was a bit **shocked** that he came up with this idea because I had never looked after a small child on my own before and I was a bit nervous and didn't know what to do or what to expect, especially if something went wrong. But my brother **reassured** me that he would only be gone for about 30 minutes or so and that everything would be fine, and if I needed to contact him in an emergency then I should just call him on his mobile phone. So I **reluctantly** agreed.

Anyway, so my brother went off to the supermarket and I stayed at home with my nephew. At first I think I just put on one of his favourite cartoons on the TV to try and keep him **occupied** for a while, but this only worked **for so long**. After around 15 minutes, he got bored of that and wanted to do something else, so I then went and got all of his toys from his bedroom and brought them out into the lounge room and tipped them on the floor. We then made a big mess playing with his toys for about 10 mins before he quickly became bored again. So then after that I went to the kitchen and found some of his favourite snacks and we sat back down to watch cartoons again on the television and eat the snacks. After about 5 minutes though, thankfully he fell asleep until my brother arrived home. So, all in all, it was a fine experience I guess. I was quite **relieved** that nothing bad happened and I realized that it wasn't that difficult to look after small kids.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **kid** – child
2. **look after** – take care of
3. **pick-up** – to collect, get or buy

4. **groceries** – items of food used to cook eg. fruit, vegetables, meat, canned food, dry noodles etc
5. **convenient** – when something is used or happens at a time or place that is easy, or useful
6. **shocked** – feeling very surprised or upset
7. **reassured** – to comfort someone to stop them from worrying
8. **reluctantly** – not wanting to do something, and therefore doing it slowly
9. **occupied** – busy
10. **for so long** – for a period of time
11. **relieved** – happy when something unpleasant or not nice has ended

**83. Describe a piece of artwork that you have seen before.**

You should say:

- Where you saw it
- What it was about
- When you saw it

And explain how you felt about it

**Sample**

Today I would like to tell you about one of the most well-known paintings in the world, which is also my personal favourite, the **portrait** of Mona Lisa.

You know, the painting was created by Leonardo da Vinci, the famous Italian artist from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. When I first saw this painting in one of my high school textbooks, I just **couldn't take my eyes off it** due to some **mysterious attractiveness**.

**At first sight**, all I noticed in the painting was a long-haired woman with a friendly smile on her face, which was quite round, and she had no eyebrows either. The more I looked at it though, the more I felt like she was actually smiling at me.

Some people have claimed that Mona Lisa was simply an **imaginary** character while others have believed that she was actually Leonardo's wife. Honestly, it doesn't really matter to me though because I think that the Mona Lisa is a **masterpiece** that attracts people with that magical smile. This is also one of the main reasons why I am a fan of the painting.

In terms of the actual truths behind this portrait though, I guess we may never know, but I think that secrets make everything all the more intriguing.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **portrait** – a picture of someone's face
2. **couldn't take my eyes off it** – when something is so interesting or beautiful that you can't stop looking at it
3. **mysterious attractiveness** – when something is beautiful but you cannot explain why
4. **at first sight** – the first time you look or see something
5. **imaginary** – something that is not real, and only exists in someone's mind

6. **masterpiece** – a work of art such as a painting, film or book that is made with great skill

**84. Describe a useful website that you often visit.**

You should say:

- What the contents of this website are
- How you first found this website
- How often you visit this website

And explain how this website helps you.

**Sample**

So, if there is anything that I miss about America, it would definitely be Netflix. I am really into TV series, you know, especially the DC comic series like the Flash, Green Arrow and Super-girl. Netflix is the **world's leading** internet television network but it's still **unauthorized** in Vietnam, so I found my first few months at home really quite **unbearable**.

Fortunately though, Minh, my good friend and **saviour**, saved me from this **dilemma** by introducing me to an **unbelievable** website called newmovie.vn. So basically, the website's owners, who apparently are also real **movie buffs**, manage to get the hottest new shows from around the world and upload them **on a daily basis** for Vietnamese viewers for, if you can believe it, **absolutely no charge whatsoever**. Newmovie.vn **possesses** unlimited access to not only my favourite tv series' but also many other shows on my **movies-to-watch list** including things like Game of Thrones and Sherlock Homes. Since this discovery, I've become addicted to the website and am a daily visitor.

In conclusion, newmovie.vn is a real lifesaver and honestly, I don't think I could put up with all the stress and assignments in my life without my **daily dosage** of films from newmovie.com.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **world's leading** – the best or most popular in the world
2. **unauthorized** – not allowed, or without permission
3. **unbearable** – too painful or unpleasant to continue doing or watching
4. **saviour** – a person who saves someone from harm or danger
5. **dilemma** – a situation when a difficult choice has to be made
6. **unbelievable** – very surprising
7. **movie buffs** – a person who knows a lot about and is very interested in films
8. **on a daily basis** – everyday

9. **absolutely no charge whatsoever** – free
10. **possesses** – to have or own something
11. **movies-to-watch list** – a list of films that you want to watch
12. **daily dosage** – the amount of medicine you should take each day

### 85. Describe one of your best friends

You should say:

- What this person looks like
- When and where you met this person
- What you do when you are together

And explain why he/she is one of your best friends

#### Sample

Well, the person I'd like to talk to you about is a very good friend of mine, Mai. She must be one of the nicest and most **down-to-earth** individuals I know.

If I were to describe how she looks I would say Mai is a very **gorgeous** and **charming** girl who always attracts a lot of attention from men. She is much taller than me so it's kind of embarrassing standing next to her to be honest. Mai also has straight brown hair and deep, dark brown eyes. Like most teenagers, she pays a lot of attention to her appearance and likes dressing in the latest and most **snazzy** fashion. I don't think I've ever seen her in a plain old T- shirt or jeans.

Anyway, we've basically known each other **since forever** because we were in the same class from high school through to college. You know, the first time I met her, she left a **deep impression** on me because on the first day at school, I got lost while trying to find my classroom and she was my **saviour**. **Coincidentally**, we were arranged by the teacher to become **desk-mates**.

And with regards to why she became my **bestie**, well, I guess the main reason is that we really **hit it off** right from the start, and we also **see eye to eye** on a lot of things such as fashion, sport and even video games. She is my closest friend so I feel like we can share everything together, from schoolwork to our **love lives**. The thing I admire most about Mai is that she is really protective and likes to look after people.

As a normal human being, however, Mai also has her **shortcomings**. She's never on time, and is sometimes quite **absent-minded** and **inconsiderate** and that makes people think she never takes things seriously. But I don't think this is true. She has a strong sense of responsibility and I know that I can always rely on her. For me, friendship is the most important thing in the world and I am proud to say that I have such a loyal and helpful friend – she's really **one in a million**.





**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **down-to-earth** – practical, reasonable and friendly
2. **gorgeous** – very beautiful or attractive
3. **charming** – very nice or pleasant
4. **snazzy** – modern or stylish, attracts attention
5. **since forever** – for a long time
6. **deep impression** – a strong effect or influence
7. **saviour** – a person who saves someone from harm or danger
8. **coincidentally** – an occasion when two or more things happen at the same time in a way that is unlikely or surprising
9. **desk-mates** – to sit next to or share a desk with someone
10. **bestie** – best friend
11. **hit it off** – to get along well with or become good friends with someone
12. **see eye to eye** – to agree with someone or to have the same opinion as them
13. **love lives** – romantic relationships
14. **shortcomings** – a fault, weakness or disadvantage
15. **absent-minded** – to be forgetful or easily distracted
16. **inconsiderate** – not thinking or worrying about someone else or their feelings
17. **one in a million** – very special or unique

## 86. Describe a street you know well

You should say:

- Where it is
- What the main buildings are
- How often you go there

And explain how you feel about this street

### Sample

Well, there are quite a few streets that I could have chosen to talk about, but I'd have to say the one I most enjoy going to is Ly Thai To Street, which is one of the most popular tourist areas in Hanoi.

Regarding the location, the street is somewhere in the centre of the city, about fifteen to twenty minutes' drive from where I live. So I normally go there by scooter.

And as for how often I go there, well on average, I guess probably something like once or twice a month, which I know is not a lot, but unfortunately, I just don't have enough time to go there as often as I'd like to.

Anyway, most of the time I actually just go there for the street food, because there are loads of stalls which do really good food, like barbecued squid, bacon sandwiches, chicken wings and stuff like that. So that's basically what I mainly go there for. There's also quite a few little shops selling various **souvenirs** and **handicrafts** as well, but I don't spend much time in them because most of the things are pretty **overpriced**. For example, a pack of postcards will probably **set you back** about 30,000 dong or so, whereas if you went to any bookshop in the city, it would probably only cost about 10,000 dong.

But anyway, in terms of why I like this street, firstly, as I just mentioned, the food there is fantastic, and as well as that, I also like that fact that it's **pedestrianised**, so there's a lot of space to walk around without having to worry about getting hit by a car! And another thing worth mentioning is that most of the buildings are pretty old, so it gives the street a really nice, traditional feeling.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **souvenirs** – gifts that tourists buy to remember a place
2. **handicrafts** – handmade objects or gifts
3. **overpriced** – too expensive
4. **set you back** – cost you, the price

5. **pedestrianised** – a street or area that is temporarily made for walking only ie. for pedestrians

### 87. Describe a time when you saw an interesting animal

You should say:

- What animal it was
- When and Where you saw it

And explain how you feel about this animal

#### Sample

Well, I'm going to talk about an occasion on which I got to see a group of small monkeys. As we all know, monkeys are one of the funniest animals in nature. They are full of **curiosity**, adventure and **mischief**, and have great intelligence. They often live in the jungle, mostly in tropical rain forests, and jump from tree to tree to **seek out** food and play. The diet of a monkey includes nuts, berries, fruits, anything that smells good, and not to mention, bananas, which is always at the top of their list.

Anyway, back to the main point, the first time I saw a 'real' monkey was a long time ago, when I was in secondary school. My friends and I travelled to a mountain located somewhere on the **outskirts** of Hanoi, and when we were climbing the mountain, suddenly a group of small monkeys appeared in the middle of the road ahead in the distance. They were jumping up and down from trees before they **approached** us. Then the monkeys stared at me and my friends as though they wanted to communicate and ask for food, so I decided to give them some of our snacks. They were really cute creatures, you know, their hands are like a mini version of ours, which makes them look like little kids.

However, although I'm quite into monkeys, I have to admit that they are unexpectedly **sneaky**. In some tourist attractions around Vietnam, you can easily spot a **troop** of monkeys stealing food from **street vendors**, and other **unsuspecting** tourists. Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do but watch them run off into the jungle with our food as they are way faster and smarter than you may think.

Anyway, the trip was truly a **once-in-a-life-time** experience for me as I got to touch and feed wild monkeys. Seeing them **first hand** also made me realize that they share more common features with humans than I'd previously thought, which really **evoked** my curiosity about the theory of how people evolved from apes over millions of years.



**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **curiosity** – a strong interest in something
2. **mischief** – behaviour that is slightly bad or causes trouble but not intended to cause harm
3. **seek out** – to find
4. **outskirts** – on the edge of a town or city
5. **approached** – to come near or closer
6. **sneaky** – to be secretive or dishonest
7. **troop** – a group of
8. **street vendors** – someone who sells something on the street eg. food, drinks or clothes
9. **unsuspecting** – not aware of any danger or harm
10. **once-in-a-life-time** – a unique or very special opportunity
11. **first hand** – personal experience
12. **evoked** – brought into your mind

### 88. Describe a famous person that you are interested in

You should say:

- who this person is
- how you know about this person
- how this person became famous

And explain why you like this person

#### Sample

I am going to tell you about a well-known physicist whose biography recently really **caught my attention**. He is a **house-hold name** around the world, Albert Einstein.

He is recognized as the father of modern physics and he was the **founder** of the Theory of Relativity, which became an essential, if not the most important, contribution to modern science. He was also awarded the Nobel Physics prize thanks to this discovery.

Besides knowing him due to his many achievements, I did **come across** and read a **biography** of him on the internet which really **intrigued** me and contained a lot of information that made me admire him a lot. His childhood was not as **carefree** as I initially thought and I was totally impressed by his **perseverance** and **dedication** to science despite having communication problems at a very young age.

I love how Albert Einstein lived and worked with passion and **enthusiasm** all his life, which, I feel is a **shining example** and a great inspiration for me to follow. Albert was **hunted** by the Nazi's for most of his adult life, yet he never **abandoned** his love for science and kept working even when he was running to protect himself.

So, in other words, he really inspired me to **pursue** my goals and dreams with all I that I have, despite any difficulties that I may come across along the way.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **caught my attention** – attracted my attention or made me look or take notice of something
2. **a house-hold name** – a commonly known famous person
3. **founder** – someone who creates or starts something
4. **come across** – to find or discover something



5. **biography** – the story about the life of a person written by someone else
6. **intrigued** – to be very interested by something unusual or unexpected
7. **carefree** – to have no worries
8. **perseverance** – to continue trying to achieve something
9. **dedication** – a large amount of time and effort spent doing something important
10. **enthusiasm** – a feeling of energetic interest
11. **a shining example** – a very good or perfect example of something
12. **hunted** – to chase something to kill or catch it
13. **abandoned** – to leave someone or something behind
14. **pursue** – to chase or follow someone or something

**89. Describe an interesting neighbour you know.**

You should say:

- Who this person is
- How you know this person
- What this person likes to do

And explain why you think this neighbour is interesting.

**Sample**

I must say, I am extremely **fortunate** to have such a wonderful neighbour, Duy, who is really friendly and always willing to **assist** me whenever I'm in trouble.

Duy and I live in the same building, and our apartments are next to each other. We came to know each other when the electricity to the entire building was **cut off** one evening. Unfortunately, I had run out of candles and the torch was nowhere to be found, so I had to go to the apartment next door for help, and this was when I first met my neighbour. He was extremely helpful and enthusiastic and he asked me to hold his torch while he lit the candles in his apartment. I was really **grateful** for his help and a few days later, I made some snacks for him as a thank-you gift. Since then, we have become quite close friends.

The more I got to know Duy, the more I began to look up to him. Even though he is **well into his fifties** and lives on his own, as he lost his family in a car accident, he still manages to **see life through rose coloured glasses**. His **motto** in life is "to keep moving forward". He works and studies at the same time, and on the weekends, he travels to an **orphanage** to teach maths to the kids there.

He really is a wonderful neighbour and I know I could **call on** him if I ever needed to. We will always help each other out when we can, and because we both live on our own, it's really important to have a good friend close by.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **fortunate** – to be lucky
2. **assist** – to help or support something or someone
3. **cut off** – to be disconnected

4. **grateful** – to be very thankful
5. **well into his fifties** – around the age of 54 – 58 years old approximately
6. **see life through rose coloured glasses** – to see the good or positive side of life or something
7. **motto** – a word, sentence or phrase that expresses someone's personal belief
8. **orphanage** – a home for children without parents
9. **call on** – ask for help

**90. Describe a family member that made you proud.**

You should say:

- Who the person is
- How close you are
- What he/she did that made you proud

And explain why they made you proud.

**Sample**

There is no one else in this world I hold more respect for than my mother. She is my **guardian**, my friend and my **role model**.

My mother is **well into her forties** now, but she still manages to **maintain a youthful appearance**. In terms of her personality, she is an extremely compassionate, kind-hearted and attentive person who always takes care of her children. She is both a mother and a friend to me as she always gives me valuable advice and is always willing to be there for me during all of **the ups and downs** in my life. Although sometimes she **drives me crazy**, because she's such a **perfectionist**, I still hold a lot of pride and respect for her.

The reason that I am so proud of her is because she is such a **strong-willed** person. Ever since she was young, she had to learn to be independent as my grandparents were constantly busy and always **on the go**. She had to take care of almost everything, her younger brother, household chores and herself. Such challenges shaped her into the strong woman that she is now. Her independence has also been strengthened through all the **hardship** she has dealt with in her life. When she reached her thirties, she decided that she wanted to run her own business, a clothing store. All the members in our family tried to **prevent** her from doing this since we all thought it was a bad idea because she would have to face a lot of competition from other nearby shops.

But through her determination and **perseverance** she has managed to make a success out of her business and it really is something for us **to look up to**, and I keep reminding myself every day to try to be as strong as my mother, a real-life "wonder woman."

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **guardian** – someone who protects you

2. **role model** – someone to admire or look up to
3. **maintain a youthful appearance** – to stay looking young
4. **the ups and downs** – the good and bad times
5. **drives me crazy** – when something or someone is annoying
6. **perfectionist** – someone who likes to do things exactly or perfectly
7. **strong-willed** – to be determined, not give up easily
8. **on the go** – always doing something or going somewhere
9. **hardship** – a time in life that is difficult or causes suffering
10. **prevent** – to stop something from happening
11. **perseverance** – to continue trying to achieve something
12. **to look up to** – to admire or respect someone

## 91. Describe two people from the same family

You should say:

- Who they are
- How you know them
- If they look a-like

And if you like spending time with them.

### Sample

Today, I am going to talk about the twin sisters that live next-door to my apartment.

The twins moved into the apartment about one year ago with their parents. We came to know each other when the electricity in our building was **cut off** one evening and unfortunately, I had run out of candles and my torch was nowhere to be found. So I had to go to the apartment next door to ask for some candles, and this was when I first met them. They were extremely helpful and enthusiastic and they even let me stay at their place until the power was back on. I was really **grateful** for their help and a few days later, I made some snacks for them as a thank-you gift and invited them over to my place for a **sleep-over**. Since then, we have become really close friends.

Even though they are twins, they look nothing alike. The older one has a short, bob haircut and a real **mischievous grin**. A true **social butterfly**, I would say. Meanwhile, her younger sister always ties her long straight hair into a ponytail with a ribbon and always has a very **sheepish** look on her face and is a bit more shy and **reserved**. Despite the different **vibes** that each one has, they both are very mentally and physically attractive in their own **unique** ways.

Ever since the twins came into my life, sleepovers and **movie marathons** have become a regular activity every weekend, and the talk never gets boring because each of them has such a different personality. I hope my friendship with them lasts a lifetime.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **cut off** – to be disconnected
2. **grateful** – to be very thankful
3. **a sleep-over** – to visit a friend's house to socialise and sleep there
4. **mischievous grin** – when someone smiles in a way that looks like they are going to cause trouble

5. **social butterfly** – someone who likes to talk with and be around other people often
6. **sheepish** – looking or acting embarrassed
7. **reserved** – to keep your thoughts or feelings private and not show them to others
8. **vibes** – energy, mood or feeling that something or someone has
9. **unique** – one of a kind
10. **movie marathons** – watching one film after another continuously

## 92. Describe an important plant in your country

You should say:

- What the plant is
- How you know it
- Why it is important

And explain how much you like the plant.

### Sample

Well I'd love to talk about rice, the most important **agricultural** plant in my country.

Ever since I was in my early **elementary** years, the rice plant has appeared in almost every subject, from literature to natural science to geography. And even in real life, the rice plant can be **spotted** all across the countryside around Vietnam.

**It never ceases to amaze me** how such a simple plant could support a whole nation's economy. Up to this day, millions of Vietnamese families are still **dependent** on **the cultivation of rice** to **make ends meet**. And the fact that Vietnam has become one of the world's leading rice exporters is more **solid proof** of the relevance of this plant in my country. Besides this, rice has been an **indispensable** part of the main meal of most families for centuries and children practice the habit of eating rice from a very young age, and as for the older generation, they **cannot go a day without** rice in some form or the other.

Over thousands of years, the rice plant has played a really important role in Vietnamese culture and many traditions and ceremonies **originate from** the farmers hopes for an **abundant crop**, and many of these traditions are considered as important **established customs** to foreign visitors.

I think that the rice plant has become one of the greatest symbols for the Vietnamese spirit and deserves large appreciation from all generations.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **agricultural** – related to farming
2. **elementary** – first years of school eg. grades 1-7
3. **spotted** – seen or found
4. **it never ceases to amaze me** – to be always surprised



5. **dependent** – to be supported by something or someone
6. **the cultivation of rice** – the growing and farming of rice
7. **make ends meet** – to earn enough money to live and pay all of your bills
8. **solid proof** – something that shows that something is true
9. **indispensable** – necessary, or too important not to have
10. **cannot go a day without** – need it everyday
11. **originate from** – comes from, the source
12. **abundant crop** – a large or good amount of the plant or vegetable grown
13. **established customs** – a tradition, belief or way of behaving that has been around for a long time

### 93. Describe a foreign food you would like to try.

You should say:

- What it is
- Where you can eat it
- How you know about this food

And explain why you would like to try it

#### Sample

Today I would like to tell you about crepes, one of the most popular French street foods that I have been **longing to** try.

I first became interested in this food after learning about it through a TV program that I watched about a year ago on different cultures around the world. The show gave a really detailed description of how to prepare this dish, what ingredients are required, the different stuffings that are used to make different types of crepes, and why this food is so closely related to French culture. I was watching with **utmost** interest and attention and immediately jumped onto my computer to do some more research about it after the show ended.

It's said that, walking around Paris you can locate street stands selling crepes everywhere and that this dish is a really tasty afternoon snack **to indulge in** before dinner without **ruining your appetite**. And even though it is not that hard to find a crepe shop in Hanoi, I believe the taste cannot be compared to the **authentic** recipe that only street stands or restaurants in France are **capable of delivering**.

Since watching this program, the idea of walking down the street in Paris while enjoying a delicious crepe has been on the top of my **wish-list** ever since, and I've been saving up money recently hoping that I get to fulfil this dream sometime soon.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **longing to** – a strong want or desire to
2. **utmost** – greatest or most
3. **to indulge in** – to allow yourself to enjoy something
4. **ruining your appetite** – to eat something before a meal that makes you not feel hungry anymore
5. **authentic** – real or genuine, to not be fake
6. **capable of delivering** – able to offer or achieve

7. **wish-list** – a list of things someone wants to have or do

#### 94. Describe a crowded place

You should say:

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

And explain how you felt about the crowded place.

#### Sample

I would like to talk about my recent trip to Ba Den pagoda, which was an experience that I always remember due to the massive amount of visitors that I **encountered** while I was there.

So usually, during the Tet holiday, my family often drives to Tay Ninh province to visit my grandfather and last year we decided to take a short trip to Ba Den pagoda on Ba Den Mountain.

Before getting on the cable car to go up to the pagoda, I thought that maybe there might be a lot of Buddhist worshippers up there, as this sacred place tends to attract **countless** visitors all year round, **let alone** during Tet, which is the biggest holiday in Vietnam. And, I was right. There were people with flowers and candles everywhere. On one corner, lines of people were trying to light their **incense sticks**, and inside the pagoda many people were **kneeling** and praying with their eyes closed. It was pretty hard for us to even find any room to stand.

But, in the end, we successfully managed to find a way through the crowd and got close to the worshipping place, however my grandfather stayed outside as he can't stand all the smoke and lack of oxygen.

You know, although I understand that most Vietnamese people enjoy going to pagodas and temples during these special days of the year to wish for good luck, and **well-being** and happiness, I really don't think I'll be doing that again anytime soon.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **encountered** – to meet someone or something unexpectedly
2. **countless** – a lot of, too many to count
3. **let alone** – not to mention (used to make a comparison)
4. **kneeling** – to be on your knees
5. **well-being** – the state of good mental and physical health

## 95. Describe a popular place

You should say:

- Where is this place?
- When did you first visit this place?
- How often do you go to this place?

And explain why it is so popular.

### Sample

So, today I am going to talk about an **outstanding** swimming pool called, the Four Seasons, which attracts around a thousand people a day and many consider this to be the most popular pool in the city.

Four Seasons is an indoor public pool located in my local **sports complex**. The reason why the pool is called Four Seasons is because it's a **heated pool** and people can go there to enjoy the warm water all year round.

As you may know, swimming is now becoming quite a popular exercise and **recreational activity** for people of all ages in Hanoi, and I also took swimming lessons through my time at school. However, it was not until about a year ago that I started to **pay regular visits** to this pool, and all thanks to my best friend for introducing me to this wonderful place.

So, I think that Four Seasons is such a popular place for several reasons. Firstly, safety is their **highest priority**, and there's always a well-trained lifeguard there to **instruct the pool safety rules** and **perform** any **water rescues** if necessary. Secondly, the quality of the facilities is excellent. The pool is nicely heated and regularly **sanitized**. There are also clean changing rooms with showers and big lockers for all your clothes and other belongings, and I think that all of this creates the best experience for the people that go there to swim. I believe that the Four Seasons swimming pool totally deserves its great **reputation**.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **outstanding** – very good, or excellent
2. **sports complex** – a building or group of buildings with different sporting facilities
3. **heated pool** – a swimming pool with warm water
4. **recreational activity** – an activity that is done for fun, to relax or for leisure

5. **pay regular visits** – to go often
6. **highest priority** – the most important thing
7. **instruct the pool safety rules** – make sure people follow the rules and act safely
8. **perform** – to do an action
9. **water rescues** – to save someone who is drowning
10. **sanitized** – when something is completely clean
11. **reputation** – the general opinion of someone or something

## 96. Describe a newly-opened shop

You should say:

- Where the shop is
- When it opened
- What it sells

And how you feel about the shop.

### Sample

I am going to talk about a newly-opened **convenience store** in my neighbourhood called Circle K. Actually, Circle K is an extremely popular **chain-store** from America and has multiple **outlets** around Hanoi now.

But the Circle K that I'm speaking about was recently built only a couple of **blocks** away from where I live and I noticed it as soon as it was built. Also, because of its **eye-catching** logo with a giant, red letter K in a white circle, it's quite **hard to miss**.

I think that the main reason that I became a regular customer of Circle K was because of one particular item that they sell in their stores, and I was **on cloud nine** when I discovered it, my favourite alcoholic drink, Vodka Cruiser. You know Cruiser's only contain 4.5% alcohol which is perfect for a **lightweight** like me. And so, after my discovery, Circle K pretty much became a regular **hangout spot** of mine where my buddies and I would sometimes meet up and sit outside the store with a couple of Cruiser's **chatting** about our lives and stuff. It's actually kind of embarrassing but Circle K is the place where I come to **let off some steam** after a break up or some other **big drama** I have in my life.

So yeah, as long as Circle K still keeps on selling Vodka Cruisers, it will always be my favourite shop.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **convenience store** – a store that sells some commonly used items and stays open long hours
2. **chain-store** – a shop that is one of many owned by a larger company that all sell the same products
3. **outlets** – a place where things are sold

4. **blocks** – the distance from one street to the next
5. **eye-catching** – very attractive or noticeable
6. **hard to miss** – obvious, or easy to see
7. **on cloud nine** – extremely happy
8. **lightweight** – a person that is thin, light, and/or gets drunk easily
9. **hangout spot** – a place to relax with friends or by yourself
10. **chatting** – to talk with someone in a friendly informal way
11. **let off some steam** – to do something that helps you relax and get rid of anger or frustration
12. **big drama** – a big problem or issue



### 97. Describe a place where you want to work

You should say:

- where it is
- what kind of work you would like to do
- when you would like to work there

And explain why you want to work in this place.

#### Sample

Well, the place that I have always wanted to work but have yet had the chance to visit is Tokyo, the capital city of Japan.

I have been dreaming to work in this city ever since I learned about it from a travel and lifestyle channel. And even though it is considered as a major **cosmopolitan** city, I'm always amazed at its ability to preserve the **cultural aspect** of Japan. The existence of such **marvellous** temples in the centre of the city, or the sight of Japanese women wearing **kimonos** just seems quite amazing to me. Apart from this, the city where I live, Hanoi, is currently suffering from a serious air pollution problem, so it would be a nice break to be able to find a job in one of the cleaner countries in the world.

Recently, there have been many agencies and organizations that help to assist **undergraduates** or newly-graduated students to find employment in Japan, and so if everything **goes according to plan**, in about 6 months I will start working as a marketing intern for an English centre located in Ginza, which is one of the busiest streets in Tokyo. **Fingers crossed** that everything goes according to plan and I am able to **enter a completely new phase in my life**.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **cosmopolitan** – containing people or things from many different parts of the world
2. **cultural aspect** – to do with the ideas, beliefs, traditions and behaviour of a society
3. **marvellous** – extremely good
4. **kimonos** – traditional Japanese clothing
5. **undergraduates** – students who have not yet graduated from university yet
6. **goes according to plan** – follows the plan
7. **fingers crossed** – a phrase that is used to wish for good luck
8. **enter a completely new phase in my life** – to start a new big change in your life eg. a new job or move to a new city

## 98. Describe a time that you arrived early

You should say:

- When it was;
- How early you arrived;
- Why you arrived early;

And explain how you felt about it.

### Sample

So last week I actually had to show up early for my friend's wedding party. And as her **bestie**, I think it's my responsibility to help her have the best wedding ever, so on her wedding day, I decided to **show up** early and help her with all the preparations. I think it was about 5am when I arrived at the front door of her house. Actually, I'm quite the **night owl**, so it was a little difficult for me to get up that early but once I saw the big smile on her face I was completely awake and got to work right away. So, the list of things-to-do was quite long, decorating the room with flowers, cleaning dishes, preparing the food, so I was really glad that I had decided to come early. By about 9am, after everything was **thoroughly** done, the wedding ceremony began in a very sincere and happy atmosphere.

Witnessing the bride and groom **exchanging vows** was quite emotional and I even **shed a tear** or two. I felt very happy for her that she'd finally found her **Mr. Right**. And after the wedding party, despite being exhausted, I was also quite relieved and delighted because I think my help was one of the factors that really made her day so special.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **bestie** – best friend
2. **show up** – to arrive
3. **night owl** – someone who likes to stay up late at night
4. **thoroughly** – completely, with nothing left out
5. **exchanging vows** – when the bride and groom read their vows to each other
6. **shed a tear** – to cry a little bit
7. **Mr. Right** – the perfect husband

## 99. Describe an interesting event

You should say

- What the event was
- How you knew about this event
- Why it was so interesting

And explain your feelings towards this event.

### Sample

Well, the event that I want to share with you today is my best friend's wedding, which took place 3 weeks ago and left a **deep impression** on me. I received a phone call from her last month and she told me that she was going to be **tying the knot** soon, and to be honest, I had been waiting for this to happen for quite a long time since both the **bride** and **groom** are close friends of mine, and I know them quite well. And since they are such close friends of mine, I knew that I would have to take part in this special occasion **at all costs**.

So there were several things that made her wedding such a wonderful day. Firstly, I was quite impressed by the way the room was decorated with lots of lights, candles and roses, which really created a **cosy** and romantic atmosphere. Secondly, the wedding was held in quite a modern way, which I found really great as I had only previously been to more traditional kind of weddings before.

One of the moments that really surprised me though was when the groom got up and sang a song for the bride and all the guests sang along with him. Many people even got up to dance. He also played a video clip of himself that he had made where he expressed his love and **appreciation** for his bride, which was very **touching**, and I think I even **shed a tear**.

And the last thing I really enjoyed about being involved in the wedding was that it gave me the chance to meet many of my friends who I hadn't seen for a long time. We made use of this opportunity to take a lot of photos with one another and the **newly-weds**, of course.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **a deep impression** – a strong effect or influence
2. **tying the knot** – getting married

3. **bride and groom** – the female and male getting married
4. **at all costs** – a must, regardless of the price or effort required
5. **cosy** – comfortable and pleasant
6. **appreciation** – to be thankful or grateful towards someone
7. **touching** – making you feel emotional
8. **shed a tear** – to cry a little bit
9. **newly-weds** – a couple who is just married

## 100. Describe a plan

You should say:

- What the plan is/was
- When you thought of the plan
- Who is involved in the plan

And say how you did/think you will achieve the plan

### Sample

Well I just turned 18 this year, so **apparently** it is time for me to plan something special for the future. There are many things that I could do, but one of the plans that I find the most **intriguing** is to go travelling to Singapore.

I came up with this plan after I had finished my university entrance exam in June, and three of my best friends have decided to come with me. So we kind of feel that after 12 years of hard work and constant studying that taking a break is really essential. I think we all decided on Singapore because it's such a modern city with such a clean environment, and not to mention the fact that it's so close to Vietnam, it's just a short flight.

Technically we're all just barely adults so it might take some time to **persuade** our parents to allow us to go on this trip together though.

First of all, we decided that it is **vital** to choose a tour, because going on a tour will make our parents feel more **secure**. It might be quite boring though due to the lack of **spontaneous** activities, but it seems like it's the best option to persuade our parents.

Another thing to consider is the price of the tour. If it's too expensive, I'm afraid our parents will not let us go either, so choosing an affordable tour is a must.

Apparently, we must book our plane tickets in advance too, not only to get the cheapest price but also so that we are more well-prepared. When we reach Singapore, I think we will be polite tourists, listen carefully to the tour guide and avoid doing anything illegal. So that's our great plan to achieve a much-needed vacation.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **apparently** – what seems to be or is likely to be true, based on what you know

2. **intriguing** – when something is unusually interesting
3. **persuade** – to convince or change someone’s mind or opinion
4. **vital** – essential, necessary
5. **secure** – safe
6. **spontaneous** – to happen naturally, without a plan

### 101. Describe a special trip in the near future

You should say:

- When it will possibly be
- Where you would go
- What preparation you need for the trip

And explain why this would be a special trip

#### Sample

Travelling is what I enjoy the most in life and I've now visited most of the famous places in Vietnam. However, most of my trips were always with my friends, so now I really want to do something different and take my parents on a very special trip to visit Thien Cam beach.

We will probably take this trip next June I think. At that time of year, there won't be any school for me so things will be much easier to plan. My parents are also very excited about the trip and are really **looking forward to it**.

Thien Cam is the largest beach in Vietnam and is quite a popular **tourist destination**, famous for its big waves. It is located in the central part of the country, which is not really too far from where we currently live. When we arrive, aside from enjoying the beach, we will probably visit some other tourist attractions around the area, and I guess that during the trip we will probably get some **souvenirs** for our relatives as well.

In terms of the preparation, we are planning to go there by train so that we can enjoy the **scenic beauty** of our country along the way. Of course we'll probably have to book a hotel in advance, and bring our swimsuits, sunscreen and summer clothes. Another important thing to remember to bring is medicines, just in case someone gets sick.

So, the main reason this will be a special trip I guess is because my parents will be with me and this will be the first time they visit this place. Having my parents there with me will really make it special because it's been more than 7 years since we took a holiday together.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **looking forward to it** – excited about the future
2. **tourist destination** – a popular place for tourists to visit

3. **souvenirs** – gifts that tourists buy to remember a place
4. **scenic beauty** – beautiful natural environmental surroundings eg. mountains, rivers, lakes  
etc



## 102. Describe a kind of music or a song

You should say:

- What kind of music it is
- Where you usually listen to it
- Why you like it

And say what kind of mood this music puts you in

### Sample

I like to think of myself as a lover of music that is kind of **sentimental** and romantic. I love to listen to many different music **genres**, but the one that I particularly enjoy the most is ballads. It is the genre that consists of slow **tempo**, sad **vibes** and heart-breaking lyrics.

I usually listen to these kinds of song on my computer or on my MP3 player with my headphones on, so you can basically see me listening to ballads pretty much all of the time, and just about anywhere. I am quite a sensitive guy, so whenever I feel sad, I just turn on my MP3 player and let the melody express my feelings.

Ballads give me a sense of **nostalgia**, and make me remember about wonderful memories from the past with special people. Every time a ballad is played, I remember my childhood, the sweet memories and the **reckless** moments I had with my friends, my ex-lovers and my family. This genre is the key that **opens up the door to my past**. I love it with all of my heart.

This music puts me in a sad yet **charming** mood. I feel sad that the past days are gone and yet I wonder about the many future moments I'll have with special people. Furthermore, if I fall asleep while listening to a ballad, I can dream of those memories and feel slightly happy when I wake up. It really has everything that I seek for when it comes to a music genre.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **sentimental** – related to feelings or emotions
2. **genres** – a particular style or subject of something
3. **tempo** – the speed of something
4. **vibes** – energy, mood or feeling that something or someone has
5. **nostalgia** – happy or sad feelings related to something from the past

6. **reckless** – to not be careful
7. **opens up the door to my past** – helps me to remember the past
8. **charming** – very nice or pleasant

### 103. Describe a time when you were not allowed to use your cell phone

You should say:

- Where you were
- When it happened
- What you were doing

And why you were not allowed to use your cell phone

#### Sample

Well, I think that mobile phones have now become the **must-have item** for everybody in daily life, so much so that we somehow feel we can't live without them. I always remember the one time that I had to be apart from my phone when I was sitting my high school graduation exam 2 years ago, and I have to say it was quite uncomfortable.

So, my high school graduation exam is a **mandatory** examination that students have to take at the end of grade 12 to get their diploma and their score is what determines their ability to enter into university. It's one of the most important events in a students' life, I guess, because it not only pretty much **shapes their future** but also helps to **reassure their value** in themselves.

And of course, cell phones are not allowed in the test, to ensure that no one gets an **unfair advantage** by cheating. If your phone makes a noise, or if you are seen using it at any time, including during breaks, you may be dismissed from the examination immediately, and your scores will be cancelled without exception.

I myself had a bad habit of always going on the internet on my phone to make sure I got the right answers when doing the practice tests at home, so during the exam, I constantly had a **burning desire** to reach for my phone but obviously it was just a thought and I didn't dare to do it. However the feelings of **uncertainty** about my results were **haunting** me and made me really nervous, and it wasn't until I handed in my papers and checked the answers when I got home, was I able to feel calm again.

From this experience, I realized that I do rely too much on my phone. And although it's a great tool to assist studying I do think we should learn how to be more confident in ourselves and our knowledge without having to look at our phones all the time.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **must-have item** – something necessary
2. **mandatory** – necessary or compulsory, must be done
3. **shapes their future** – determines their future opportunities
4. **reassure their value** – makes them feel good about themselves
5. **unfair advantage** – to have something that other's don't that helps you to do something
6. **burning desire** – a strong feeling to do something
7. **uncertainty** – not sure of
8. **haunting** – staying in your mind, or scaring you

#### 104. Describe a TV series you enjoy watching

You should say:

- What it is
- What it's about
- When you first watched it

And explain why you like watching it

#### Sample

Well, I would like to talk about The Walking Dead, which is an American television drama series I have recently become crazy about.

As you might know, The Walking Dead is the most popular TV show **on air** at the moment and everybody **across the globe** is watching it. It **portrays** the world after a zombie **apocalypse**, where society has **crumbled** and there is no government anymore to take care of the people's **welfare**. I first watched this series about 3 years ago and I immediately fell in love with it, and since then I've become really fond of horror movies as well.

The show stars many talented and famous actors, which is one of the main reasons why I love this series. Andrew Lincoln is the actor who plays the **leading role** of a police officer and I think he leaves the most significant impression on the **audience** and me, mainly because of his **outstanding** acting skills and the **devotion** he puts into every scene.

Interestingly enough, my favourite part about this show is the **make-up** of the various kinds of zombies, with each and every one of them having to go through an **elaborate** makeup process to achieve the extremely realistic looks they are able to get.

So as I was saying earlier, I really have had a great interest in the idea of a Zombie apocalypse ever since I was a kid and I even dreamt of living in one once. But apart from that though, I think that this series has a very **stimulating plot** and many **unexpected twists** which raise great **suspense** and excitement for viewers.

I just simply cannot get enough of this show and I can't wait for the opening of the next season.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **on air** – broadcast/shown on TV
2. **across the globe** – around the world

3. **portrays** – to represent, describe or show something
4. **apocalypse** – a serious event resulting in a lot of destruction and change to the planet
5. **crumbled** – broken apart, destroyed
6. **welfare** – physical and mental health
7. **leading role** – the main actor or character
8. **outstanding** – very good, or excellent
9. **devotion** – to give a lot of time and effort towards something
10. **make-up** – cosmetics or something used to change the colour or appearance of your face
11. **elaborate** – a lot of careful detail
12. **stimulating plot** – exciting storyline
13. **unexpected twists** – unpredicted changes in the story
14. **suspense** – a feeling of excitement or anxiety about something that is going to or might happen

## 105. Describe an interesting advertisement

You should say:

- Where you saw it
- What it's about
- Why you think it was an interesting advertisement

### Sample

So I'm going to talk about an advertisement for Blue Electronics, which is one of the biggest electronic brands in Vietnam. I've seen its advertisements everywhere, on TV commercials and even on social media networks like Facebook and Instagram.

The advertisement shows a video of people dressed as blue **household appliances**, smiling and staring **creepily** at the screen and dancing **spontaneously** to a really annoying yet **catchy** tune.

I think the aim of this ad is to create a big impression on the audience and to make the products seem more **appealing** to them. I also think they are trying to **traumatize** the audience so that whenever they hear that tune, they will think of Blue Electronics.

I think the advert is interesting because the company is **deliberately** trying to influence and attract people's attention, and they do this by trying to present the household appliances as something special, and kind of like a useful friend for everyone I guess.

I think older people will probably not enjoy these kinds of advertisements because older people usually prefer more informative, serious kind of ads, whereas the younger generation seems to be more crazy about this kind of advertisement, as I think they seem to be more open and able to **perceive** more **innovative** and **hilarious** ideas.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **household appliances** – an electrical device or machine used at home eg. refrigerator, rice cooker
2. **creepily** – done in a strange or scary way
3. **spontaneously** – happening naturally or unplanned
4. **catchy** – sounding nice and easy to remember
5. **appealing** – interesting and attractive

6. **traumatize** – to shock or to affect someone’s mind for a long time
7. **deliberately** – to do on purpose, or planned
8. **perceive** – the way that something is thought about or noticed
9. **innovative** – a new and different way or idea
10. **hilarious** – very funny



## 106. Describe someone you admire who is much older than you

You should say:

- who this person is
- how long you have known him/ her
- what qualities he/ she has

And say why you admire him/ her.

### Sample

Well, the first person who came to my mind is my grandmother. She is almost in her 80's and she has always been a major influence on me.

I guess I could say that I've known my grandmother my whole life because she was actually there the day I was born, and after the death of my grandfather she started to live in our house, so I was lucky enough to grow up and pass my **adolescent** years with her love and affection.

Since my childhood, she has always cared and loved me with all of her heart, and she is a really kind and **wise** woman which is why I always **turn to her for advice**. I think she's a **compassionate** person with a big heart, and always tries to help others whenever she can, and I can recall many occasions when she took great risks to help other people out.

She's also a successful mother of four children, one of whom is my father. She has **devoted** her entire life for the **betterment** of her kids, educating and guiding them to become good people. She possesses a very **charming** personality and always pleases everyone around her. Even a stranger can feel the warmth of her heart within only a short time.

I could really talk about her all day long because I love and admire her for many reasons. But I must say, the most important reason is her **unconditional love** for me. She is a great **mentor** who always shows me the positive side of things and guides me through my hardest times. Talking to her is a **soothing** experience and the stories she tells are always informative and full of important lessons and **morals**. I think she has had a great influence on my attitude in life and on my personality, and for all these reasons there's a strong bond between us, and I admire her very much.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **adolescent** – between the ages of a child and an adult eg. approximately 15 – 18 years old

2. **wise** – being able to make good decisions and/or judgements
3. **turn to her for advice** – to ask for advice
4. **compassionate** – to understand and care about someone
5. **devoted** – to give a lot of time and effort towards something
6. **betterment** – to make something better
7. **charming** – very nice or pleasant
8. **unconditional love** – complete love, without any exceptions
9. **soothing** – making you feel calm
10. **morals** – ideas of what is good or bad behaviour

### 107. Describe a person who has apologized to you

You should say:

- when it was
- who the person was
- why this person apologized

and explain how you felt about it.

#### Sample

Well I think that we all tend to make some mistakes in life now and then, sometimes **intentionally**, and sometimes unintentionally, but we usually regret them afterwards. I always try to apologize for what I do wrong, and of course, I expect the same from others.

So last month, my friend borrowed my car for the day and he knows very well that I'm very **possessive** about my car. I asked him to take good care of it as I know he is not a very good driver, and in fact, this is the reason why his father doesn't buy him his own car.

But he promised me to drive it very **cautiously** and safely, however when he returned it in the evening he sounded very low and he told me that someone hit the car from the rear when he was stuck in a traffic-jam and that caused him to hit the car in front of him. He was feeling very guilty for not taking care of the car and he apologized repeatedly for his **negligence**, and he assured me that he would get it repaired the first thing the next morning.

I did feel sorry for him though, but at the same time very sad as my car was damaged, but somewhere in my mind I knew that this was not his fault. Normally, I easily **lose my temper** but it was because of his **sincere** apology that I couldn't stay mad at him for very long.

So the next day, he went with me to the mechanic and luckily the damage was not so bad or expensive to fix. He apologized again and assured me that he'd be more **vigilant** in the future. We are still good friends and I feel that receiving an apology and forgiving someone is the best way to maintain and make relationships stronger.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **intentionally** – to do something with a plan or a purpose
2. **possessive** – to have strong feelings about something you own or have

3. **cautiously** – carefully
4. **negligence** – not giving enough care or attention
5. **lose my temper** – to get angry
6. **sincere** – honest feeling
7. **vigilant** – to be careful or very attentive about something

**108. Describe a dinner you enjoyed with your friends.**

You should say:

- when and where you had the dinner
- what you had
- who you went with

and explain why you enjoyed the dinner.

**Sample**

I have had many meals and taken part in many celebrations and parties over the years but among these, there's one particular time that I remember the most. A few months ago, I went to a barbeque party on the rooftop of one of my friends' homes. It was actually a **farewell party** for my best friend since she was going to study abroad, and the meal and the party were both really fantastic.

We had been planning this party for a long time and so on the day, we gathered at my friend's house and all went shopping and prepared everything together. We had a lot of amazing food that night as my best friend has a real **talent for** cooking. Thanks to her secret recipe, all the meat was **marinated** and **seasoned** perfectly and the taste was simply delicious. Besides the main dishes, a lot of drinks and snacks were served too. I myself enjoyed the dessert the most. It was a fluffy red velvet cake with a classic cream cheese **frosting**. We bought that from a famous bakery in Hanoi and it was **worth every penny**.

So we ate the grilled meat, drank beer and chatted the whole evening. During the dinner, we talked about our future, our funniest memories together and everybody had a **real blast**. There's no doubt that it could be quite a long time until we can all gather like that again, so that party is very memorable to me.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **farewell party** – a party to say goodbye to someone
2. **talent for** – a natural or good ability to do something
3. **marinated** – to soak something in herbs, spices and/or flavourings
4. **seasoned** – to improve the flavour of something by adding salt, herbs and/or spices
5. **frosting** – the sweet layer on top of a cake

6. **worth every penny** – it was worth the money that was spent
7. **a real blast** – a good time

### 109. Describe a time when you had to work hard to achieve a goal

You should say:

- what the goal was
- when this happened
- what you did to achieve this goal

and explain why the goal was important to you.

#### Sample

I'm the type of person who never likes to **rely on luck**. I believe that everything can only be achieved through hard work and determination, and my final year in high school was one of the times that I **spared no effort** to achieve my goal.

At that point, I was still a senior student and like all the other students, passing the University entrance exam to get into my dream University was my main goal. But for me, I felt that the pressure was even higher since I had chosen Hanoi Medical University – one of the top Universities in Vietnam. There are thousands of students taking part in that exam every year so it is highly competitive.

In order to compete with the other candidates, every day I would spend hours in the library to read as many books as possible and to learn as much as I could. And even after school, I usually stayed up late to review everything I had learnt that day. It was a long process with a lot of hard work but I didn't feel tired at all because becoming a doctor was one of my greatest **desires**. I was willing to put in a lot of hard work and effort for that dream and to not let anything stop me from achieving it.

So in the end, all the **hard work paid off**, and I passed the entrance exam with **outstanding** results and became a medical student. When I received the results, I was so happy that I **burst into tears**. All of my hard work for the year had helped me achieve one of my big goals in life so far.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **rely on luck** – to leave things to chance or fate
2. **spared no effort** – to try as hard as possible
3. **desires** – a strong feeling of wanting something
4. **hard work paid off** – got good results due to a lot of effort
5. **outstanding** – very good, or excellent
6. **burst into tears** – to suddenly begin to cry





### 110. Describe a holiday or vacation you have been on

You should say:

- when you had it
- where you went
- what you did

and explain how you felt about it

#### Sample

A few months ago, I went to the South of Vietnam for a vacation with my family. It's was to the lovely **coastal city** of Nha Trang, which is also a very famous tourist destination. We decided to go there by plane since it is nearly 1200 kilometres from Hanoi, and would take a long time by car or train.

I was so eager for the trip that I prepared everything such as my clothes, camera and other accessories a week **in advance**. It took about an hour to fly there, and luckily, the flight took off **on time**. The trip began with an **incredible** view from the airplane window and I can still remember being quite **overwhelmed** by the beauty of my city from above and the amazing sunset.

The time we spent in Nha Trang was a **blast**. We got to try out so many new things such as **skydiving**, surfing, and diving to see the coral reef. This place has one of the most beautiful beaches in Vietnam with deep blue water and pearly-white sand. Also, the food there was so **unique** and delicious. I think the most memorable moment of that trip though was definitely when we bought fresh ingredients from a local market and grilled them by the beach. Sitting there by the fire on a **breezy** night with the delicious smell freshly barbequed fish was an amazing experience.

The trip to Nha Trang really was the holiday of a lifetime. We had a lot of fun and got to see a lot of **spectacular** scenery. We definitely enjoyed it and we will definitely go there again if we have a chance.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **coastal city** – a city that is located along the coast or near the ocean
2. **in advance** – before it happens
3. **on time** – to happen at the expected time
4. **incredible** – amazing or hard to believe
5. **overwhelmed** – to feel a sudden strong emotion
6. **a blast** – a good time

7. **skydiving** – jumping from an airplane and landing with a parachute
8. **unique** – one of a kind
9. **breezy** – a little windy
10. **spectacular** – very exciting or interesting

### 111. Describe a happy family event that you remember well

You should say:

- what the event was
- when and where it happened
- What you saw or did

and explain why you remember this event so well.

#### Sample

Well, this is a very nice topic for me and I would love to talk about one of my most memorable childhood events that I had with my family. The celebration was to welcome a new member to our family, the birth of my **nephew**. My eldest sister gave birth to a beautiful and healthy baby boy and he was the first grandchild of my parents.

After seeing the newborn baby for the first time, my father **declared** that this was a really special occasion and that we must celebrate to welcome the newest member into our family. So we all got to work straight away organising and planning for the party, my parents set out to invite all the guests and do the necessary shopping while my grandmother and sister cooked a lot of delicious food.

I was so happy and excited that when the **gorgeous** baby arrived, I didn't leave his side. I wanted to be near him and play with him all the time but he was still so small that he couldn't play with any of the toys I had given him. But it didn't really matter because I could just stare at his cute face all day long anyway.

It really was a day full of happiness, **amazement** and celebration. The arrival of a beautiful baby into the family had brought us all together. Many friends and relatives **turned up** for the occasion, and it was definitely a very happy event for our whole family, close friends and relatives.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **nephew** – the son of your brother or sister
2. **declared** – to announce or express something clearly
3. **gorgeous** – very beautiful or attractive
4. **amazement** – extreme surprise
5. **turned up** – to arrive



## 112. Describe a long journey you travelled by car

You should say:

- what it was
- when and where it happened
- who was involved

And explain if you enjoyed it or not.

### Sample

I would like to describe quite a long but exciting journey that I went on last week by car from my hometown, Hue city, to the capital city, Hanoi.

I had three **travelling companions** in the car with me, who were three of my close friends and we had agreed on **gathering** at my house at 5am, which was our **point of departure**. Actually, I'm quite **an early riser**, so I found it quite easy to get up that early and be ready on time. And luckily, the weather that day was really nice, so we were able to leave the windows down for most of the trip. The fresh air and **tranquility** of the countryside made me feel really relaxed but energetic at the same time.

After driving all day, we arrived in Hanoi quite late, by around 6:30pm and continued to drive around the lake a few times, until about 7pm, when the sun began to set and the streets became a little quieter. After that, we stopped at our favourite cafe to **sip on** some coffee and **reflect on** our long day.

I really enjoyed that car trip because of several reasons. To begin with, it was a great chance for me to see my country from a very different angle, a road trip with my **mates**. Usually I would take the train or a plane to complete that journey. So this was a great way to see things, stopping whenever we liked, if we saw something that interested us, for example. This car trip also helped me to **refresh my mind** by just **hitting the open road** and leaving all my worries behind. It was also a really great opportunity for me and my friends to **enjoy each other's company** and exchange stories along the way from our daily lives. You know, we are often too busy to meet regularly, so chances like this are really valuable.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **travelling companions** – people to travel with
2. **gathering** – to come together
3. **point of departure** – place to begin a journey from
4. **an early riser** – someone who wakes up early every morning eg. at 5am

5. **tranquillity** – calm, peaceful and quiet
6. **sip on** – to drink slowly
7. **reflect on** – to think about
8. **mates** – friends
9. **refresh my mind** – to be mentally relaxed
10. **hitting the open road** – going for a drive somewhere out of the city
11. **enjoy each other's company** – to have a good time with someone

### 113. Describe a short trip that was special to you

You should say:

- when it was
- where you went
- who you went with

And explain why it was special.

#### Sample

I would like to describe a short but rather exciting tour that I went on last Saturday, which was a bicycle trip around Hoan Kiem Lake, which is also known as Sword Lake, and is one of the **major scenic spots** in Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam.

I went on this trip with three close friends of mine, and we agreed on riding our bicycles to the Ly Thai To statue at 5am, which was to be our **point of departure**. I'm actually quite the **early riser** so I found it pretty easy to get up that early and be there on time.

And luckily the weather that day was really nice. The air was fresh and the **tranquillity** of the morning made me feel relaxed but also energetic. We biked around the lake about five times until around 7am when the sun began to rise and the streets started to get crowded. After that, we gathered at our favourite cafe to **sip on** some coffee **chat** about our lives.

I really enjoyed that short bike trip due to several reasons. Firstly, it was a great chance for me to see our city from a very different perspective, a peaceful Hanoi without traffic jams and air pollution. I was able to **escape from the hustle and bustle** of the city for a few hours and **recharge myself** to get prepared for a new week.

I think that cycling is also a really great exercise that helps me to **strengthen my health, build up stamina** and **improve my immune system**. And **last but not least**, I think this trip was a really great opportunity for me and my friends to get together and chat about our daily lives. You know, we are often too busy to meet regularly, so times like these are really valuable.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **major scenic spots** – popular place with natural beauty
2. **point of departure** – place to begin a journey from
3. **early riser** – someone who wakes up early every morning eg. at 5am
4. **tranquillity** – calm, peaceful and quiet
5. **sip on** – to drink slowly

6. **chat** – to talk about unimportant things
7. **escape from the hustle and bustle** – to get away from a busy place or city
8. **recharge myself** – to get new energy, to feel good again
9. **strengthen my health, build up stamina and improve my immune system** – to improve the different aspects of your health and fitness
10. **last but not least** – the last thing, but not the least important



### 114. Describe an environment law

You should say:

- what it is
- how you first learned about it
- who benefits from it

And explain how you feel about this law

#### Sample

I would like to talk about a policy which the government put in place a long time ago, and I believe that has had a **tremendously** positive effect on the daily life of Vietnamese people.

I don't remember the exact official title of the **regulation**, but generally, it states that people must separate their **household waste** into three groups: **organic**, inorganic and recyclable materials, each of which has been assigned a different coloured bin. To effectively make this rule work, the government has had to install thousands of different coloured bins throughout the city's public areas.

In the past, **waste disposal** was such a **daunting task** for the local government to deal with because most people had very little **environmental awareness**, and they often just mixed their trash into one giant mess, dumping it into rivers, on the streets or in any public place they felt like. This became quite an **alarming situation** in Vietnam for a number of years and had an extremely **detrimental impact** on the environment, and **not to mention** the mess it was creating in many urban areas.

So, by introducing this new law and by **effectively campaigning** it, a **clear shift** has occurred in people's daily lives, as now there is an effective and practical solution to **get rid of** everyday waste, and people's awareness around this issue has now significantly increased over the years. I'm really quite happy with how this law has helped to solve the waste problem in my country, rather than only the ineffective talk about the problem that was happening beforehand.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **tremendously** – extremely or very much
2. **regulation** – an official law or rule

3. **household waste** – garbage from your house eg. food scraps, plastic packaging, boxes etc
4. **organic** – something natural, not with any chemicals
5. **waste disposal** – throwing away garbage
6. **daunting task** – a task that makes you feel slightly worried or frightened about doing it
7. **environmental awareness** – to think about or know about environmental problems
8. **alarming situation** – a serious problem
9. **detrimental impact** – a negative or damaging effect
10. **not to mention** – used when you want to emphasise something you are about to say
11. **effectively campaigning** – to successfully
12. **a clear shift** – an obvious change
13. **get rid of** – to be free of something

### 115. Describe a recent happy event

You should say:

- what it was
- when and where it happened
- who is involved

And explain why it was happy.

#### Sample

I would like to talk about a special wedding that I recently attended, which was my brother's wedding, which is possibly one of the happiest events in my entire life. It was only 2 months ago and I still remember that day rather clearly.

My brother, who is my only **sibling**, decided to get married in the summer of 2017. And since my brother's **fiancée** is a **Catholic**, the wedding was a combination of both catholic and traditional Vietnamese style. Because we were on the groom's side, my family and I had to wake up early to follow my brother to his bride's house. There my brother would ask for permission from his future **parents-in-law** to allow him to take their daughter to her new family. After getting the acceptance, both the bride and groom and all the guests headed to a fancy restaurant, where the wedding ceremony was celebrated. I remembered how well the entire room was decorated with sparkling light bulbs and purple ribbons, which was the bride's favourite colour. During the whole ceremony, myself and other guests witnessed the bride and groom **exchanging vows** with each other and this was indeed an unforgettable moment.

Also, this marriage was special for me in another sense, being that it was the first wedding I had had the chance to be a part of, which really made the whole event a **once-in-a-life-time experience**. It was really great to be able to see and feel the passionate love the couple had for each other, through the way they looked at each other and the through the way they expressed their vows. And finally, the wedding was carried out with a smooth and peaceful atmosphere and I think that all the guests really had a great time attending this sacred occasion.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **sibling** – brother or sister
2. **fiancée** – the man or women that someone has agreed to and is planning to marry
3. **Catholic** – a form or the Christian religion

4. **parents-in-law** – the parents of your husband or wife
5. **exchanging vows** – when the bride and groom read their vows to each other
6. **a once-in-a-life-time experience** – a unique or very special experience

### 116. Describe a long walk you had

You should say:

- where you went to
- when you went
- who you went with

And explain how you felt about this walk.

#### Sample

I would like to talk about a long walk that I have taken recently. So this was a walk around Hoan Kiem Lake. I do this walk quite regularly actually, usually in the late evening, and usually whenever I am feeling **under pressure** at work or school.

That night, the fresh air and **tranquil** atmosphere around the lake made me feel relaxed but quite energetic at the same time, and it helped me to refresh my mind to get ready for a new day to come. There's also a lot of **police presence** around the area which makes you feel quite safe, so you don't have to be concerned about being **pick-pocketed** or something like that, you can really just concentrate your mind on other more important things.

Surrounding the lake is a long **spacious pavement**, where people usually go jogging and walking, and after taking a long walk I just sat there on a bench, taking in the peaceful atmosphere. Most of the time I was just **gazing** at the stars, trying my best to let my mind unwind and **meditate**.

The reason I took this walk was because I had just had a **huge** fight with my best friend and he had started questioning some things about my life, and it made me feel really **awful**. So following that, we had an argument and all of a sudden I started questioning our relationship. Things just started feeling very **bizarre**, so I went looking for something that would calm my mind.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **under pressure** – feeling stressed because you have a lot of things to do
2. **tranquil** – calm, peaceful and quiet
3. **police presence** – when there is police in the area
4. **pick-pocketed** – to have something stolen from your pocket eg. wallet or phone
5. **spacious** – with a lot of space
6. **pavement** – the footpath
7. **gazing** – looking at something for a long time
8. **meditate** – to sit still and pay attention to your mind and breath

9. **huge** – very big
10. **awful** – very bad or unpleasant
11. **bizarre** – very strange, weird or unusual

### 117. Describe a situation when someone made noise

You should say:

- when it happened
- who made the noise
- where it was

And explain how you felt about it.

#### Sample

So I'm going to talk about when my neighbour made a lot of noise when he **renovated** his house a few months ago. The noise of the **drills, hammers** and other **power tools** during the daytime was really annoying.

I heard that a **newcomer** had bought the house next to mine and because of some problems with water leakage; he had **made up his mind** to do some **repairs and renovations** to the house, and after that, the noise of hammers, saws, and drills **seemed to be endless** around my house all day long, even on the weekends. My neighbour wanted to live in his house as soon as possible so he would start the work early every morning, and that made my family members and I wake up earlier than usual.

During this time I felt extremely **exhausted** and I really wanted to make a complaint so that my neighbour would take some actions but his house renovations were **legal** so there was nothing I could do. Hearing the noise all the time **drove me crazy**, and had quite a negative impact on my work.

Sometimes I was **sleepless** all night. But luckily, after about a month or so, my neighbour finished the renovations and the terrible construction noises **ceased**. I finally felt relieved!

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **renovated** – to repair and improve something eg. a building
2. **drills, hammers, power tools** – building tools
3. **newcomer** – someone new to the area or place
4. **made up his mind** – decided to
5. **repairs and renovations** – to fix something and make it better
6. **seemed to be endless** – felt like it never stopped or ended
7. **exhausted** – very tired or low energy
8. **legal** – to do with the law

9. **drove me crazy** – to be angry or annoyed by something
10. **sleepless** – couldn't sleep
11. **ceased** – stopped



**118. Describe a difficult choice that you made.**

You should say:

- what the choice was
- when this happened
- what choice you made

And explain why the choice was a difficult one.

**Sample**

So I'm going to talk about a situation when I found it really difficult to **make up my mind**. It was when I was a child, about ten years ago, and my parents weren't **getting on well with each other**, which made the atmosphere at home really terrible. In the end, they got **divorced**, but I didn't know whom I should go to live with, my mom or my dad.

That was a really difficult time in life for me because so many things changed, mostly in a negative way. I had a difficult time to choose who to live with because I loved both of my parents and we had had many unforgettable memories together. So to **solve** this **matter**, our family spent a long time discussing it and deciding on the best option for me.

Finally, I chose to stay with my mom because she could take better care of me and she needed my support after the divorce. Though my dad felt **upset**, he agreed with my choice, **for my sake**. You know, I believe that was not only a tough choice for me but also for my parents as well.

I always want to **live under the same roof** as both my parents, so choosing just one person to live with was a hard thing for me. Not being able to see my dad every day made me feel sad, so that was one of the toughest choices I have ever had to make.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

1. **make up my mind** – decided to
2. **getting on well with each other** – having a good relationship
3. **divorced** – when a husband and wife are separated ie. opposite of getting married
4. **solve** – to find an answer to a problem
5. **matter** – problem
6. **upset** – to be angry or unhappy
7. **for my sake** – for my benefit
8. **live under the same roof** – to live in the same house

### 119. Describe what you would do if you were given a day off

You should say:

- what you would like to do
- who you would like to be with
- where you would like to do it

And explain how you would feel at the end of the day.

#### Sample

So I'm going to share with you an activity that I would love to do if I had a day off; and that is to spend my entire day participating in various outdoor activities, in order to **relieve some stress** and **recharge my batteries**. I have been making some plans of a number of things that I'd like to do when I get the chance, such as hiking or cycling in a mountainous area, and **paying a visit** to some historical places.

So, if I had a day off, I would like to spend it with my best friend, Lan. She loves travelling and discovering new places as well, and she knows **basic first aid** and how to **survive** if we were to ever **get lost**, so I think that she would be the perfect partner to go with.

Ninh Binh province is my hometown so I would like to go there on my free day, and although I was born and **brought up** there, I haven't finished travelling through this massive mountainous province. Having numerous tourist attractions, Ninh Binh would enable me and my friend to enjoy the fresh atmosphere, go hiking and visit various places, for example, the Stone Church and Hoa Lu Palace.

I've been suffering from quite a heavy workload in my job recently, so I'm really in need of a day off that would allow me some time to do my favourite activities, making me feel more excited and happier with my life.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **relieve some stress** – to reduce or release stress or worry
2. **recharge my batteries** – to get new energy, to feel good again
3. **paying a visit** – to visit
4. **basic first aid** – basic emergency medical care
5. **survive** – to continue to live ie. to not die
6. **get lost** – to not know where you are
7. **brought up** – raised



## 120. Describe an ideal house

You should say:

- where it is
- what it looks like
- when you would like to live in

And explain why you would like to live in it

### Sample

So I'm going to talk about the perfect house that I would like to live in. I would like it to be **spacious**, **comfy** and **tranquil** and it should therefore be located in a **rural area** with a quiet and peaceful atmosphere.

Painted white and pink, the house would somehow look like a little **palace** for a **royal family**. Natural light is a **must** for this house, and it must contain an effective window system for good **ventilation**. The house would be equipped with modern **appliances** and air-conditioning for comfort and convenience. Trees and flowers would be planted around it for decoration and to make it look beautiful.

My ideal house, which would be full of natural light and surrounded by a lot of beautiful gardens, would be the perfect place for me when I am in need of relaxation, and an escape from my **heavy workload** in the city. I would be able to enjoy the fresh air, and living there would be the perfect way to **relieve stress**.

To be honest, having the chance to live in such a house would be a dream come true for me, feeling like a king in his own castle, and I hope that one day I can actually build a house like this to live in.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **spacious** – with a lot of space
2. **comfy** – comfortable
3. **tranquil** – calm, peaceful and quiet
4. **rural area** – the countryside or farming area
5. **palace** – the home of a king or royal family
6. **a must** – necessary
7. **ventilation** – the movement of fresh air in a closed space
8. **appliances** – an electrical device or machine used at home eg. refrigerator, rice cooker
9. **heavy workload** – a lot of work to do

10. **relieve stress** – to reduce or release stress or worry

## 121. Describe a book you liked to read in your childhood

You should say:

- who wrote this book
- what it is about
- when you read it

and explain why you liked it.

### Sample

Well, I'm going to share with you the book that I was really **fond of** reading when I was a little girl, which is Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. It's a **fantasy novel** written by the British **author** J. K. Rowling, and she has become really popular all over the world now thanks to this fantastic series of books.

The book illustrates the school life of a young wizard, Harry Potter, and his two best friends Ron and Hermione. Harry had a powerful enemy, the Dark Wizard, Lord Voldemort, who **longed for immortality** and **to rule** the magic world.

I started reading this book when I was about 8 years old I think. At that time, I was only beginning to improve my reading skills, and Harry Potter was quite a thick book so it **took me ages to get through it**.

As a little girl, I didn't understand all the details in the book but I truly admired the story of Harry's friendship with Ron and Hermione. And I think it helped me to feel more confident to make friends with my classmates, some of whom I still **keep in touch with** now. And I guess that is the main reason why I **appreciate** this book so much.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **fond of** – to like
2. **fantasy novel** – a book that involves magic or imaginary worlds
3. **author** – someone who writes a book, story or article
4. **longed for** – really wanted
5. **immortality** – the ability to keep on living, and never die
6. **to rule** – to control something
7. **took me ages** – took a long time
8. **get through it** – to read it
9. **keep in touch with** – to stay in communication with someone, through email, message or phone

10. **appreciate** – to be thankful

## 122. Describe a success in your life

You should say:

when it was

what it was

why you chose it

how you achieved.

### Sample

Well, the success that I would like to share with you today is about my contribution to a **social welfare** activity that **occurred** about 5 years back when I was just a **freshman in college**. I really feel proud of this achievement as I believe I have done something really good for society.

At that time, the **local authorities** in my hometown had planned to destroy a public park and build a **shopping mall complex** instead. I had **taken notice of** them cutting down the trees so I gathered my friends **to protest**, though it was a very complicated situation.

The reason for me to do that was because that park was the only **green space** and **recreational area** for the local people. They came there every day to exercise, and enjoy the fresh air in order to maintain and improve their health. As well as this, it's also **home to** a large number of wild birds and other animals, which I feel is a very important thing to **conserve**.

I know that **going against** the authorities is a really hard thing to do but I felt that I needed to do it **for the sake of** the community. We made some plans to contact the media and go to the local authorities to express our view and opinion, and in the end, we succeeded and the construction of the shopping mall was cancelled, so I feel like this really was a success in my life.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **social welfare** – to do with the health, happiness and living conditions of people within a society
2. **occurred** – happened
3. **a freshman in college** – first year student in university or college
4. **local authorities** – the local police or government
5. **shopping mall complex** – one or more buildings that include many shops, restaurants, cafes and possibly a cinema and other facilities
6. **taken notice of** – to have seen or paid attention to something
7. **to protest** – a strong complaint or argument against something or someone



8. **green space** – an area with a lot of trees, grass
9. **recreational area** – an outdoor area usually with a lot of nature used by people for activities that help them to relax and have fun, such as playing sport, exercising, walking, having a picnic etc
10. **home to** – the home of
11. **conserve** – to keep and protect from damage, waste or loss
12. **going against** – to argue or challenge someone or something
13. **for the sake of** – for the benefit of

### 123. Describe a time when you were looking at the sky

You should say:

- When and where you looked at the sky
- Who you looked at sky with
- How you felt when looking at it

And explain why you looked at the sky

#### Sample

Looking at the sky seems like the sort of thing we might do every day without actually having any **awareness** of doing it. But today I want to share with you the time when I had an opportunity to look up into the sky from a city on the other side of the planet.

A couple of years ago I had a great opportunity to escape from the **scorching hot** summer in Hanoi to one of the most **stunning** cities in Europe, London. Usually the weather in London is pretty much day after day of **overcast clouds** and **dreariness** with high levels of rainfall throughout the year. However when I arrived in London, I guess I must have caught a lucky **break in the clouds** as the city was **lit up** in sunlight.

But while I was travelling from the airport to my hotel in the west part of London with my mother, I opened the car window to **glance** around and feel the wind on my skin and in my hair. By this point, the sun had disappeared and the sky was **overcast** and grey with **loads** of thick clouds. There were many people on the street walking in a hurry to avoid the rain, while others were too **absorbed** with their phones to even notice the coming rain.

I was so excited and curious about this huge city that I decided not to let the rain ruin my first day, even though I got **soaking wet** in the **heavy downpour** as I got out of the **cab** and moved my luggage. For the rest of the day, I spent my time looking at the sky from my hotel room's window while the rain kept **pouring down**. I love London, without a doubt, but that kind of weather totally made me feel **depressed**.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **awareness** – knowledge or understanding of something
2. **scorching hot** – very hot
3. **stunning** – beautiful
4. **overcast clouds** – grey clouds covering the entire sky
5. **dreariness** – dark, dull and depressing
6. **break in the clouds** – a gap in the clouds

7. **loads** – a lot of
8. **absorbed** – very interested in something and not paying attention to anything else
9. **soaking wet** – completely wet
10. **heavy downpour** – heavy rain
11. **cab** – taxi
12. **pouring down** – raining heavily
13. **depressed** – feeling very sad and unhappy

## 124. Describe an article you read about healthy life

You should say:

- where you read it from
- when you read it
- what the article was about

And explain what you thought about this article

### Sample

Today I want to share with you one of my most favourite **articles** of all time named “Ten ways to live longer”, which was **published** in the Guardian - a very famous British magazine, and is, in my opinion, a **must-read** article about human health and well-being.

I believe that the more people become **wiser**, the more they will care about their health. The first surprising thing I noticed about this article was about the country with the longest **life expectancy**, which was Japan, for both men and women. The question is, how do they do it? Well, apparently Japanese people simply have regular **health check-ups** and **pay close attention** to **hygiene** in every aspect of their lives. Avoiding a **sedentary lifestyle** is one of the **golden rules** of good health, yet this is still a major problem in many countries around the world. In other words, **get your running shoes on** and never just sit around all day. Another major point I learnt was that you should get your blood pressure checked regularly because high blood pressure is the **number one factor** that leads to early death and years of poor health.

According to the article, the ten things to do or avoid included some things like, not smoking, eating seeds and not junk, drinking in **moderation**, staying out of hospital, and not getting stressed, which all seem quite **obvious** but can certainly change your life if you follow these rules. You don't need to do **strenuous** or **vigorous** exercise in order to have better health. Simply drink a little bit less each day, add a little bit more vegetables to your diet and do something as simple as carrying your heavy shopping bags instead of using the **trolley** to improve your muscle strength at least two days a week. Sounds easy, right?

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **articles** – a piece of writing in a newspaper or magazine
2. **published** – to make something available to the public by printing it eg. a book, magazine etc
3. **must-read** – something that is highly recommended to read
4. **wiser** – smarter

5. **life expectancy** – a prediction of how long something or someone will live
6. **health check-ups** – visiting the doctor to check your health
7. **pay close attention** – to look or do something in detail
8. **hygiene** – keeping yourself and your environment clean in order to avoid sickness and disease
9. **sedentary lifestyle** – a lazy lifestyle with little or no exercise or physical activity
10. **golden rules** – the most important rules
11. **get your running shoes on** – put your shoes on to prepare for some exercise
12. **number one factor** – the number one cause of
13. **obvious** – easily seen or understood
14. **strenuous** – needing or using a lot of energy or effort
15. **vigorous** – very energetic
16. **trolley** – shopping cart

## 125. Describe a new skill you would like to learn

You should say:

- What it is
- Who you want to learn it from
- How you are going to learn it

And explain why you want to learn it

### Sample

Today I would like to share with you about a skill I have always desired to learn, which is speaking German.

A couple of years ago I had such a fantastic trip to Europe, and I was **deeply impressed by** the beauty, **uniqueness** and modern style of the capital city, Berlin. I was **wandering around** all over the city in many different shopping malls to find my dad his favourite black Nike coat. I was fortunate enough to finally find it in the Kaufland shopping mall, however, when I flew back to Vietnam, I realized that I had bought the female size. So it was after that **incident** that I decided to **try my hand** at learning German.

The first reason that makes German such an attractive language to learn is that it is pretty much the second most common language spoken in Europe, for example, in Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Austria, and so on. And secondly, German **bears a close resemblance** to English, and shares pretty much the same alphabet, so I think that might make it a little easier to learn. Additionally, if I learn German, in the future I could certainly apply for a scholarship to study in Germany's great education system.

I think learning a new language can also be really **handy** when travelling, can make you more **decisive** and can bring you **multitudes of cognitive advantages** such as becoming smarter and avoiding Alzheimer's disease when you get older. And last but not least, I think life would be much more exciting if you can speak multiple languages.

So, sometime in the near future, if I can **handle** my work and study load, I'd love **to give learning German a go**.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **deeply impressed by** – having a very strong positive effect or influence on your feeling about something
2. **uniqueness** – one of a kind, or rare
3. **wandering around** – walking around without a fixed route or destination

4. **incident** – an event, usually unpleasant
5. **try my hand** – to try something
6. **bears a close resemblance** – is similar to
7. **handy** – useful
8. **decisive** – the ability to make decisions
9. **multitudes** – many, a lot of
10. **cognitive advantages** – benefits for your brain
11. **handle** – deal with
12. **to give learning German a go** – to try to do or learn something

## 126. Describe one activity stopped by the weather

You should say:

- When and where it happened
- Who was involved
- What the activity was

And what you did after the activity was stopped

### Sample

Anyone who is a **big fan of** tennis definitely knows the name of tennis **legend** Novak Djokovic. And today I'm going to tell you about the story of how I **skipped school** to watch **the big game** that didn't happen between Novak Djokovic and Dominic Thiem at the 2017 Roland Garros.

You know, I've been fascinated by the wonderful world of tennis since I first discovered the sport. My dad and I would always just sit around like a pair of **couch potatoes** whenever a big tennis competition was on. Novak has long been my hero on the court while my father has always been a big fan of Roger Federer. I always love watching a tennis match with my favourite player, whether he wins or loses, and I still love him either way because that's **just the way things go** sometimes. I still admire his **sportsmanship** and **talent** and the way he **elegantly** yet powerfully moves on the court.

On this particular day though of the quarterfinals Novak had to **defeat** Thiem to go through to the semi-final and I was so excited to watch this game because Novak had previously lost the Roland Garros cup before two years in a row. Unfortunately, I had an **unavoidable** mid-term test that day which meant it was impossible for me to watch the game **live**. But after **wrestling with my conscience**, I decided to tell a lie to my dad so that I could stay at home to watch the match. However, the weather in Paris that day turned out to be so terrible that the game was cancelled. I felt so guilty when I found out that the game was cancelled, and I got into big trouble by my dad for not **showing up** to take the mid-term test at school.

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **a big fan of** – really like something
2. **legend** – somebody who is famous or admired, a hero
3. **skipped school** – didn't go to school
4. **the big game** – a sporting match that is important or will be watched by many people
5. **couch potatoes** – someone who watches a lot of television and does very little exercise
6. **just the way things go** – the way something happens



7. **sportsmanship** – the quality of showing fairness and respect while playing sport
8. **talent** - a natural or good ability to do something
9. **elegantly** – done gracefully or beautifully
10. **defeat** – to beat or win against
11. **unavoidable** – cannot be stopped
12. **live** – shown or broadcast as it is happening
13. **wrestling with my conscience** – struggling to make a decision because you know you are  
or might be doing something wrong
14. **showing up** – going or being somewhere

## 127. Describe a person who gave a clever solution to a problem

You should say:

- Who the person is
- When and where it happened
- What the problem was

And explain why it was a clever solution

### Sample

To '**think outside of the box**' is always the term that comes to mind whenever a problem arises and not everyone succeeds in coming up with a solution, but there is one person on this planet though who always surprises me with his **cleverness** and ability to come up with a solution to even some of the toughest problems. His name is Nam and he's my older brother.

My mother always told us that even though we're brothers and we have a **close-knit relationship**, we're still as different as two people could possibly be. I'm quite an active person and have a tendency to make very quick decisions, while my brother is extremely calm and usually solves problems in a **level-headed** kind of way, and that's the reason why he has been a kind of **saviour** to me on a number of occasions.

There was a time that I consider as an important **landmark** in my life which was when I took the entrance exam to university. And similar to my mother, I suffer from **hypotension** which is low blood pressure and sometimes causes **dizziness** when I'm hungry or tired. In certain circumstances, I just need the sugar from a couple of candy bars to recover, but actually I'm quite an **absent-minded** person so I usually forget to carry any with me.

On that day, when the start of the examination was getting nearer, I was so nervous that I couldn't think clearly and my hands had begun to shake. All of a sudden I found some tiny chocolate bars in my pocket, and they absolutely saved my life! In the end, it turned out that my brother remembered to put some in my pocket for me in order to avoid this situation. So thoughtful and so smart he was to do such a thing!

### Vocabulary highlights:

1. **think outside of the box** – to think in an original or creative way
2. **cleverness** – smart, good problem solving ability
3. **a close-knit relationship** – a good and close relationship
4. **level-headed** – calm and sensible even in difficult situations
5. **saviour** – a person who saves someone from harm or danger

6. **landmark** – an important moment, time or event
7. **hypotension** – a disease related to blood-sugar levels
8. **dizziness** – when you feel like your head is spinning around and you cannot stand up normally
9. **absent-minded** – to be forgetful or easily distracted

## 128. Describe a time when you had a problem with a piece of equipment

You should say:

- What equipment it was
- What problem you had
- When you had this problem

And explain what you did about this problem.

### Band 8 Sample

I am actually very quick when it comes to technology and devices, but I am going to tell you one time when I really couldn't deal with a **technical problem** on my phone.

This story dates back to when I got my very first smartphone. You know, at that time, about 7 – 8 years ago, most students only had a basic phone, or, a dumbphone, which could only serve 2 or 3 functions. Having a brand new, updated iPhone seemed to **be such a big deal**, and I immediately became the target of **jealousy** when I brought my phone to school.

At first, it was really great to be the **centre of attention**, but after a while, I realised that my friends tried to download a ton of applications to my device. When I got my phone back, one of them secretly told me that a boy had installed a harmful app which would cause serious battery drain, and right after that, the phone shut down. It came as a real shock to me as that was just the first day I had that phone. I was speechless for hours, paralysed with fright. I didn't know how to tell mom and dad about the incident, because I was very sure they would kill me the second they found out about it. Also, I couldn't get my phone fixed at the store because I was **flat broke** then. In that moment, I really thought that my life was over.

My desk mate noticed my silence and turned to see my eyes full of tears. I thought she was going to say something to cheer me up, but no, she just laughed so hard at me until my whole face turned red. I stopped crying and looked at her with curiosity, and she told me to turn my phone on. It worked. It turned out that I was actually fooled by my classmates.

That's how I fixed the problem with my phone, in such a surprisingly easy way. Thank you for listening.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **technical problem:** a problem involving the way a machine or system works
- **be a big deal:** to be a thing considered important.
- **jealousy:** the state or feeling of being jealous.
- **centre of attention:** a person or thing that excites everyone's interest or concern
- **flat broke:** be completely out of money

## 129. Describe an outdoor meal or picnic that you had

You should say:

- Where it took place
  - What was the occasion
  - What you ate and drank there
- And explain whether you enjoyed it or not

### Band 8 Sample

I'm going to talk about my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party, which is one of the most memorable events in my life.

At that time, one of my friends had decided to study abroad, and therefore, I wanted to **throw a party** to celebrate my birthday and **give her a farewell party** as well, so I came up with the idea to have a barbecue party in my backyard. After about 2 hours of preparing all the ingredients, the meal was finally ready, and we all **wolfed the food down** quickly because we were so starving and because it was so **scrumptious!**

After that, we enjoyed some cupcakes for dessert and talked. I was really impressed by the idea of one of my besties, who said that she really had a strong passion to run a café, and we talked about it for 3 or 4 hours.

If you ask me about my feelings of that day, I would say that it was such a memorable time and I cherish all the memories they gave me from that party. I realised that we have all **come of age** since then, and we all have our own paths to follow, so maybe we will never get another chance to hold a party like that again. Therefore, I have always **attached a lot of importance to** that day and consider it to be a symbol of our long lasting friendship.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **throw a party:** hold/ organise a party
- **give a farewell party:** throw a party for someone who is leaving a job, city, etc
- **wolf something down:** eat something very rapidly and in very large pieces
- **scrumptious:** delicious
- **to come of age:** to reach the age when you are legally considered to be an adult.
- **attach importance to:** believe that something is important

**130. Describe a project or a piece of work you did together with someone**

**You should say:**

- What it was
- What you have done
- Why you have chosen this person(s) to work with

And explain what you did to finish the project.

**Band 8 Sample**

I'm going to tell you about a project I did with my younger sister that I have always **taken pride in**. And that's my mother's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party, which took place last year.

To be frank, I'm not usually a very good team mate, and most projects I have ever done always **end up** in disaster. That's why I couldn't care less when the little girl brought up the idea of throwing a surprise birthday party for mom. I was pretty sure I would mess everything up. However, my sister was so determined and she literally forced me to prepare everything with her. I did hesitate, of course, but **on second thoughts**, I was also quite curious about mom's reaction the moment she would be **taken by surprise**.

So I was in. At first, I planned to just buy mom a gift for fear that I might ruin everything. Khanh, my little sister, wasn't very pleased with my intention to quit. And rather, she just told me to make mom a video full of our memories together, and I couldn't do anything but follow her orders.

Finally, mom's birthday came. She didn't even remember it; let alone be aware of what we had done, because we agreed to keep it a secret beforehand. Right at the moment she came home, she was really **taken aback** by a note telling her to come to the kitchen. All the lights in the house had been turned off, so she had to carefully **make her way** there. When she got there, we played the video and her favourite song. She stood still for a moment, and then tears of joy streamed down her face. We knew we had got her.

After all, the plan **turned out** to be quite a success, and besides a **sense of accomplishment**, I also felt really thankful to see my mom so happy for the first time **in a while**.

Thank you for listening.

## Vocabulary highlights

- **take pride in:** To take satisfaction in, be proud of, or highly value something one owns, has done, or is renowned for
- **end up:** to reach a particular place or achieve a situation after other activities
- **on second thoughts:** Having reconsidered or revised one's opinion of something
- **be taken by surprise:** to be shocked or startled by someone or something
- **be taken aback:** to be shocked or startled by someone or something
- **make one's way to somewhere:** walk or travel to somewhere
- **turn out:** to happen in a particular way or to have a particular result, especially an unexpected one
- **a sense of accomplishment:** a proud feeling of having done something difficult and worthwhile
- **for a while:** for some time

### 131. Describe an important stage of your life

You should say:

- What part it is
- Where you were then
- What memorable things you did

And explain why this is the most enjoyable part / stage in your life.

#### Band 8 Sample

I want to talk about the time I was preparing for the university entrance exam, which until now is still the most important stage of my life. It actually happened 5 years ago, but the feeling was so intense that everything is still **fresh in my memory**.

As you know, in Vietnam, the university entrance exam has always been considered the most important examination in anybody's life, and mine was no exception. In my time, all students were required to sit for an exam that covered the knowledge of 3 full years in high school. It was too much for anyone to handle; the amount of things to learn was so enormous that I remembered having to **pull all-nighters** almost every day. Of course, the competition was fierce, I mean you wouldn't be admitted into the top schools unless your score were really high.

Besides the stress of studying, I was also faced with the question of which major to choose. For many, it was an easy pick, because they understood where their strengths and interest lied. For me, I had no idea whatsoever what I should do in the future, so I was feeling **on edge** during the entire period before the exam.

**In hindsight**, it was not an enjoyable time, but definitely a precious memory to me. It was the first time I was ever involved in something that had such a huge impact on my life. Through this, I had an opportunity to have a closer look at my career orientation as well as my ability. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that I became an adult after this. That's all I want to share about this topic.



### Vocabulary highlights

- **fresh in one's memory:** remember clearly
- **pull all-nighters:** to be awake all night long, especially to study or to complete something
- **on edge:** nervous or worried
- **in hindsight:** looking backward, reflecting on the past

### 132. Describe an occasion that someone or something made noise

You should say:

- When this happened
- Who this person was/what this thing was
- What kinds of noise was

And explain what you did when you heard the noise.

#### Band 8 Sample

I'll tell you about the time when I slapped my neighbour kid in the face. This may sound harsh but that's exactly what happened, and I'm going to tell you the story from the beginning. 3 months ago I made a major decision, which was to move out of my old room which I shared with my brothers to go and live alone. My goal back then was to increase my level of concentration to **get the most out of my study** because I was preparing for the IELTS test. The first few days were nice, I mean, the new room basically satisfied all my needs and it was a pretty quiet place as most of my neighbours were **white-collar workers**. But then, the nightmare presented itself.

When summer began, my neighbour's kid was on his school vacation and stayed at home. Maybe he got bored so he started singing, screaming, and crying all day long. His room was **adjacent to** mine so I heard pretty much everything. At first, the level of noise was acceptable, so somehow I was hoping that I could live with it. But gradually, the kid got louder and louder and did not care about other people in the neighbourhood. Some people complained to his parents about the noise and his parents did promise that it wouldn't happen again, but then, when they left the kid at home to go to work, everything began again.

I remembered that moment quite well. I was writing an IELTS essay and was facing some trouble generating ideas, which made me a little bit cranky and upset. So when the terrible noise started again, I was **boiling with rage**. In the heat of the moment, I stomped out of my room and knocked on my neighbour's door. When that kid opened the door, I looked him straight in the face, and then I slapped him.

He was surprised, of course, and scared. Helpless tears rolled slowly down his cheek. I was screaming at him madly. I told him to shut up and made it clear that I didn't want to hear his terrible voice ever again. Then I went back to my room to pick up my laptop and went to a café to continue my work. Later that night his parents and I had a meeting and we talked about what happened. I apologized for what I did, and they were also sorry about their kid and there were no hard feelings. Up until now, the kid seems to be much more cautious whenever he was home alone, and I have

never heard him making noise again.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **To get the most out of something:** to achieve the greatest output of work, effort, production, etc., out of someone or something
- **While-collar workers:** people who work in offices, doing work that needs mental rather than physical effort
- **Adjacent to:** next to or adjoining something else
- **To boil with rage:** To express or feel an intensive anger

**133. Describe something you do to keep healthy.**

**You should say:**

- What the activity is
- When you do it
- How often you do it

And explain why it is a good way to look after your health.

**Band 8 Sample**

I would like to share with you something that I am keen on doing in my leisure time to stay healthy, which is jogging.

I **took up** this habit about 2 years ago. At that time, I **was up to my ears with** study to prepare for my graduation examination so I was a little bit stressed out. Then I thought that I needed to do something energetic to release some stress, so I decided to **have a crack at** jogging.

At first, doing this was quite challenging for me because I led a **sedentary lifestyle**. I just sat in front of my computer every day to complete my assignments. But after a few days of suffering from muscle aches, I got used to jogging and kept doing it in the evenings.

Well, I have to say that this sport has helped me a lot in strengthening my physical health as well as my mental health. Thanks to jogging, I was able to lose my fat belly and **get lean**. Now, to be honest, I'm quite satisfied with my youthful appearance and trying to maintain it. Also, jogging allows me to unwind and enjoy fresh air, and whenever I go jogging I feel like my mind is being refreshed.

In the future, I am going to keep doing this to stay healthy and maybe I will try some other sports too. That's all!

**Vocabulary highlights**

- **take up**: start doing something
- **to be up to my ears in**: extremely busy
- **have a crack at something**: attempt to do something
- **sedentary lifestyle**: spend a lot of time sitting down
- **get lean**: have very little or no fat

### 134. Describe what you would do if you had a day off.

#### You should say:

- What would you do?
- Who would you do it with?
- Why would you like to do it?

#### Band 8 Sample

I would like to talk about what I would do if I had a day off. Actually, I haven't been able to rest properly lately, so I am desperately longing for a day off to completely recharge my energy.

If I had such a day, the first thing I would do is turn off my phone, so that I was uncontactable and no work could bother me. I wouldn't even bother to call my bestie, since I want to totally **shut myself off** from everything and just **laze around** at home. Let's see, there are so many things I want to **catch up on**, like reading a book and my favourite TV series. I guess I would probably spend the morning **binge-watching** the latest season of Master Chef. In the afternoon, I would take a walk in the park nearby. To be honest, I have moved into a new apartment a few months ago, but have never had a chance to visit the park. That's why I am thinking it would be nice to check it out when I am free.

There is no specific reason why I want to stay home on my day off. I simply feel that I am in serious need of some time for myself. Too much socializing and working really tires me out, so I want to forget about all of that for a while. Of course, I believe this will help me regain my stamina and boost my productivity. That's the end of my answer.

#### Vocabulary highlights

- **Laze around:** to spend a period of time being lazy
- **Catch up on:** learn about something that one missed
- **Binge-watch:** to watch several episodes of a television series or programme
- **Shut oneself off:** isolate oneself from other people.

### 135. Talk about something that makes you excited.

#### You should say:

- What it is
- How it is exciting
- Why you feel excited about it

#### Band 8 Sample

To be honest, there aren't many exciting things going on in my life at the moment, but if I have to talk about one, I would say the weekly coffee date with my best friend is what excites me the most.

The reason why I look forward to this date so much is because my friend and I rarely have a chance to talk on weekdays. Back in school, the two of us were like **the white on rice**, I mean we were **inseparable**. I could spend days and nights gossiping with my best friend, and meeting each other was never a problem for us. However, since graduation, both of us are always **buried in work**, so it gets harder to stay in contact regularly. So now, weekends are the only time we can meet up, and the thought of it never fails to excite me.

There are millions of things I and my bestie can do together. Most of the time, we choose a nice café to sit down and have a chat. On some other occasions, we go shopping, or have brunch in a fancy restaurant. In fact, what we do doesn't really matter, as long as we can see each other. I feel relieved every time I **confide in** my best friend, because I know she will always cheer me up and give me some useful advice. All in all, this is one of the things that excites me the most, thank you for listening.

#### Vocabulary highlights

- **like the white on rice**: close as anything can be
- **inseparable**: very close
- **buried in work**: very busy with work
- **confide in**: to tell something secret or personal to someone who you trust

### 136. Describe an experience that you had when you left home

#### You should say:

- What is it
- When did it happen
- And how do you feel about that experience

#### Band 8 Sample

I'm going to tell you about the time when I got lost in a forest 80 km away from my house. It was 1 year ago, I was on a 2-day company trip to a famous resort not so far from the centre of Hanoi. The first day was fun, as I had many incredible experiences with all my co-workers. We were eating, drinking and singing until we were too drunk to move our heads. And as usual, being drunk is when we do all kinds of crazy stuff. The place where we camped was adjacent to a huge forest. I, who was literally **cross-eyed drunk**, came up with a brilliant idea. "Let's go discovering that forest" – I said to those people who were still able to walk. And, crazy as it sounds, they were all interested in what I said.

So, around 10 of us left our camp and advanced into the forest. The night was dark, so we turned on the flash on our phones to see. At first, when we could still see our camping fire, we were excited. I, as the leader, kept walking having no idea where I was heading. At first, the dark forest seemed to be rather amusing. But then, after around 20 minutes of **roaming**, we found ourselves **in the middle of nowhere**, and even worse, none of us remembered the way back to our camp. As we walked a little bit further, we saw a giant Banyan tree and a temple right next to it. The pale red light from the temple made it look a bit creepy. Right at that moment, one of my colleagues told a ghost story about a temple in his hometown. The story was so horrifying that one of us gave out a **shrill scream**.

We instantly regretted our decision, but as I said earlier none of us had any idea how to get back to our camp. We called some friends in the camp and asked them for help. Luckily some were still awake and they immediately went to those who owned the place and told them about our situation. Of course the locals knew where the tree was so they told us to wait. As scared as we were, we had to stay near the tree waiting for people to come to rescue us. After 15 minutes, the locals came and showed us the way back to our camp. We all felt lucky and we were all tired, but somehow we managed to stay awake all night long talking about the journey. I will never forget that day, it was a truly memorable trip.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **cross-eyed drunk:** alcohol intoxicated.
- **to roam:** to move about or travel, especially without a clear idea of what you are going to do
- **in the middle of nowhere:** in a place that is remote and isolated
- **shrill scream:** a high pitched scream that can really hurt your ears if you're too close



**137. Describe a positive change that you made to your life.**

**You should say:**

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

And explain how you have benefited from this change

( or, explain how you feel about this change)

**Band 8 Sample**

I'd like to tell you about a **life-changing** decision that I've made lately. It was when I decided to change my entire career path. You know, 6 months ago I was still a **real-estate agent**. I'd been working as a salesman for around a year and a half and I was **making some progress** and seeing some positive results. But somehow, as I kept digging deep into this career, I realized it didn't really suit me. I mean, when I pictured myself 5 years from then, I didn't think I wanted to be a salesman anymore. That's why I quit my job and went on to test my ability in an unrelated area. I wanted to be a teacher. As I was searching, I realised that a job teaching IELTS in Hanoi offers quite a **lucrative** income, so I started learning everything I could about IELTS.

Of course, the journey was **arduous** at the beginning, I was overwhelmed with all the self-learning materials that I found on the internet. I knew at that time that I couldn't do it alone so I sought out the help of my friends. I found one who shared the same goals as me and we began studying together. Mainly what we did was keep each other motivated and disciplined, so we set out some **ground rules** to follow, whoever broke the rules would receive harsh punishment. Just like that, after 2 months, we were ready to take the test, and we took it on the same day. Now, we are both IELTS teachers and are enjoying our new responsibilities. Of course as a new teacher I have to figure out a lot of things and do a lot of research to develop a deep-understanding of teaching methods. But, in **retrospect**, I have to say that I've **made the right move**. The new job gives me a lot of fun and opens doors to numerous opportunities for self-improvement. So all in all, this a positive change in my life.

## Vocabulary highlights

- **life-changing:** having an effect that is strong enough to change someone's life
- **real-estate agent:** a person who sells and rents out buildings and land for clients
- **to make progress:** to move forward in one's work or activity
- **lucrative:** producing a great deal of profit
- **arduous:** involving or requiring strenuous effort; difficult and tiring
- **ground rule:** a basic principle
- **retrospect:** a survey or review of a past course of events or period of time
- **to make the right move:** to have a right decision

**138. Describe a person you know who is beautiful or handsome.**

**You should say:**

- Who the person is
  - When you met the person at the first time
  - What the person's character
- And explain how you feel about the person.

**Band 8 Sample**

I'd like to tell you about a man who used to be a **role model** for me when I was growing up, and that is my older brother. I have to say that I really **looked up to** him. He is 8 years older than me, and we **took different paths**. He is tall, strong, charming and extremely confident. His appearance and strength slightly resembles the Superman that often appeared on TV throughout my childhood. In school he wasn't good in academic subjects like math or physics, but he was **highly capable** in all kinds of sport, which was completely **diametrical to me**. I was born small and weak, but fortunately I could pick up words and solve math problems a little bit faster than my peers. However, as you can easily guess, it was my brother that all girls in my school paid attention to.

He was also a leader of his own gang. I know a gang sounds a bit naughty but they didn't cause any problems to the local community or anything. Rarely did I see him walk alone, there were always some cool-looking dudes accompanying him, like following an alpha wolf. He often got involved in a fight to prove his power in school, and I never saw him lose. Of course, my father, who is a high school teacher, didn't like that. He often punished my brother in the hope of changing his eldest son into something "better", like me, without knowing that it was my brother that I admired so much. However, my brother was stubborn, so despite all my father's efforts, he didn't change a bit, at least not until he got seriously injured in a fight with 20 gangsters. After that, he transformed into a different person. Now he has his own family, a wife and a son. If you look at him now, you would never guess that mature man used to do a bunch of crazy stuff. I still look up to him, but no longer because of all those badass things from the past. Now I admire his calmness and confidence when facing a difficult situation, and I'm happy that my brother has changed in a positive way.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **role model:** a person looked to by others as an example to be imitated
- **to look up to sb:** to admire and respect someone
- **to take different paths:** to make different decisions
- **to be highly capable:** to perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced levels when compared with others
- **to be diametrical to sb/st:** to be completely different to sth/sb

**139. Describe an old friend you enjoy talking with**

**You should say:**

- Who this person is
- How you knew him/her
- What you usually talk about

And explain why you want to talk to this person

**Band 8 Sample**

I'm going to tell you about Nguyen, one of my university friends. Among all of the people I've met, Nguyen is perhaps the most **approachable** and funny guy. Back in college, we used to hang out a lot until he went abroad for **further education**.

Nguyen wasn't my classmate, and we aren't in the same clubs at university either. I just met him by chance when we were both candidates in a **citywide** singing contest in our second year. At that time, he was an average guy with a silly smile always on his face, but of course that was not what made me notice him. I actually never did, until we **bumped into** each other at school a few months later. We talked more after that and became great friends since then.

If there is something special about Nguyen, that has to be his way of speaking. He used to speak in such a charming voice and include a lot of playful jokes, which always **cracked me up** even when I was in a bad mood. Also, we shared a lot in common, from our passion towards music and all kinds of instruments to our love interests. I was really **in awe** the first time I found out about his crush on a girl in his class, because if I were a boy, I would definitely be crazy about her.

These things would be enough to explain why we can talk with each other for hours. Sometimes, I even spent the whole day, from 7 in the morning to 10 in the evening, to just lie next to him on the floor of a quiet café, and just talk. What really surprises me is that we didn't start a romantic relationship as people around us expected. After all, I finally found my lover, and so did he. We're still friends, great friends, but at the moment, we've got our own lives and our own relationships. However, he is still, to me, the best person I like to talk to.

Thank you for listening.

## Vocabulary highlights

- **approachable:** easy to talk with; friendly
- **further education:** formal education beyond school other than at a university or polytechnic
- **citywide:** including or occurring in all parts of a city
- **bump into:** to meet by chance
- **crack someone up:** to make someone laugh
- **be in awe:** fearful and respectful of someone or something

## IELTS Speaking Part 3:

### 1. Do you think it is easy to make friends in your country?

I believe whether it is easy or not depends on who you are: your lifestyle, personal traits, or even your social status and wealth. I know it's a little bit cliché, but there's a saying that 'birds of a feather flock together', and this somehow makes sense to me. Doesn't matter where you are, you will often find it very easy to befriend people who share common characteristics with you.

### 2. What do you think is the difference between adults and children when making friends?

Well, I suppose the most significant distinction between how mature people make friends and how younger people do lies in the main purpose of each group when doing so. Children are often very instinctive when it comes to friendship. They just instantly like people who treat them well and they also make friends almost immediately. On the other hand, adults tend to choose their buddies in a different, more pragmatic manner. Normally, they would pick their friends based on similarities, such as interests, lifestyles and so on.

### 3. How do children make friends?

As I've just mentioned, children make friends in such an instinctive manner, almost like small animals. Little kids often follow their hearts and befriend those they feel familiar with or can easily get along with, or in other words, they want to make real friends who they can trust and who can comfort them.

### 4. What is the most important thing in friendship?

This question seems very weird to me, because every aspect in friendship is equally important as this kind of relationship is of great importance to our lives. But if I had to choose one thing, then I would say it's trust. Trust lays a firm foundation for a friendship, and it helps ensure a lifelong friendship.

### 5. In what ways have you helped your friends or your friends helped you?

I always try, to the best of my ability, to provide my friends with everything they need. I could go outside on a rainy day just to pick a friend up from a bus stop, or lend another quite a large amount of money even when I'm nearly broke. In exchange, it's no exaggeration to say that I've never been disappointed about my friends' generosity towards me. They're the best friends one can ever have, I'm sure.

#### **6. Why do friends sometimes break up?**

I'm not sure, but maybe they just grow apart. Some people find themselves unfamiliar with their best friends upon maturity. Others just feel more and more awkward talking with their old buddies. These, I think, result from the lifestyles that some groups of friends just don't share with each other anymore. You see, as we all grow up, we just don't have the same interests as we did before, and that's the same with friendships. We just don't feel the affection like we used to, that's it.

#### 140. Describe a place where people go to listen to music

You should say:

- What kind of music is performed there
- What type of people go there
- Why people go there
- Explain your impressions of this place

#### Band 8 Sample

I am going to tell you about a famous music pub I frequently visit. It is a place named Polygon, which is located in a hidden corner of Cat Linh street.

I first knew of this place through my close friend, who was a big fan of live music. Instead of playing just one **genre**, this pub offers a wide variety of styles depending on the artists they invite each day. The bands there mostly play western pop, but on special occasions there were also jazz and ballad nights.

As far as I know, this place is a **hotspot** for youngsters that have a taste for band music. Some are here to have a drink with friends while bobbing their head to the music, some simply need a place to **dance the night away**. For me personally, I love seeing talented artists **singing their heart out** on stage.

Regarding what impressions I have of this pub, I would describe it as a place of freedom. It is where strangers can easily connect with each other through music. The audience can take the stage if they want to, and artists can **improvise a tune** when someone makes a request. I would highly recommend this pub to anyone who is interested in band music.

#### Vocabulary highlights

- **Genre:** a particular style in arts
- **Hotspot:** a popular and exciting place
- **Dance the night away:** to spend the whole night dancing
- **Sing one's heart out:** To sing with great enthusiasm
- **Improvise a tune:** to perform without preparation.



### **IELTS Speaking Part 3:**

**1. What is the role played by music in people's lives?**

I have heard someone saying music is an art form that enriches our life, and I cannot agree more. What I mean is by listening to the same song, people from all walks of life can relate to each other, and I think this is the magic that no language on earth can ever do.

**2. When do you listen to music?**

I do it all the time, but I especially need music when I am feeling under the weather. To me, it is a form of therapy that can immediately lift my mood and help me gather strength.

**3. What changes do you see in today's music in comparison to past?**

I don't think there are many changes. Just like fashion, music is also cyclical, which means the trend repeats itself after a certain period of time. For example, disco used to be the 'in' style of the 70s, and it is becoming trendy again in recent times.

**141. Describe a shop that has opened in your hometown**

**You should say:**

- What shop it is
- What it sells (or, what you usually buy there)
- When you first started going to this shop (or, how you came to know about this shop)

And explain why you like (to go to) this shop

**Band 8 Sample**

Well, a shop that has just opened in my hometown I want to share with you is Tranquil café, which is one of the best book coffee shops in Hanoi.

This cafe is decorated in an old, traditional Hanoi style with loads of bookshelves and attracts many foreign tourists.

I still **vividly remember** the first time I went there 3 months ago, which was also the opening day. That was entirely **coincidental**. At that time, I came across an article about a new **go-to place** in Hanoi. As I was so curious about that café, I decided to visit and it **caught my eye** immediately. That space was so unique with gorgeous paintings and decoration. It really made me feel at home.

As for the reasons why I am fond of this place, I have to say that's because of its **warm ambience**, which I haven't found in other cafes yet. You know, Hanoi is a busy and noisy city and I am so exhausted and irritated whenever I travel on the road. Therefore, I often go there as **a hideaway to run away from the hustle and bustle**. I find it extremely soothing with a cup of coffee and a small book. And an interesting thing is if I go there on Saturday nights, I can enjoy some soft music played by their staff. I am also pleased that the waiters tend to remember their customers and often give me a small discount. They really know how to **retain their customers**.

For all these reasons, I would say that I'll still keep going back there **in the long run**.

## Vocabulary highlights

- **Vividly remember:** remember something accurately
- **coincidental:** happening by chance, not planned
- **go – to place:** the best place to come
- **caught one's eye:** attract one's attention
- **warm ambience:** warm atmosphere
- **a hideaway:** a place you can go to hide or to be alone
- **run away:** escape from somebody/ a place
- **the hustle and bustle:** noisy activity of a lot of people in one place
- **retain their clients:** keep their customers
- **in the long run:** a long period in the future

**142. Describe a movie you would like to watch again.**

**You should say:**

- What it was about
- When and where you watched it
- Who you watched it with

And explain why you would like to watch it again.

**Band 8 Sample**

The name of the movie I would like to check out again is Love Rosie, a romantic comedy starring Sam Claflin and Lily Collins. Actually, it was an **adaptation** of a book called Where Rainbows End, which was an Irish best seller back in 2004.

I remember watching it for the first time in 2014, shortly after it **hit the big screen**. My movie buddy on that day was no other than my best friend, who was also a movie maniac like me. As we were going through some movie trailers on the internet, Love Rosie caught our attention with its **stunning cinematography** and **catchy soundtrack**. We quickly booked our tickets and went to the cinema hoping the movie wouldn't disappoint us. Lucky enough, this movie far **exceeded our expectations**. The plot was about 2 childhood friends who had feelings for each other but kept missing the chance to confess their love. In the end, they found the way back to each other and got married. It was a happy ending, but there were so many heart-breaking scenes that I **cried my eyes out** in the cinema.

About why I like it and want to re-watch it, I guess the main reason is the witty dialogue in the movie. The conversation between the main characters is simple, yet at the same time full of life lessons. I could relate to many of the words, and would love to watch it again to delve deeper into it. That is all I want to share about this movie, thanks for listening.

**Vocabulary highlights**

- **Adaptation:** the transfer of a written work to a film
- **Hit the big screen:** to be shown at the cinema
- **Exceeded my expectations:** to be better than expected
- **Cry one's eyes out:** cry a lot.

## 142. Describe a special cake you had

You should say:

- What kind of cake it is
- When you ate the cake
- Who you ate with

And explain why you think the cake is special

### Band 8 Sample

I would like to talk about a special occasion when a simple cake literally changed my **miserable life**. That was the time when I had just entered high school, which was 80km away from my hometown so I had to rent a flat and live alone near my school. Like many others, I was **overwhelmed by the new environment** and **unable to adapt quickly**. As a result, I was **living in solitude** for the first few months and had no close friendship with anyone.

But then an incident happened. I got sick, like, **horribly sick**. I couldn't even walk for 50 metres, **much less** go to school. During that time, I was stubborn and stupid enough to believe that my condition would improve simply by waiting for my body to recover itself. As I was too weak to attend school, I asked my teacher to give me some days off. After 3 days lying in bed, my condition only seemed to be worse, since most of the time I was sleeping and didn't eat anything.

But then, at around 3pm that day I received a call from one of my friends. She asked me about my condition and wanted to come over to check me out. When she came, I tried my best to walk downstairs to meet her, and I was surprised when I saw her holding a cake in her hand. It turned out that she knew I was in trouble so she made the cake herself and brought it to me **in the hope of cheering me up**. That simple act almost made me cry, and I ate the whole cake with **heartfelt gratitude** for my friend.

After that day my body healed up quickly, maybe it's because I had finally put something into my stomach again. And of course, we became best friends after that moment. Now, even though we **have taken different paths**, we still keep in touch with each other and regularly share our stories and experiences. All in all, I am **deeply thankful** for having such friendship in my life, all starting with a cake.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **be overwhelmed by something:** to get so much of something that it becomes a problem
- **to live in solitude:** to live all alone
- **much less:** not to mention
- **heartfelt gratitude:** sincere readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness

143. Describe a subject you would like to study that you never had the opportunity to study.

You should say:

- What is it
- What this subject deals with
- What benefits you would get

And explain why you want to study this subject.

### Band 8 Sample

If I had a chance, I would like to study Japanese, which I always wanted to study when I was younger.

**Back in the day**, I was crazy about manga – Japanese comic books. I could not **take my eyes off** those stories, I read them every single day. And I told myself that I would study Japanese in the future. Unfortunately, when I grew up, I was up to my ears in study and then working to make a living so I missed the chance to learn Japanese.

**Now and then** I think about that childhood dream and hope that one day, I can arrange my work and take part in a Japanese course. Being fluent in Japanese will **make my dream come true**. I would possibly read manga in Japanese, not Vietnamese and get a chance to access more Japanese culture, which I'm interested in after many years reading manga.

That's all I want to share with you.

### Vocabulary highlights

- **back in the day**: in the past
- **take one's eyes off**: to cease looking at something or someone
- **now and then**: sometimes
- **make my dream come true**: make a wish or a dream become a reality.

**144. Describe a situation where you have to be polite**

**You should say:**

- What it is
- What did you do to be polite
- Why did you have to be polite

And explain how you felt about it afterwards

**Band 8 Sample**

I would like to talk about a time when I saved a bus seat for a pregnant lady.

It was a rainy day around 3 years ago when I was still a freshman at university. On a bus trip from my **dormitory** to the city center to attend a **music festival** sponsored by Heneiken, I met a pregnant lady who got on the bus at one of the stations. At that time, the bus was already **swarming with** students, and many of them even had to stand as there were not enough seats for all. In that **stuffy atmosphere**, the lady's face suddenly turned **pale** and she had to hold on to the hand rail tightly. Sweat was rolling off her forehead.

**Without hesitation**, I stood up and asked her to take my seat. Then I quickly opened the glass window, trying to release the heat from inside the bus. After taking a deep breath, the lady seemed to feel better and started to have conversation with me. She told me that she was on the way to visit her aunt who was in the hospital. She knew that the bus was full but she couldn't wait for the next one in order not to be late for the visiting hours. She also thanked me a lot for saving her the seat. Without a place to sit on the bus, she thought she would have fainted because of dizziness.

I think any person who witnessed that moment would also have the same reaction as me. For me, I did it simply because it was necessary, and my action just came from my instinct, without any hesitation. If the lady had stood for a long time, that would have affected not only her health but also her baby inside. Also, I always thought of my mom's advice to pay close attention to things around me and provide support to people at the right time as it could be very meaningful. Therefore, at the end of that day, I was still **thrilled** because I had helped not only one, but two people. I mean the mom and her baby.



### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Dormitory:** a building for college students to live in
- **A music festival:** a community event oriented towards live performances of singing and instrument playing
- **Swarming with:** to be full of something
- **Stuffy atmosphere:** an unpleasantly warm atmosphere without enough fresh air

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. Are Vietnamese people becoming politer?

Back a few decades ago I would say “yes”, but now it is different. In my observations, people seem to only care about themselves and do not often show their politeness toward others. I have been very surprised, you know, to realize that men are no longer courteous enough to pull out a chair for a woman in a restaurant; young people queuing at the cashier desk at the supermarket are no longer willing to save the turn for elderly people. So, it is the bitter truth.

#### 2. In what ways do Vietnamese people show politeness?

Like I mentioned, it is hard to see polite behavior in public places nowadays. However, in certain environments, the politeness is well preserved. For example, in school students usually save the elevator for their teachers or friends who are disabled. In the hospital, visitors have been more aware of their noise and try to walk and talk quietly when passing through the area where there are patients. These are behaviors that should be encouraged.

#### 3. What are the uncivilized manners on public transportation?

There are numerous of them I have to say. Some may eat and drink on the bus regardless of the smell that may annoy other passengers, or on the train some may talk too loudly and bother those who need some rest. So, to better improve the situation, I think regulations should be posted on these means of public transport so that people know how to behave appropriately.

#### 4. What would you do when this happens?

Well, it may depend on who they are. To young people or those the same age as me, a friendly reminder with a smile may be effective to stop their irritating behavior in peace. But for other people who look rather aggressive, to be honest, being quiet and suffering can be the only way to prevent me from further troubles.

#### 5. Should people show politeness to friends?

Why not? It is really insufficient to believe that politeness should be saved for and given to certain groups of people. Even to friends, politeness is welcomed as it is one of the factors that strengthen

the friendship. Friends can then see each other as a good example and contribute together to the development of a civilized society.

### 145. Describe a memorable story told by someone

#### You should say:

- Who told you the story?
- When you heard the story
- What the story was about
- Why you found it memorable.

#### Band 8 Sample

I would like to share a funny story that I heard from Julie, a friend of mine, a long time ago. It was a random day that our group hung out at a coffee shop and sat at the circle table near the window, as we usually do. This was our favourite spot. But that day, instead of ordering a cappuccino as I usually do, I decided to try a completely new drink – mojito mixed with some fruit, though I can't remember exactly what.

The mojito looked good on the outside but its taste was unbearable to me. Despite my warning, Julie insisted on trying it. It turned out that she liked the drink very much and in that moment, she concluded that it tasted exactly like the toothpaste that she ate in her childhood. Learning of this incident, we were a bit shocked as to why she ate such a thing, so she continued to **elaborate on her story**. She recalled that she indeed thought that the taste of toothpaste was delicious, and even she was banned from eating it by her parents, she secretly saved money to buy one for herself a few years later. She added that she sneakily hid the tube in the room and she could finish the whole thing in one go. We were frozen and all eyes were on her for a few seconds. Then we all **burst into laughter**. I still remember laughing so hard that my tears ran down.

I was indeed impressed by her story. As the matter of fact, it wasn't the first time I had heard of someone enjoying eating toothpaste, but secretly saving money to do this was a surprise element and it was hilarious. And of course, it has become an inside joke between us since then.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Elaborate on the story:** Explain in greater detail.
- **Burst into laughter:** A spontaneous and sudden fit of laughter.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

- **What kind of stories do children like?**

In my opinion, I think most kids like to read picture storybooks that include vibrant, detailed illustrations that support the story. This is because kids of this age are becoming more aware of language, books that include rhythmic patterns, rhyming and repetition or predictable texts provide them with opportunities to memorize stories to tell to others.

- **Do you think it's important for parents to read bedtime stories for their children?**

Yes, I think reading bedtime stories is essential for children because bedtime is the calmest and quietest part of the day. So, even while we can read during other parts of the day, it's often difficult for the kids to pay attention and concentrate, especially if they're hungry, or right after an intense play time.

- **Do you think reading benefits us?**

Yes, I do think so. In fact, it can help broaden your knowledge because everything you read fills your head with new bits of information, and you never know when it might come in handy. The more knowledge you have, the better-equipped you are to tackle any challenge you'll ever face.

- **How do you keep your reading habits in your busy life?**

I usually read books at night after a hard-working day, especially on weekdays, because this is the only period of time that I have some free time for myself to read for about 30 minutes to 1 hour before going to sleep. However, on the weekend, since I don't have to go to work, I will spend about 3 or 4 hours reading.

- **What books would you recommend young people to read?**

If I have to choose, Harry Potter would definitely come out on top of my list, because there have been lots of people read it, including those who don't really like to read, so young adults will have more opportunities to talk about this series. Besides, it offers a smooth read, as the writing is clear and entertaining, and it won't take them long to burn right through the whole series.

### 146. Describe an art and craft activity you did at school

You should say:

- What it was
- What you did for this activity
- Who you did it with

And explain how you felt about this activity.

#### Band 8 Sample

I'd like to talk about a craft activity I did in elementary school - origami. I guess I don't need to say much because origami is already so popular worldwide. It's the art of paper folding in order to create a particular object or animal.

It was **all the rage** in my old school because to do this, you have to be very skillful and patient to make a beautiful paper figure. It was like a challenge for young kids, you see. I was **caught up in all this hype** so I asked my desk mate to **show me the ropes**. Although he was a boy, he was one of the best in my class when it came to origami. Anyway, he showed me how to fold the easiest figure - the crane. It looked so easy when he did it. He told me to just follow the exact steps and I could create a paper crane. **Easier said than done**, though, because in the end my crane was **misshapen beyond recognition**. I didn't know what I did wrong. Even when he patiently showed me one more time, the result wasn't much better. He finally gave up on me and I was sorely disappointed in myself.

**In retrospect**, I think I was too clumsy and careless. I rushed things because I wanted to do it so badly. But origami isn't about speed, it requires patience and accuracy. That's why I admire origami artists so much. Maybe in the future I might try origami again, but this time I will take my time and relax more.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **To be all the rage:** to be very popular or fashionable.
- **To be caught up in all this hype:** to be involved in a discussion on TV, radio, etc.  
(disapproving)
- **To show somebody the ropes:** To show somebody how something is done.
- **Easier said than done:** to be much more difficult to do than to talk about.
- **Misshapen beyond recognition:** with a shape that cannot be recognized.
- **In retrospect:** Thinking about a past situation

### 147. Describe a visitor in your home

#### You should say:

- Who was this visitor
- When did he/she visit your home
- Why did he/she come to visit

And explain whether you like him/her or not

#### Band 8 Sample

So it was around 4 months ago since I invited one of my very close friends to come over to my house for dinner. It was Christmas Eve, and my friend is **an expat** living far away from home. As I didn't want him to spend his Christmas alone, I asked him to join my family for a special family dinner. My friend is an American, and since he couldn't have turkey on Thanksgiving that year, my mom decided to make turkey for him that night.

One of the funny things I remember about that night was that pretty much all the cooking appliances in my house were electrical, even the stove and all of a sudden it was a **blackout** an hour right before dinner time so by the time my friend got to my house, none of the food was ready. I was a quite embarrassed, but my friend was pretty cool about it. We lit up the candles and my dad went out to buy some bread and ham. We were talking and eating while waiting for the power to turn back on. We had an absolutely amazing time talking about **the cultural differences**, how hospitable Vietnamese people are, and how **the language barrier** didn't stop him from getting to know the locals.

Anyway, we got to eat the turkey after a 2 hour delay. Even though my mother made it quite differently from the way my friend's family did, he really enjoyed it. And I must say that my parents absolutely **adored** him after that night. Since then, he has been coming over more often and becoming a very close friend to our family.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **An expat:** a person living outside their own country
- **A blackout:** a period when there is no light as a result of an electrical power failure
- **The cultural differences:** the differences between 2 cultures
- **The language barrier:** the difficulties in communication experienced by people or groups speaking different languages
- **Adore:** love someone very much

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. Do young people like to visit their friends nowadays?

Yeah..., I guess. But I think this question is really awkwardly phrased. Like visiting here you mean visit them when they're sick, or just simply meeting up with friends? If you mean meeting up with friends, then yes. And I think not only the young but also the old also like to visit their friends as well. It's just youngsters have more time to do it. And as they do not have to spare so much of their energy or time for family, or children yet, they can spend their time with their friends.

#### 2. What do Vietnamese people usually do when hanging out together?

There're tons of activities we often do together like going to the coffee shop, and shooting the breeze there. Just look at the increasing number of coffee shops and tea houses here, in HCMC, we can see how much Vietnamese people like to spend their time there. We also like to go to the movie theater, catching up with some of the latest entertainment or maybe simply chilling at home and listening to music.

#### 3. Do you think technology has brought us closer or not?

I mean, technology is a double-edged sword. It can go both ways.

On the one hand, things like Facebook and Instagram help us to keep in touch with our friends in this hectic life. We can also find people who share the same interest on these social media platforms.

On the other hand, using phones and other devices has created a self-imposed isolation. This is proven in the most obvious way when we go to a coffee shop and see so many groups of teenagers sitting together but they all have their eyes stuck to their phones instead of talking to each other

#### 4. What time do you think is suitable for visiting?

Any time we are invited to come, obviously. But if we decide to show up to visit someone out of the blue then I think we shouldn't come too early in the morning or too late at night. We don't want to wake them up to open the door for us or keep them from going to bed. And another unsuitable time I can think of is meal times like lunch or dinner, as in our culture it's quite impolite to show up at someone's door around this time. You know, you never wanna interrupt people while they're eating.

#### 5. How do you make new friends?

Me, personally, I'm going with the conventional ways, making friends with my classmates or colleagues. I don't like making friends through social networking websites, though I know it's pretty common nowadays. I guess because I'm often paranoid about talking to strangers, and any of these



people can turn out to be serial killers maybe. Gosh, I know I'm watching too many psychological movies.

**148. Describe a historical period that you are interested in**

**You should say:**

- What the historical period is
- How you know it
- What happened during that period
- Why you find it interesting

**Band 8 Sample**

If I could go in a time machine, I would choose to go back to the **glorious time** of Hong Bang period in about 2000 BC, the very first days of my country.

At that time, this place wasn't called Vietnam, it was under the rule of Hung Kings and was named Van Lang instead. What I find fascinating about this era is the **legends and myths** which I learned from History and Literature class back in school. Van Lang was a small country yet it was frequently invaded by the mysterious people. Whenever this period of time is mentioned, people will immediately relate to hundreds of wars, some even last for decades. We, the descendants, had no idea how they could win in those wars due to the sparse population and simple weapons, so we made up stories and fables to honor the bravery of our ancestors. Some specific examples are the legend of a three-year-old boy who went to war to save the country, or the myth of the Magic Crossbow which could deliver thousands of arrows and the story of the princess innocently trusting her lover and betraying her father, and the list goes on.

Although some of the stories are imaginary, it left a mark on me and nurtured my love for my home country since I was a little girl. Moreover, many of modern Vietnamese **cultural practices** also date back to this era, like cooking sticky rice cakes and displaying five-fruit trays on Tet holiday. This era can be considered as the cradle of our culture. I am always curious about the origin of our customs, and I believe that going back to this time could provide me with first-hand experience as well as a thorough understanding of my country's tradition.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Glorious time:** A time of greatness and prosperity.
- **Legends and myths:** Traditional stories, usually historical and unauthenticated (possibly not true).
- **Cultural practice:** an action committed by people of a particular culture, tradition or nationality.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. Do young people like historical stories in your country?

I am afraid not, since history is not taught very effectively here in Vietnam. Many of my friends aren't keen on history, and most of them don't even know some very common heroes in Vietnamese history, which is really a shame.

#### 2. Which historical period do you think is important in your country?

I would say the Nguyen Dynasty, since it witnessed our country's transition from the feudal age to the early modern era. The last Viet Emperor was a Nguyen, and he put an end to his own regime.

#### 3. Do you think history matters in a country's future development?

Yes. We humans reflect on history to learn from our own mistakes. Understanding our mistakes and correcting them is the solid foundation for future development.

#### 4. What is the effective way of learning history, by reading books or watching videos?

It really depends. For beginners, movies are a good starting point. Vivid images and fighting scenes from movies can be very inspirational. It can help inspire people to get to know more about history. However, when one wishes to have a deeper insight, books are the better option.

#### 5. Why should we learn history?

→ History is a good reflection of the past. By learning history, we are able to conceive how our ancestors lived, struggled against Mother Nature, and died. Knowing these facts and learning from their mistakes is a solid foundation for future development.

### 149. Describe an unusual meal you had

#### You should say:

- Who you were with
- Where you went
- When it happened
- Why it was unusual

#### Band 8 Sample

Well, my family usually enjoys our dinner at home with simple and traditional dishes, but there was an occasion we had a very special meal together in a fancy restaurant.

It was around 3 years ago when I was **tied up in** revision for my final examination. After that high-pressure time, I **passed the exam with flying colors** so my dad decided to **ease my mind** by taking the whole family to a Western restaurant for enjoying a cozy meal together.

That dinner was a little unusual to my family because we had never eaten in such a luxurious restaurant, so my mother and I were very surprised at that time.

This French restaurant is located in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. Because it is situated in a **well-trodden** area, this restaurant welcomes hundreds of guests every night. The food here, therefore, wasn't very **budget-friendly**. Actually, it **cost** my family **an arm and a leg**, which made this dinner even more special to me. Even though my dad is not the kind of person who **makes a killing**, he was still willing to take my mom and me to such a restaurant as a reward for my hard work. So I really appreciated him for that.

I really enjoyed this dinner because it really helped me to relieve everyday stress and chill out after long hard-working days. Besides, this unusual meal was also a very good chance for us to strengthen our family bond because we all have been so busy for a long time.

In the future I will try to earn a lot of money to take my family to wonderful places like this to try different cuisines and outstanding dishes, like lobster, abalone and salmon.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **To be tied up in something:** to be occupied by something/too busy doing something
- **To pass the exam with flying colors:** successfully pass the exam
- **Ease my mind:** to relax
- **Well-trodden area:** an area with a lot of people traveling

- **Budget friendly:** affordable
- **Cost an arm and a leg:** very expensive
- **Make a killing:** make a lot of money quickly

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. Do you think having dinner at home is a good idea?

Well, definitely yes, home-made dishes are usually cleaner because we know how and when they were processed. Eating in restaurants may be less time-consuming for people who are too busy at work or study, but if the food they eat in restaurants is not hygienic enough, it will be harmful for their health. Moreover, having dinner with family members is a very good way to reduce stress and find happiness after work. If we are living with your family, a cozy dinner at home is very important.

#### 2. Do young people like to spend time with their families or friends?

I believe this will depend on what kind of people we are talking about. I mean, to those with a sociable personality, spending time with friends is not only a good way to have fun but also a time to cultivate their friendships which will help them at work. On the other hand, family-oriented people prefer staying with their family members because we all know family is always the most important. There are many kinds of young people, so I think their options are varied.

#### 3. What do you think are the benefits of having dinner together?

Having dinner with other people brings about a great number of benefits. One of them is this is a good way to relieve stress from work or study through talks we have with our family or friends. You know, eating alone would be very silent and tedious. Besides, people usually share their happy and sad stories they experienced in their workplace or at school, so I think we can learn a lot from it during our meals. For example, stories about my friends' mistakes teach me what to do in a similar situation.

#### 4. Do you think people are less willing to cook meals by themselves these days, compared to the past?

Yes, I think most people nowadays lead very hectic lifestyles so they get used to fast food, meals that they can easily find at restaurants or even canned food. Many years ago, when many Vietnamese people were farmers, food like rice or other produce sometimes were abundant in their own house, so it would take them less time to prepare meals. Furthermore, cooking was a traditional activity of our ancestors, so they spent more time cooking than people in our modern

society.

### 150. Describe your favorite season of the year

#### You should say:

- How is the weather like
- Why do you like this season
- What activities do you usually do during it
- How would different kinds of weather affect people

#### Band 8 Sample

Today, I am going to tell you about my favorite season. Honestly, I love all the seasons but I think my favorite is spring. Usually, it starts at the end of December in our country and lasts till the middle of March.

The weather in Vietnam is the best during spring because you will not **suffer from** the **excessive** heat of summer or the freezing wind of winter. The temperature is **tolerable** both day and night. One of the best things about spring is that, during this poetic season, nature displays itself in beautiful green and flowers are noticed everywhere. Fruit trees, such as cherry and apricot trees are **in full blossom**, and colourful flowers such as daffodils and marigolds bloom in parks and gardens. The sounds of spring are wonderful too. A typical spring day will begin when some birds start their **morning chorus** as they look for a mate. We also celebrate Tet, one of the most anticipated holidays by the Vietnamese people. This is an occasion for **pilgrimages**, family reunions and many festivals. Parties full of delicious traditional dishes are the main theme for the whole holiday of Tet.

I am of the opinion that different kinds of weather can affect people's health. Even among those **in the prime of** health, an excessively hot or cold day can lead to illness or injury, let alone the elderly, who can be more **susceptible** to extreme weather conditions. Weather can also make a huge impact on people's lives. Obviously, the weather **dictates** what you are going to wear for the day, often depending on the time of year. Also, winter snow storms in Western countries can cancel school or make your morning commute a **hassle**.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **suffer from:** be badly affected by
- **excessive:** greater than what seems reasonable or appropriate
- **tolerable:** moderate, acceptable
- **in full blossom:** with the flowers fully open

- **morning chorus:** early morning bird songs
- **pilgrimage:** a journey to a holy place for religious reasons
- **in the prime of:** in the best, most successful, most productive stage
- **susceptible:** very likely to be influenced, harmed or affected
- **dictate:** decide, determine
- **hassle:** irritating inconvenience

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

- **Do you think weather has an influence on people's mood?**

Well definitely yes. Most people have a big preference for mild or windy weather due to the fact that it is the most favorable time to go out and do something outdoors. However, when the weather is a little rainy and humid, people have a tendency to stay at home and watch a movie or something like that.

- **Do you like to go outside when winter comes?**

Well, I have to admit that I hate having to leave the house in the winter because there's often a thick fog every morning and we sometimes get bitterly cold winds as well. Such things prevent me from going to work and study.

- **How you feel about the climate in recent years?**

Well, that is an intriguing question. From my personal perspective, the climate on Earth is becoming more and more changeable, which unfortunately results from climate change. As you can see, normally, in summer there would be no rainfall at all in nearly 3 or 4 months, but nowadays, in that particular season, the rain can come any time, which even contrasts the weather forecast.

- **What can we do to stop greenhouse effect?**

There are several ways that can put an end to greenhouse effect. Firstly, industrial countries like the US and China need to have a consensus on the amount of Co2 emissions released into the air every year. Therefore, it can help reduce such bad effects on the air people breathe in every day. Another possible solution is to cut down on the number of vehicles using fossil fuels on a global scale. Instead, people should be encouraged to use public transport.

- **What are the possible results if temperature continues going up?**

If that continues to happen, it is obvious that people especially those from low-income households



cannot stand the boiling hot weather and then spend more money installing costly air-conditioning systems. This would reduce the amount of budget that can be spent on other educational and recreational activities.

### 151. Describe something you learned in a place or from someone

#### You should say:

- What it was
- Where or who you got it
- What the situation was
- How you felt

#### Band 8 Sample

I am so lucky to have the chance to learn so many things from the people around me; the list of things I have learnt would be a very long one. I would like to **emphasize** one thing that I learned from a middle-aged woman in my neighborhood, and that is the pleasure of **voluntary** activities.

We call her Ms. Lan. She was born and grew up during one of the most **turbulent** periods in Vietnamese modern history. Now, in her late 50s, she became interested in trying to make a difference – working for her own volunteer organization.

She has been running a group of **dedicated, compassionate** young people who **are all committed to** making a positive difference to the lives of **senior citizens** in **nursing homes** around the town. “Spending time with the elderly is very important, they don’t always have relatives to visit them so I try to fill that gap and spend a bit of time with them. I have a **rapport** with elderly people, I’m a patient person and I like to sit down and talk to them,” she once told us.

During my working under her guidance, I have learnt about the benefits of working as a volunteer. If you have ever volunteered, you may have noticed that you felt fantastic afterward. Community service can help you gain confidence by giving the chance to try something new and build a real sense of **achievement**. Besides, volunteering can help you meet different kinds of people and make new friends.

Generally speaking, volunteering can have a real and valuable positive affect on people, communities and society. Besides, I believe that we can learn much about life from those who have seen it almost to the end.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **emphasize:** give special importance to
- **voluntary:** done willingly
- **turbulent:** full of sudden change and confusion
- **dedicated to:** working hard at

- **compassionate:** feeling or showing sympathy for people who are suffering
- **be committed to:** willing to work hard and give your time and energy to
- **senior citizen:** the aged
- **nursing home:** a public or private residential facility providing a high level of long-term personal or nursing care for the elderly
- **rapport:** a friendly relationship
- **achievement:** a thing that somebody has done successfully

## 152. Describe an interesting song you like

You should say:

- What it is
- Which country the song comes from
- What story the song tells

And explain why you think it is interesting.

### Band 8 Sample

One of my favorite songs is “Bonjour Vietnam”, a song **composed** and sung by Pham Quynh Anh - A French woman with Vietnamese origins. Though this song was released years ago, I still keep it in my “favorite” playlist on my phone.

I first came across this song when it was discussed all over the media during my secondary school years. You see, it’s really rare for such a beautiful song to be written about Vietnam, or the Vietnamese identity for that matter. It’s about a Vietnamese **expat** desperately wanting to learn more about her Vietnamese roots. She also wanted to go to Vietnam someday to know for herself whether it was like what her parents and the media **portrayed** or not.

To be honest, the first time I heard this song, I didn’t understand a word but I was **hooked** by the gentle melody and the silky voice of the singer. I was later motivated to learn French to know the exact meaning of the lyrics. When I understood, it was all the more beautiful. I realized there was still so much more to discover and love about my country. You could say my love for the beauty of Vietnam was rekindled.

I really wish more quality songs like this can be produced in the future instead of the meaningless ones that young generations are so obsessed with.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **To compose:** to write music
- **An expat:** a person living outside their own country
- **To portray:** to describe something or somebody
- **To be hooked:** to enjoy something very much

### 153. Describe a recent change in your life

You should say:

- What the change was
- When it happened
- How you felt about it

And explain if it was a positive or negative change for you

#### Band 8 Sample

I suppose one of the biggest turning points in my life was when I graduated from university just a couple of months ago. I looked for a job and began working full-time right after that so I haven't really had time to take a deep breath and **reflect on** this momentous change.

People say that university is one of the best periods of time in your life, and that you will miss it once you are employed. That's not true for me, because I was very relieved when I finally got my degree. I didn't get to learn a lot in school and was always **irritated** by the poor attitude of the staff there. Throughout 4 years, all I wanted was to get a job so that I could support myself first and then my family. And that has finally come true. I am more in my element when I'm working because I constantly learn new things and have to deal with new challenges.

But the biggest change for me is that now I can take care of myself financially and not have to rely on my family anymore. I already worked part-time when I was in university, but what I made wasn't nearly enough to save for a rainy day, let alone support my family. So although my work isn't all roses, I am still very glad I have made it this far. Personally I feel this change has had a very positive impact on me.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **To reflect on:** to think carefully and deeply about something
- **To be irritated:** to be annoyed

#### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

##### 1. What changes do you want to make in your life?

Probably I want to do something about my daily routine. I am quite lazy, you see, so I tend to procrastinate and leave things till the last minute. I have wasted a lot of time and also a lot of

energy due to this bad habit. So I think I should make a weekly schedule and stick to it so that I can be more efficient.

## **2. Do you believe we can control our own fate? How?**

No, I don't think fate is something we can fully control. There will certainly be things that take you by surprise, whether you like it or not. Well, traffic accidents are a clear example. But it's not all bad. Sometimes fate can lead you to good things like a business opportunity or a romantic relationship.

## **3. What three changes you would want to see in your country?**

The first and most important change I want to see is a better education system. I am a teacher, so of course this is very close to my heart. I want there to be a better curriculum that teaches students useful skills they need in the future instead of just useless theories they'll forget once they have taken a test. I want there to be fewer tests, maybe once or twice a school year. That way children will have a chance to be just children, instead of lifeless zombies going from class to class.

The second thing I want to see is a better public transport system together with better infrastructure. I live in Saigon so there are traffic jams every single day and I'm so sick of it. I am prepared to switch to public transport if only it weren't so uncomfortable. The buses are always too crowded and unpunctual.

Lastly, I hope that people can be kinder towards each other. I know it's corny but people treat each other so badly nowadays. You can see it everywhere, from reckless drivers and abusive parents to sellers who put toxic chemicals into the products they sell. The scary thing is that this has become a norm. If only people were more considerate, I believe none of these horrible things would happen.

### 154. Describe a person who has apologized to you.

You should say:

- Who this person is
  - When this happened
  - What this person said for apologizing
- And explain how you feel about the apology

#### Band 8 Sample

Well I consider myself as an easy-going person so I don't usually remember anybody's mistake or their apologies for a long time. But **if my memory serves me well**, like 3 years ago when I was a newcomer in my company. It was at the end of the year so I was tied up with reports and meetings. That's why I decided to unwind after that high-pressure time by having dinner at a fancy restaurant and here I received a sincere apology from a waiter.

I was enjoying the meal with my besties and we didn't notice that a waiter was approaching. Suddenly, a glass of wine was spilled on my suit and the waiter was very confused. I tried to stay calm while the waiter kept apologizing to me.

At first, I thought that he would be fired because it was a five-star restaurant and the manager wouldn't forgive such carelessness. However, after his manager came, she turned out to be quite **tolerant** and told him to be more careful next time. Actually, she was also very nice when trying to make sure that I wasn't angry and promised to offer me free lunch on the day after that.

Saying sorry to other people is not an easy thing to do, especially to customers in such a fancy restaurant. That's why I believe the manager's behavior and attitude was something for me to learn and the way she tried to **calm my anger down** was also a great lesson for me.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **If my memory serves me right:** If I remember correctly.
- **Tolerant:** to be able to accept what other people say or do even if you do not agree with it
- **Calm my anger down:** to make me become less angry and more relaxed

#### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

##### 1. Is it important to say sorry?

Definitely yes, saying sorry to other people is a good way to pay respect to them who may feel, like, offended or hurt. In my opinion, apologizing to others doesn't mean that I admit that I'm wrong but it simply means that I consider the relationship between those people and me greater than myself. I mean, it is like something you use to protect our relationship, as long as the apology is sincere enough.

## **2. In what situations do people say sorry?**

People often say sorry when they think that their words or behavior have hurt someone else. For example, I always apologize to my mother when I made her sad. Recently when I failed the university exam, I said I am sorry to her because I couldn't live up to her expectations.

## **3. Why do some people hate to say sorry?**

I am not sure but maybe their ego is way too big. Yeah I guess their pride doesn't allow them to admit their faults. In other cases, perhaps they think also they don't need to make any apology for those who are so close to them, like their parents or siblings because these words may sound awkward and ridiculous to them.

## **4. When will people say thank you?**

Sharply contrasting to apologies, saying thank you is way more popular among people, especially when they feel, like, they have received some kind of assistance from others. They may do it wholeheartedly because they feel grateful or they may do it because they think they have to. Anyway, we always need to say thanks when being helped, I guess.

## **5. When was the last time you found it hard to accept an apology?**

To be frank, I don't really remember, it is quite embarrassing to say that I am kinda absent-minded. In fact, I am more of a tolerant individual, you know, so it is very unlikely that there was any occasion that I couldn't forgive someone. If it did happen, it was probably a mistake on my behalf.



**155. Describe a leader or politician who you admire.**

**You should say:**

- Who is he/ she?
- What is so appealing about him?
- What type of leader is he/ she

And explain why do you admire him /her.

**Band 8 Sample**

I would like to talk about Mr David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the UK and I do believe that he is the most professional person that I have ever known in my life.

First, I would like to get the ball rolling by touching on the matter of how I knew him. It was about 5 years ago more or less, when I travelled to England and had a chance to meet him in front of Number 10 Downing Street.

On the subject of his appearance, I must confess that I was struck by his powerful and presentable look at the first time seeing him. He was so **charismatic** and confident that everyone wanted to listen to him when he was talking as well as debating with others over political issues. As well as that, he was always **cool headed** in every situation because he **weighed up the pros and cons** before making any decision instead of **jumping to a conclusion**.

There are several reasons why I really admire Mr Cameron. First, he led his party in a democratic way. You know, he always listened to everyone's opinions and commented fairly on them. Second, with his contributions to many areas, ranging from medicine to social welfare, the UK has become the fifth strongest economy globally.

For all these reasons, I want to reaffirm that David Cameron is the most honorable leader that I have ever met. And in the future, if I have a chance, I will go back to the UK to meet him once again.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **Charismatic:** To have the powerful quality to attract and impress other people
- **Cool-headed:** calm
- **To weigh up the pros and cons:** to consider both advantages and disadvantages
- **To jump to a conclusion:** to make a decision too quickly

### **IELTS Speaking Part 3:**

#### **1. Do you want to be a leader?**

Definitely yes. When I was knee high to a grasshopper, I used to dream of becoming a leader in the political area, like a prime minister or a governor. You know, those positions give me a lot of power and a sense of pride.

#### **2. What qualities should a leader have?**

I believe to become a good leader, people need to have patience to overcome challenges during their leadership. Without patience, they easily make mistakes and inappropriate decisions. Another important thing is excellent presentation skills. As you know, it is important for a leader to deliver a plan or a strategy clearly to his colleagues and make sure that all members fully grasp it.

#### **3. How do you think we can improve the leaders qualities?**

Well, I do think that leadership skills can be polished via proper training and practice. For example, to become a good leader, people should engage in some courses about leadership in their free time. During such courses, they will be given more chances to practice their skills and learn new things about this interesting, but challenging skill.

#### **4. Do you think a leader should be perfect in all fields?**

No, I don't think so. It goes without saying that each person can only be good at one or some areas. Therefore, I suppose that people should focus on their strengths and become the leader of that area. In this way, they can easily reap more success in their career path.

#### **5. Why do we need a leader?**

A leader in a team or an organization can be seen as the backbone, the spirit of the team, I would say. We do need that person because he can operate all of the activities, and give a clear direction for the whole team. Without him, the team cannot develop and easily fall into disunity, which could be followed by continuous failures.

### 156. Describe a person who does well in work

You should say:

- Who the person is
- How do you know this person
- What kinds of work this person does

And explain why this person can do well

#### Band 8 Sample

Recently I took a job as a maths teacher at an International school. Describing a person who does well at work makes me think of the head of the Maths department at my school, Mr Lawrence aka Laurie. I met Laurie in the school cafeteria over coffee and we began to talk about his role as the head of Maths.

Laurie told me he's been a maths teacher since 1985 so that's... 33 years **in the trade**. He loves his job, and he said he'd be a Maths teacher for 500 hundred years if I he didn't die of old age first. To be honest, I was quite **taken aback** by this comment. I always get a feeling somewhere between admiration and sympathy for teachers who commit almost every aspect of their life to their work. Admiration because of the dedication to their students and their craft; sympathy because they have given up so much to become the teacher they are today.

It is precisely this quality, though, that explains why Laurie a person who does well at work. His work and his life are intimately linked, and if Laurie wants to lead a good life, this is almost synonymous with him being a good teacher.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **In the trade:** To be working in a particular business
- **To be taken aback:** To be surprised by something

**157. 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.

**Band 8 Sample**

Although I don't know this person personally, I am going to talk about Bear Grylls, a famous adventurer with his own survival show on Nat Geo channel.

You don't need much explanation when you hear this name. Bear Grylls is an **embodiment of adventure and courage** himself. In his show, he went to remote places with harsh conditions to try to survive for several days. He would then try to find food and water in the **most unlikely places**, sometimes hunting wild animals or eating bugs just to survive. I feel like there's nothing this guy is afraid to do. I mean, he even drank his own piss and ate a cow's eyeball once.

I don't know why he is such a risk-taker but I think he's just really confident in his survival skills. Whatever comes his way, he can cope with it and make it till the end. Besides, he made this show to teach people what to do when they are stuck in the same situation so he had to set a good example for them.

I'm really **in awe of** Bear. I don't even dare to eat bugs so I can't imagine going through his ordeal. Now that he's a bit old, I don't know if he's going to continue with his show but probably he will. He's a tough guy.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **An embodiment of adventure and courage:** A person or thing that represents adventure and courage
- **The most unlikely places:** Places that no one would want to visit
- **In awe of:** To admire somebody

### 158. Describe a famous athlete you know

**You should say:**

- Who he or she is
- How you know him or her
- What he or she has achieved
- Why he is famous

#### **Band 8 Sample**

Being a big fan of basketball, I have long **idolized** the legend of this sport - Michael Jordan, also known as MJ. I first got curious about his life when I saw a logo portraying him on a product of the brand, Nike, and his life turned out to be intriguing to me.

He played in the position of shooting guard in one of the most **renowned** teams, the Chicago Bulls, and was famous for his exceptional leaping ability, illustrated by performing slam dunks from the free throw line. Early in his NBA career, while playing for the University of North Carolina, he appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated with the heading "A star is born" just over a month into his professional career. It was not only his talent but also his dedication that made him a strong clutch performer. He spent hours studying films of his opponents to improve his defense. Even when his right knee was injured, Jordan did not miss any games in the season from 1986 to 2001. Throughout his career, he led the Chicago Bulls to six championships, was awarded the NBA Most Valuable Player five times and was the first player to be honored with both the NBA's Defensive Player of the year award and Most Valuable Player awards. All the compliments that journalists gave him were not an overstatement.

Although Michael Jordan retired in 2003, his skills and his legacy are still a **great inspiration** for any basketball player or person considering pursuing a basketball career. He is also active in charity activities. His clothing line, Jordan brand, has made donations to different organizations across America. It's difficult to describe how amazing Michael Jordan is in words, just watch a few of his videos playing in NBA games or his interviews, you'll figure it out yourself.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Idolize:** Admire, revere, or love greatly or excessively.
- **Renowned:** Known or talked about by many people; famous.
- **A great inspiration:** Someone that people aspire to be and are motivated by.

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. Do teenagers like exercising in your country?

I would say yes, I know many teenagers who are really keen on doing exercise like jogging or dancing. Some of them are not too busy so they can do it on a daily basis but others get occupied with their hectic studying schedule, so they can only exercise once a week or even less.

#### 2. Would you like to stay at home or go outside for holiday?

Well it would depend on my mood, actually. I confess that I am quite unpredictable. I mean if I feel happy I will consider going out with my friends and enjoy a movie. On the other hand, sometimes when I am in a bad mood, I'd rather stay in with lots of interesting activities to enjoy a holiday, like watching television or simply sleeping.

#### 3. Do you think physical education is necessary? Why?

Yes for sure, it is of great necessity I would say. Physical education can improve our immune system and keep our mind clear and active so that we can respond better to stress when we come back to work or school. Though it may sound a little exhausting, doing exercise can become addictive when we get used to it.

#### 4. How do you think physical classes affect children's development?

Like I just said, physical classes with a wide range of physical exercises can improve children's mental health, which allows them to absorb the lessons better. On top of that, in my nephew's physical class, I saw some exercises that really stretched her body so I believe such classes are also beneficial to children's height

#### 5. What kind of exercises do Vietnamese people like?

Well, we can easily catch sight of people in my country jogging along the pavement every morning. So I believe this is the most favorite exercise here because jogging is totally free-of-charge and doesn't need any special equipment. Some people jog in the early morning while others prefer the afternoon or evening, so it's quite flexible, too.

**159. Describe something you enjoy doing with an old person in your family**

**You should say:**

- What it is
- How often you do it
- Who you do it with
- Why you enjoy doing it with this person

**Band 8 Sample**

Well, now I'm going to tell you something about an activity that I am particularly keen on doing with my 80-year-old grandmother, which is watching an Indian soap opera series on TV. Honestly, the series that we like best is "8-year-old bride" and it is broadcast every day on Today TV.

The first time my grandma and I knew about this TV series was about 4 months ago after seeing the 1<sup>st</sup> episode of it. As I still remember, on that day, we were both highly impressed by a character in the film called Anadhi and since then, we have never missed even a single episode. This series mainly tells the story of a girl named Anadhi, who had to **live a miserable life** since she was in a **forced marriage** at the age of 8. After that, she also **encountered several difficulties and pains** throughout her life.

As I mentioned, this series is shown every evening at 8 pm and I always try my best to arrange my work so that I can enjoy it with my beloved grandma. During the time we watch, she also tells a lot of things about the meaningful details in each episode, which I could hardly realize if watching alone. In fact, I have learned quite a lot of wonderful lessons from both this series and my grandmother and the most important lesson would be: "Getting married too early can be the most terrible mistake that one can make".

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **Live a miserable life:** to have a very unhappy and uncomfortable life
- **A forced marriage:** a marriage where the husband and wife are forced to get married
- **Encounter difficulties and pains:** to experience difficulties

### **IELTS Speaking Part 3:**

**1. How much time should parents spend with their children every day?**

Well, it is quite difficult to give an accurate answer to this question since I believe that this should depend on the working schedule of each person. However, everyone should consider spending time with their kids as one of the top priorities and I think that the most suitable amount of time each day would be about 4 – 5 hours (sleeping time excluded).

**2. Do young people like to live with old people in your country?**

Actually, in Vietnam, taking care of old parents is the responsibility of everyone and I think that it is the moral value that we should always keep, whether we like it or not. Therefore, it is very easy to find an extended family with at least 3 generations living under one roof in Vietnam and in most cases, all family members are very happy.

**3. What's the most important thing that young people can learn from old people?**

Obviously, it's experience. Old people have spent the major part of their life dealing with several challenges and difficulties. Therefore, they have a huge amount of experience in many different aspects of life. If a young person wants to solve a problem quickly, the best way will be asking for help from an elderly person.

**4. Do people nowadays spend less quality time for their family?**

Unfortunately, I have to say yes. Due to the development of the society nowadays, young people are getting busier and busier, which means that they tend to have less time to spend with other members in their family. In fact, I know some people who barely see the faces their relatives, even though they are living in the same house.

**5. Do Vietnamese families like to arrange indoor or outdoor activities?**

You know, parents in my country really want their children to go out more since young people are spending too much time on their mobile phones. Therefore, whenever they can arrange their free time, they would immediately organise an outdoor activity for the whole family. And actually, I think that this is a very good thing since the bond between family members can be strengthened thanks to frequent participation in these activities.



## 160. Describe an interesting person from another country

You should say:

- Who this person is
- What this person does
- Why this person is interesting
- How you think of this person

### Band 8 Sample

Now, I'm going to tell you something about a very nice and funny foreign friend that I have. His name is Xin Jiping, and is Chinese. I first knew about this person 2 years ago when I was an exchange student in China. **To the best of my recollection**, the first time that I met him, I was highly impressed by his leadership skills as well as his strong determination.

He is a tall, fat guy and quite a bit older than me. In his country, he is well-known for his talent in organizing events and leading groups in social activities. He told me he first discovered this talent at the age of 8, when he first read a book called "Marxist philosophy", which he called "The Holy Bible". Through this book, he learned many new things about leadership and how to become **an influential person** in society. At first, he had some difficulties when applying the theories in this book into reality since many people were still opposed to his opinion. However, thanks to his effort, he eventually managed to become the leader of student union at a big university in China. So far, he has participated in a number of different activities and used his influence to help many less fortunate people in his hometown.

Finally, with regards to my feeling about this person, I think there are many things that I need to learn from him. I hope that I'll have another opportunity to go back to China and meet him again.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **To the best of my recollection:** if I remember correctly
- **An influential person:** a person who has a lot of influence on other people

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. Do you think communicating with foreigners is a good way to learn about foreign culture?

Well, I think it's too obvious, actually. From my experience, people from any country are always willing to share what they know about their own culture to others with a great sense of pride.

Therefore, we can learn a great deal of new things about their country when having a chat with them.

**2. What are the disadvantages of working for an international company?**

In my opinion, I believe that the biggest drawback when working for a multi-national organisation would be the differences in working cultures. You know, many employees may find it difficult to adapt to a completely strange working environment and it would take them quite a while to get used to everything at the new place. This may somehow affect their working performance during the first days at the company.

**3. What kinds of problems do people face when they travel or live in a foreign country?**

There are several problems in this case and the most obvious one would be the differences in cultures. Some actions may be acceptable in a culture but can be considered as offensive in another. Therefore, if we don't carefully take culture into consideration when travelling to a new place, we may get into some trouble with the local people.

**4. Do you like to make friends with people from other countries?**

Yes, of course. Having friends from different countries is a very good way for us to learn about new places and new cultures. And such knowledge can be highly valuable if we plan to move to another country to live or just to travel.

**5. Do you have any international friends?**

I do have a few but we're not very close. You know, I don't have time to see them frequently, so we actually don't know very much about each other.

**6. How do the cultural differences hinder the growth of an organization/company?**

From my own experience, some employees may be reluctant to work and contribute to organizations whose culture doesn't match, or is even conflicting, to the one of their local area. Because of this, the working performance of each worker and then the productivity of the company may be negatively affected.

**7. How do sports help to break the barriers of cultural differences?**

To be honest, I don't know much about sports and their influence on culture. But if I have to give an answer for this question, I think that maybe when people play sport, they share the fun and passion of the sport and don't take culture into consideration. That could be the reason why differences in cultures can be eliminated in sports.

### 161. Describe a time when someone helped you

You should say:

- Who helped you
- When it was
- Why s/he helped you

And describe how you felt about it.

#### Band 8 Sample

I am going to tell you about a time when I received support from a stranger. You know, it was back a month ago when I was on my way back home from work when it was very late. Everything was fine until a **sudden torrential rain** poured down and my raincoat was nowhere to be found. Even worse, I couldn't find any shop or house on the roadsides with a cover where I could hide for a while. So, I kept moving on, accepting **the worst-case scenario** that I would be **as wet as a drowned rat**.

But then, from my **rear-view mirror**, I noticed a young woman who tried to chase me with her motorbike. When she got loser, her voice was loud enough for me realize her suggestion to help me by giving me her extra raincoat. I was rather **skeptical** at first as my mom always warns me not to trust anyone in the street, but after looking at her, I knew that her sincerity should not be questioned. I then received the raincoat with both hands and looked at her with my deepest appreciation. She gave me a warm smile and asked me to keep the raincoat for myself. I looked at her until she disappeared in the distance, and then headed home.

I was still soaked when I got home. However, it was the kindness of the woman that warmed me from inside my heart. Obviously, she was no one I had ever met before but was willing to help me for no reward, and her **humanity** in this society was something I would always cherish.

Thank you for listening

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **A torrential rain:** the rain falling in large amounts
- **The worst- case scenario:** the most unpleasant that could happen in a situation
- **Be as wet as a drowned rat:** to be very wet, especially because you have been in heavy rain
- **Rear-view mirror:** a mirror in which a driver can see the traffic behind
- **Skeptical:** having doubts that something will happen
- **Humanity:** the quality of being kind to people

**162. Describe a shopping street you would like to go.**

**You should say:**

- What is this place?
- Where is it situated?
- Why is it so popular?

**Band 8 Sample**

Well I am gonna talk about Nguyen Trai street, which is one of the most crowded shopping streets of Ho Chi Minh city. I went there once, like, 3 years ago when I was a freshman at university. It was at the end of the first semester so I was swamped with assignments and revision. That's why I decided to **chill out** after that **nerve-racking** time by wandering around my neighborhood with my besties and by chance, I found this shopping heaven.

Nguyen Trai shopping street is, more or less, 5 kilometers away from my house. It is located in downtown Ho Chi Minh City, which is really bustling with tons of people, noise and traffic. This street attracts a lot of visitors every day because of its variety of delicious food.

It has been 2 years since the last time I went there so I really hope that I can manage my timetable to have a day off and go back. You know, this street is well-known for the **high-end products** sold there, especially food and clothes. I plan to visit this street at the end of this month after I finish my project. At first, I thought that Nguyen Trai street was kinda boring because I didn't feel comfortable in crowded places. However, after I went there once, this street turned out to be quite fabulous. Actually, I really want to go back to this place again and again in the future.

The reason is quite simple. I just want to go shopping around to **relieve everyday stress** and **ease my mind** after hard days at work. Besides that, I plan to go there with my family because I believe going shopping together is a good way for us to understand each other better.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **To chill out:** to relax
- **Nerve-racking:** making you feel very nervous and worried
- **High-end products:** products that are expensive and of high quality
- **To relieve everyday stress:** to reduce everyday stress
- **To ease my mind:** to make myself less worried

### 163. Describe a city or country you most want to live in the future

You should say:

- What is it
- Where is it located
- Why do you like it

#### Band 8 Sample

I would like to tell you about Tokyo, the city I want to live in the most in the future. It is the capital city of Japan and is the most populous **metropolitan** area in the world.

The most important reason I wish to **settle down** in Tokyo is the **co-existence** of modern and traditional values. It's the kind of city where the red gates of a centuries-old Shinto **shrine** may well be found just next door to a glass skyscraper **showcasing** the finest 21st century technology. Or where a quiet green lane lined with wooden low-rise houses and an old school tofu shop might sit just a **short stroll** from a neon-lit square packed with **flickering** billboards and rainbow-bright street fashion.

The **hectic** life in Tokyo is also an **irresistible** attraction for young people. Tokyo's railway system seems like it was designed to win world records. It's rare to find a location in the metropolitan area that can't be reached with a train ride and a short walk.

I feel that the city is moving toward the future. I believe Tokyo will become a city that is full of surprises.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **metropolitan**: connected with a large or capital city
- **settle down**: start to have a quieter way of life
- **co-existence**: the state of being together in the same place at the same time
- **shrine**: a place where people come to worship
- **showcase**: present
- **a short stroll from**: not far from
- **flicker**: keep going on and off as it shines or burns
- **hectic**: full of activity

- **irresistible:** cannot be stopped or resisted

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

- **Do you like to live alone or share a room with others?**

I prefer to live on my own. It offers me a sense of freedom to do whatever I like without affecting or being affected by others. Sharing a room with a mate may be more fun as you have someone to talk to, but disagreements and conflicts occurring from daily interactions may be inevitable.

- **What are the advantages and the disadvantages of living alone?**

Well living somewhere on your own has some certain pros and cons, I believe. Like, our sense of independence can improve when we have no one to rely on but ourselves. It's the main benefit of living alone. However, it would be tedious and maybe lonely when we have to sleep alone and do household chores without anybody's help.

- **What are the advantages of working abroad?**

There are numerous benefits I can think of. Firstly, people have a great chance to improve their use of a foreign language. Working in countries like England or the US, for example helps them practice their English on a daily basis, which eventually results in a better level of confidence and activeness in their English communication skills. Also, people have ample chance to broaden their horizons by learning about the progress of other countries, such as management systems or technological advancements, right in their workplace, which not only provides them with knowledge but gives them a chance to accumulate a lot of good skills and experience.

- **What are the disadvantages of living in a foreign country?**

There are many but I would like to focus on two that I believe are the biggest. One of the drawbacks relates to culture shock. You know, differences in working manner or working culture may result in employees' reluctance in processing their tasks, not to mention the difficulties in understanding others with a foreign language. Secondly, working in a foreign country can also be a challenge of one's independence. In fact, a number of people have not been able to stay in a foreign country for the long term just because they cannot suffer the loneliness.

- **Would you like to live in a developed city with a high salary, but with polluted air?**

To be honest, I am not willing to live and work in conditions where there is such imbalance. It is because the environment can directly affect my ability to work as efficient as I can. Moreover, money can be earned but the harmful consequences for one's health caused by pollution cannot be compensated. Needless to say, without health, it is hard for me to enjoy my life even when I am living in a developed country and can earn plenty of money.

**164. Describe a tall building in your hometown you like or dislike.**

**You should say:**

- Where it is
- What it is used for
- What it looks like

And explain why you like or dislike it.

**Band 8 Sample**

Well, I am gonna talk about Bitexco which is one of the most crowded buildings in Ho Chi Minh city. The first time I went there was, like, 3 years ago when I was a student in high school. It was at the end of the term so I was struggling with projects and presentations. That's why I decided to relax after that stressful time by going around the city with my besties and by chance, we came to this shopping heaven.

Bitexco building is, more or less, 5 kilometers away from my house, located in downtown Ho Chi Minh city, which is a very bustling area with tons of people, noise and traffic. This building attracts a lot of visitors every day because of the variety of fancy clothes stores there.

You know, this building is well-known for the high-end products sold there, especially food and clothes. Its shape is based on the lotus, our traditional flower but to be honest, it looks more like corn to me. At first, I thought that Bitexco building was kinda boring because I didn't feel comfortable in crowded places. However, after I went there once, this place turned out to be quite fabulous. Actually, it has become the landmark of HCM city for many years.

Every time I visit Bitexco, I feel like I can relieve everyday stress and ease my mind after hard days at work. Besides that, I always go there with my family for shopping because I believe going shopping together is a good way for us to understand each other better. That's why I really like this building.



**165. Describe an important river/ area of water in your country**

**You should say:**

- How long the river is
- Where it is
- What it looks like
- Why it is important

**Band 8 Sample**

I am going to talk about the Mekong river, one of the biggest and most important rivers located in southwestern part of Vietnam. With a length of about 2,700 miles, the river is the 7th longest in Asia. Locally, it's called "River of the Nine Dragons" because the small branches of the river are, **since time immemorial**, associated with the image of nine **majestic** dragons. Needless to say, the river is mentioned in a variety of poems and songs.

In terms of **agriculture**, the **mighty** river together with its surrounding delta has been known as the agricultural heart of southern Vietnam and the 'rice bowl' of the whole country. The Mekong is also Vietnam's most important fishing region.

If you are a **discerning** tourist who really has 'wearing a conical hat in a sampan boat in Vietnam' on your **bucket list**, a trip to Mekong Delta is a must. It is carpeted in a dizzying variety of greens and is also a place where boats, houses and markets float upon the innumerable rivers, canals and streams that **criss-cross** the landscape like arteries. Embarking on a Mekong River cruise provides tourists with fascinating insight into the local rural way of life, including the opportunity to visit some of the region's best-known sites, along with plenty of hidden **gems**.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **since time immemorial:** for a very long time
- **majestic:** impressive
- **agriculture:** the cultivation and breeding of animals and plants
- **mighty:** very strong and powerful
- **discerning:** able to judge the good quality of something
- **bucket list:** a number of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime
- **criss-cross:** mark with intersecting lines
- **gem:** a person, place or thing that is especially good

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

- **Do people like that river in your country?**

I am afraid not. Rivers are really not what we Vietnamese are concerned about. Like you know, rivers aren't our first choice when we go on a tour or something. We may long for beaches, we may want to be hitch hikers, but not many think of going on a river voyage.

- **Do you like any activities on water?**

Since i do not know how to swim, I'm afraid of activities in and on water, so it's not really something that I care about. However. I do know something about parasailing and scuba diving from English textbooks, so I believe I may give it a try someday when I learn how to swim

- **Is it necessary for everyone to learn swimming?**

Of course, swimming is vitally important. It's a survival skill for people who live near rivers and oceans. There have been many reports and cases of children drowning, so I believe swimming should be a compulsory part in any PE course

- **Do people in your country go to swim in their spare time?**

I would say yes and no. Around, like, 30% of Vietnamese know how to swim, and do it whenever they have some time to spare. Lam Son pool - the biggest public pool in my city is always fraught with people swimming every summer. However, I would not say so for the other 70% who have no idea how to swim



**166. Describe a place where you can read and write.**

**You should say:**

- Where this place is
- How do you know this place
- What do you do there

And explain why you think it's a good place for reading and writing.

**Band 8 Sample**

Well, I am gonna talk about the City Library which is one of the largest libraries in Ho Chi Minh city. I went there for the first time, like, 3 years ago when I was a senior in college. It was in the middle of the final examinations so I was terribly busy with homework and exams. That's why I decided to try to ease my mind after that exhausting time by reading some new books, so I visited this library.

This library is, more or less, 5 kilometers away from my house and is located in downtown Ho Chi Minh city, which is a very bustling area with tons of people, noise and traffic. This library attracts a lot of visitors every day because of its variety of fascinating books.

You know, this library is well-known for its tranquility and it is like a heaven for those who have a burning passion for books, especially novels and comics. It is equipped with very long tables and is well air-conditioned. Many of my essays were written there because this library provides me with a great range of learning materials. At first, I thought that this library was kinda boring because I wasn't a big fan of books. However, after I visited once, this place turned out to be wonderful. Actually, I have become a big reader since the time I went to this library and read books there.

Every time I read books in this library, I feel like I can relieve everyday stress and ease my mind after hard days at work. Besides that, books and other materials in this library also enable me to expand my horizons and learn lots of new things. That's why I really like this building.

**167. Describe a place where you often visit with your friends or family**

**You should say:**

- Where the place is
- How you know the place
- How you go there
- Why you want to visit

**Band 8 Sample**

I would like to share with you about the Freedom Park which is situated in the heart of district 4.

This is a fantastic place for people who want to enjoy fresh air and a cool breeze in the early morning without any noise from vehicles on the streets. As I told you just now, I am residing in District 4 and since the first time I moved there, I have taken notice of Freedom Park due to its tranquility.

Each and every morning, people in the locality go to the park to **take a stroll** and work out to **kick off** their new day full of energy. The interesting thing is that the place offers people a variety of public sports facilities that people can use to boost their **mental wellness**. Apart from that, at the top of the hill in the park, there is a lovely small cafe that sells some kinds of breakfast food such as hamburgers, sausage, Pho and fried rice. After a few hours of doing exercise people can enjoy a good cheap breakfast.

**If my memory serves me right**, the first time I went there was two years ago with my girlfriend. It was incredibly peaceful, especially when the night fell and all the lights were on. My girlfriend and I walked along the small paths flowing through the park, hand in hand together. Everything was absolutely romantic.

For all these reasons, Freedom Park always comes out on top of my list when it comes to a place where I can get back to nature and **put my feet up**. In the future, I hope I have more spare time to go there with my family and friends in order to enjoy such a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **To take a stroll:** to take a slow relaxed walk
- **To kick off:** to start something
- **Mental wellness:** the state of being mentally healthy
- **If my memory serves me right:** if I remember correctly
- **To put my feet up:** to sit down and relax

## 168. Describe a public place that you think need improvements

You should say:

- What the place is
- When do you go there
- What do you like and dislike in the public place

### Band 8 Sample

I would like to talk about a public place that I think needs improvement. Among the most popular public places where people can **socialize** and hang out with each other is Dam Sen, an amusement park in Ho Chi Minh city, considered a green **oasis** located in District 11.

Last month, I decided to take my nieces and nephews there. The park is comprised of many areas including a **roller coaster** which, to my surprise, the children **eagerly** rode. Time just flew by with the kids.

We liked everything about the park except the fact that people were throwing empty water bottles here and there. I felt there should be more bins. Well, to tell the truth, the park is rather old. Sometimes my parents used to take me there in my childhood. However, the park was a lot different from what I could remember. Some facilities at its far end were covered in moss and overgrown weeds. The **crumbling** walls gave the impression that the area had been **abandoned for ages**. One day, to our **terror**, we found some used needles laying **amidst** the **shabby greenery**, **invisible** and able to **pierce** the common light-weight shoes the children wear.

I would say that the city authority should encourage local people or voluntary groups to tidy up the park and hire more care-takers to make it a safer and more attractive playground for children. Also, a certain amount of money is needed to install new restrooms and other safety-oriented upgrades like street lighting or warning signs.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **socialize**: to meet and spend time with people in a friendly way
- **oasis**: an area in the desert where there is water and where plants grow
- **roller coaster**: a track at a fairground that goes up and down very steep slopes and that people ride on in a small train for fun and excitement
- **eagerly**: in a way that shows great interest and excitement

- **crumble:** break something into very small pieces
- **abandon:** leave somebody with no intention of returning
- **for ages:** for a long time
- **terror:** extreme fear
- **amidst:** among
- **shabby:** in poor condition
- **greenery:** green leaves and plants
- **invisible:** cannot be seen
- **pierce:** go through

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

- **Are there many public places in Vietnam?**

I guess there's many public facilities in my country where people can enjoy themselves without paying any fees. In HCM city alone, we can find many parks and public libraries which serve the local people for free. I guess there is a budget from the government for this kind of thing, so let's enjoy the free services we have.

- **Do you like to exercise in the public places, such as parks?**

I would say yes; since I am living in the city, parks are seemingly the only place where I can truly be a part of nature. In fact I have this very healthy habit of going jogging in the park every morning at 5:30.

- **Do older people or younger people prefer exercising in the public place?**

I believe older people like going to the park more than younger people. While old people may consider parks as a good place to do some basic physical activity like going jogging or doing tai-chi, I think the young see it differently. Being relatively stronger and more flexible, gyms are a better option for young people. In fact, virtually none of my friends go to the park to exercise.

- **What measures should governments and individuals take to keep public places clean?**

Among many available solutions, I believe the change in people's awareness would play a key role



in improving the cleanliness of public areas. For that reason, it is necessary for the government to carry out educational campaigns to encourage people to behave appropriately, such as putting garbage in the right place, or even organizing events where people gather to pick up litter in public parks or gardens.

**169. Describe a good place where people go to swim.**

**You should say:**

- What is this place?
- Where is it situated?
- Why is it so popular?

**Band 8 Sample**

To be completely honest with you, I am incredibly obsessed with swimming as it is a good way for me to enhance my **stamina**. So, for that reason, I would like to tell you about the Central Pool in District 4 which I often frequent at weekends.

First, I would like to mention the dimension of this pool. As the name of it suggests, it is the biggest swimming pool in HCM city at 80m wide and 120m long. As well as that, it is divided into two areas, one for adults and the other for children.

The pool is open 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. Next to it, there is also a giant restaurant specializing in Vietnamese and Japanese cuisine. It is a perfect place for people to **unwind** with a wide range of food after hours of training in the water. Not to mention, the staff and the lifeguards there work professionally and more importantly they are always on time, which gives swimmers including me a sense of respect and satisfaction.

For all these reasons, this pool is always crowded at weekends, so people have to book tickets in advance if they want to have a chance to swim there. As for me, I even bought tickets for the whole year in order to freely gain access to the pool. If I had more spare time, I would definitely invite more friends to come with me so that all of us can work out together.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **Stamina:** the physical or mental strength that enables you to do something difficult for long periods of time
- **To unwind:** to relax

**170. Describe a book that you would like to read again.**

**You should say:**

- Which book it is
- Why you want to read it again
- What is it about

And explain why you want to read it again.

**Band 8 Sample**

To be completely honest with you, I have been incredibly **engrossed in reading** since I was **knee-high to a grasshopper**, so much so that I often buy books and articles to read every single day.

Today, I really want to share with you the time I borrowed a very special book from my friend who is currently a finance analyst at the University of Economics. The book is called “RICH DAD, POOR DAD”, written by Robert Kiyosaki.

If my memory serves me right, I was a third year student at the time and was deeply depressed with my current financial situation and felt like I was stuck in the rat race. The reason for that is I was always broke, even though I had a part-time job at KFC.

One day, after searching for a solution on the Internet, I came across a book with a **very intriguing title** “RICH DAD, POOR DAD”. and fortunately, that was the book that my close friend had. So, the following day, I immediately borrowed the book from him and **read it from cover to cover**.

After digesting all of the ideas in the book, my mind seemed to be enlightened by the valuable lessons. Gradually, I learnt how to save my money and more importantly, how to invest in myself effectively. Since then, I have been putting those lessons into practice on a daily basis with a firm belief that it is improving my life.

For all these reasons, I just want to say thanks to my friend because without his book, I wouldn't have become the mature person that I am today.

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **To be engrossed in reading:** to give all your attention to reading
- **To be knee-high to a grasshopper:** very young and small
- **An intriguing title:** a very interesting title
- **To read it from cover to cover:** To read everything in it

### 171. An electronic machine you want to buy

You should say:

- What it is
- When you know this machine
- What specific features you want

And explain why you want this machine.

#### Band 8 Sample

Today, I'm going to talk about the Aqua air-conditioner that I really want to own in the next few weeks. This air-conditioner is produced in Vietnam but under the supervision of a big Japanese company, so I guess the quality should be ok. I first noticed this piece of equipment about 2 weeks ago. At that time, I was watching a movie on the internet and an advert for this product came on the TV, and I was immediately impressed by its design and functions. I immediately made a decision to buy one, since it is summer and the weather is boiling right now. However, there is one major problem: I'm running short on money as I've just overspent my monthly budget on a bunch of clothes and the price of this air-conditioner is quite high. Maybe I'll have to borrow some money from my mother and then reduce my budget for food in the next few days in order to purchase it.

Talking about this AC in a bit more detail, it's designed with the latest technology that minimizes the consumption of electricity that it uses. Besides that, it also has the auto-adjusting function, which means that it can automatically modify the temperature inside the room in order to reduce the differences with the temperature outside. This is truly a valuable item for me to live with through the heat of the summer season.

## 172. Describe a toy that you received when you were a child

### You should say:

- What the toy was.
- Who gave it to you
- How you used this.

And explain how you felt when you got this toy

### Band 8 Sample

Well, the first **sentimental item** that came to mind when I saw this topic was the **stuffed animal** named Marsupilami. This special toy was a birthday present. I can't remember exactly how old I was, but I was probably about 5 or 6. This toy was important to me because I **longed for** it and it was a gift from my parents.

The toy was **identical to** the **character** in the cartoon I had watched. Therefore, I felt as if he had come from the movie. Marsupilami was a black-spotted yellow monkey-like **creature** with dog-like ears. The animals were **characterized** by an **incredibly** long, strong and flexible tail, used for almost any task.

As a kid, this was a fascinating and exciting toy for me. In the beginning, I did not allow any of my cousins and friends to touch Marsupilami. Marsupilami used to sit proudly on my bed each and every day, and every night he "slept" next to my pillow.

Thanks to the toy, I experienced a happy childhood. As the saying goes, "Teddy bears don't need hearts as they are already stuffed with love." This is also true for my beloved Marsupilami.

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **sentimental item:** the object whose value derives from personal or emotional associations rather than material worth
- **stuffed animal:** a toy with an outer fabric sewn from a textile and then stuffed with a flexible material
- **long for:** want very much
- **identical:** exactly the same
- **character:** a person or an animal in a book, play or film/movie
- **creature:** a living thing

- **characterize:** be typical of
- **incredibly:** in a way that is very difficult to believe

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

- **Why do children like to have toys in their lives?**

I think toys are the instruments that allow them to discover the world they live in, which is precisely why they interact with their surroundings through toys. Plus, toys provide plenty of enjoyment and happiness, both of which help build their skills. For example, toys promote children's cognitive development by stimulating their concentration and memory skills and giving them the ability to solve problems creatively, which is key to their future autonomy.

- **Do children like to play with toys or computer games nowadays?**

I think children nowadays prefer electronic games to toys. Electronic games with audio effects engage children for long hours, and most children are not allowed outside to play without supervision, which is the main reason they choose computers or other electronic games to fulfill their gaming spirit. Also, computer games give scores and levels to motivate children to play more and elevate to higher levels in the game.

- **What can parents do if they can't afford a toy for their kids?**

I think it is better to stand firm and don't give in to a child's pestering. This is because latest toys can overstretch the family budget and many parents might feel under pressure to meet their children's demands. Therefore, cost is a consideration for most parents, and so is keeping limitations on how much they treat their children.

- **Do girls and boys like the same toys?**

No, they don't. In fact, boys tend to like "wheeled toys", such as a wagon, or trucks or cars, and play with them in a masculine fashion, while girls have a preference for "plush toys" like Barbie dolls and play with them in a feminine way.

- **What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of having too many toys at home?**

There are many advantages for children who have a lot of toys, but there are also some disadvantages. As for the advantages, children can develop visual sense and basic math skills. However, on the other hand, having too many toys can stop the development of their creativity, and they may not bother to play outside or engage in much physical activity.

### 173. Describe a piece of technology (not computer–related) you like to use

You should say:

- What the technology is
- When it was invented
- What it is used for
- How you feel about it

#### Band 8 Sample

I consider myself a **technophile**, so it's hard for me to live a day without using technological devices, especially my smartphone.

It was a present from my parents to congratulate me on my high school graduation four years ago, and it has come in handy ever since. It was the latest Android phone at that time with lots of cool apps and functions, but no one has ever gave me proper instruction on how to use it. I had to resort to Google search to explore my phone and troubleshoot its problems when the screen suddenly went black or the application failed to run. My phone is with me most of the time and even though I know it's not good for my eyesight, I can't help but use it on a daily basis and for more than 6 hours a day. I can't deny that this **multifunctional** device has a big influence on my life, both positively and negatively. I no longer need dictionaries, notebooks, a camera, a music player or a TV because now I can look up new words, take notes, capture photos, listen to music and watch films on the screen of my phone.

In replacement of a heavy bulky laptop, my **pocket-sized** phone also allows me to create and edit documents on the move. On top of that, it saves me a lot of time and money going to stores thanks to online shopping and notifications of when there are special offers. However, the drawback is that I am somewhat **overdependent** on it. If my phone suddenly runs out of battery or I forget it at home when I am outside, I may feel vulnerable and lonely. This phone has helped me a lot with my work and study but I am thinking of reducing the time using it for my well-being.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Technophile**: very interested or obsessed with technology.
- **Multifunctional**: does many different things.
- **Pocket-sized**: small enough to fit in your pocket.
- **Over dependent**: too dependent on something; cannot work or live without it.



### **IELTS Speaking Part 3:**

#### **1. Do you like to use new technology?**

To be honest, I am kind of a “low-tech” person. I mean I find it quite challenging to cope with anything related to new technology. I am still using my phone and laptop as indispensable items in work and study, but am only able to handle their very basic functions. You know, learning some new technological advances always takes me plenty of time and effort.

#### **2. Does technology deeply affect people's life?**

Of course, I believe the development of technology has changed human life dramatically. Most of aspects of life have been affected, from the way people communicate to human interaction, daily habits, work and study and so on. While such technological advancements bring about benefits to support mankind better, their detrimental effects on certain aspects are undeniable.

#### **3. Is there any difference between technology in cities and in small towns?**

Well, due to a slower-paced lifestyle, the technology in small towns may be a lower standard and develop much slower than in megacities. Also, people in big cities may have easier and quicker access to the use of modern technology, such as computers and automatic machines while it may take much longer for those in the small towns to catch up with such developments.

#### **4. Do you agree that men are more obsessed with new technology than women?**

In my observation, I may say “yes”. Most men are curious and have passion in the discovery of the latest technology. They are often keen on looking for information about cutting-edge technology in the newspaper or on the Internet and then burst into excitement whenever they get the chance to try them. Meanwhile, most women just regard technology as a tool to support their life.

#### **5. How to teach older generations to use new technology?**

It is quite a hard mission I think, as elderly people are usually slower to acquire something new, let alone technology that is intrinsically complicated to learn. However, introducing them to the availability of some useful technological devices such as smartphones or laptops, and instructing them to use their basic functions like sending text messages or writing emails can be done without too much time or effort.

#### **6. Do you think that technology always has positive effects?**

→ Of course not, anything in this life has both pros and cons and so does technology. Besides the beneficial effects that it brings to mankind, the negative impacts are inevitable. Take smartphones and the internet as an example, they have somehow changed the way people interact with each other. I mean, many people nowadays are no longer interested in family conversations, because each of them has their phones that contain a whole world of joy and entertainment.

**174. Describe something you made yourself.**

**You should say:**

- What you made.
- Why you make it.
- How you make it.

And explain how you felt about it.

**Band 8 Sample**

Now, I'm going to talk about a cake that I made on my mother's birthday, which, to be honest, was not very successful. I first learnt how to make a cake 2 years ago after buying a cook book from a local book store.

The cake that I made is called Tiramisu, which is a kind of traditional Italian cake. I first tried this cake quite a long time ago at a big restaurant in District 1 and I decided that it would be the perfect gift to surprise my mom with on her birthday. On the day that I made the cake, I got up quite early to buy the necessary ingredients from a supermarket. Everything seemed to be quite OK before I made a mistake in the process. When condensing the whipping cream, I used a porcelain bowl instead of the one made of stainless-steel shown in the instructions. As a result, the cream stayed in the liquid form and the whole cake turned into a big mess. Right after that, my mom got home and noticed what I was doing. You know, I expected that she would yell at me for the mess I created, but she smiled and said that she was very happy when seeing my attempt to make her a birthday present by myself.

I then cleaned up the kitchen and bought her a new dress to compensate for the cake that I ruined. We actually enjoyed the birthday party a lot, and in the future I hope that I'll be able to successfully make that kind of cake for her on another birthday.

**175. Describe a film that you did not enjoy.**

**You should say:**

- What the film was
- When you watched it
- Who you watched it with

And explain why you did not enjoy this film

**Band 8 Sample**

I am going to be talking about the worst movie that I have watched in my entire life. Its name is “Deadpool”.

It was a sunny Friday morning a year ago when my **bestie** and I had nothing to do but to wander around the city with no specific direction. Suddenly I **caught sight of** the movie poster for “Deadpool” when we were waiting for the traffic light at the intersection. And as you may probably guess, we were in the cinema, just 15 minutes after that, with our box of popcorn, ready to enjoy the movie. But in fact, it was one of the worst decisions that I have ever made.

The main character is a man whose superhuman ability was activated after being injected with a serum to cure his cancer, the movie was full of violence with a lot extreme fighting scenes, blood, **gruesome torture scenes** and an excessive use of bad language. While others, including my friend, were applauding in excitement, I found myself suffering from a **splitting headache**. In fact, I was about to leave when it was about one-third of the way through the movie, but as my friend kept insisting me to stay, I remained seated, wishing the time would fly faster.

I supposed Deadpool was not that bad as many youngsters were still fascinated by it, and more importantly it became a success and won many awards. However, it is simply because the movie is not my taste and the **inhumanity**, even to bad people, is something I couldn’t stand. My friend told me its **sequel** would be released soon, but to me once was enough for my suffering.

Thank you for your listening

**Vocabulary highlights:**

- **Bestie:** a best friend
- **To catch sight of:** to suddenly notice
- **Gruesome:** very unpleasant and filling you with horror, usually because it is connected with death or injury

- **Torture:** the act of causing somebody severe pain in order to punish them or make them say or do something
- **Splitting headache:** a very bad headache
- **Inhumanity:** cruel behaviour or treatment
- **Sequel:** a movie that continues the story of an earlier one

### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

#### 1. What kinds of films do children (i.e., people aged 4 to 12) like to watch?

Cartoons, definitely. It is because cartoons are full of animation and color, so they grab children's attention very easily. In fact, it is quite natural for a young mind to be more attracted to the fantasy world rather than the reality that they may have no idea about. On top of that, the fast-paced action in cartoons also brings children visual pleasure, that's why they can enjoy watching cartoons for hours without getting tired of them.

#### 2. What is the difference between watching movies at home and at a cinema?

There are a lot, I guess. One of which would be related to the sense of comfort. I mean watching a movie at home can be more relaxing as you are free to eat, drink or make loud noises as you wish without worrying about bothering others like in the cinema. However, when it comes to the quality of the movie itself, the cinema is definitely a better place as it offers a big screen with lively sound effects, which helps audiences enjoy the movie to the utmost.

#### 3. To what extent do films influence a country's culture?

From my observation, it can be the fashion in films that partly influences what people wear. As a matter of fact, after certain films are released, the national fashion trends are updated with some new items or the style of some traditional costume is modified. Take "Co Ba Sai Gon"- a Vietnamese movie as an example, just a short time after the movie was released at the cinema, the traditional "Ao Dai" with vintage patterns become so prevalent among the youth.

#### 4. Why do some film actors become famous?

To me it can be either their talent or their scandals, or both. A lot of young talents have started to emerge after their movies, and audiences admire their excellent performance or just simply love their characters in their films. But a group of actors are also well-known across the movie industry for scandalous affairs which are constantly updated in the press, and in fact, many young stars have decided to make their fame this way.

**5. Do you prefer to watch a movie at home or at a cinema?**

Well, at home, for sure. To me, nothing is better than gathering with my siblings around the computer screen and enjoying a really scary horror film. I find that a much cozier feeling compared to watching movies at the cinema with a bunch of strangers. On top of that, watching at home saves me a lot of time travelling, and money for buying the tickets too.

**6. Do people of different ages in your country watch different kinds of movies?**

Yes, they have different tastes. People usually prefer to watch movies that best suit with the characteristics of people their age. For example, while most young people are crazy about fantasy movies as they enable them to immerse themselves in discovery and adventure, the older people may be into soap operas that feature emotional relationships and drama.

**7. Do you ever learn anything from watching a film?**

Yes, many of them have made me think about life. Some have brought a meaningful message about human relationships and ways of behaving in society, while others, like action films, have taught me to be more cautious about things around me and how to foster my bravery in dangerous situations.

**8. What about children - what impact do films have on children?**

It depends on the type of films children watch. With some films that are suitable for their age, it does no harm, but when it comes to films with violent content, children may get affected in a negative way. They tend to be more aggressive and imitate what they see in the films and apply it into real life. So, it is necessary for parents to have control over the films that their children have an access to.

**9. Do you think films have much influence on young people?**

Sure and it can be both positive and negative, depending on the films they watch. While some can leave an important message about social relationships or highlight positive human qualities, others may undermine their belief about life. Also, the language in films can affect the way they speak to others.

**176. Describe your favorite flower.**

**You should say:**

- What it is
- Where it is grown
- If it is common in your country

And explain why it is your favorite flower.

**Band 8 Sample**

Today I'm going to talk about one of the most popular kinds of flower in the whole world and also my favorite one, which is the rose. I first learned about this beautiful flower over 20 years ago when my mother told me about it.

With regards to its appearance, roses are a kind of small flower that can be found in almost all markets and supermarkets around the whole world. Usually, the roots of old rose bushes would dig very deep into the ground. The rose stem is small and thin but quite hard to break. From this part, a number of leaves grow as the plant starts to reach its maturity. In addition to this, touching the stem of roses can be quite painful sometimes as many rose species have sharp thorns on their body as a tool to protect them from predators. On top of this plant lies a part called the petal, from which the bud would rise and then turn into a very beautiful flower when the blooming season arrives.

In the past, most roses around the world were only red, but now, thanks to the development of agricultural technology, people have been able to create roses in a wide range of colors, such as purple, yellow, white and so on. As I mentioned above, this flower is a common favorite on a global scale since it has always been considered as the symbol of love. Besides that, roses have also been mentioned in several literary works, songs and movies.

As for myself, I usually give roses as a kind of gift for the people I love on some special days like their birthdays. Also, I have planted some roses in my garden and hope that in the future, I'll be able to start my own business selling these flowers.

### 177. Describe an advertisement that you saw or heard or liked

#### You should say:

- Where you saw or heard it
- What kind of advertisement it was
- What the content of the advertisement was (or, what product /service was advertised)

And explain how you felt about this advertisement/ why you liked it.

#### Band 8 Sample

I would like to tell you about my all-time favorite advert for the paint product - Dulux Easy Clean. It was many years ago when I watched this advert for the first time in the **commercial break** on TV and I have been in love with it ever since.

The advert starts with many children messing the walls of their house with color, mud and powder and enjoying their world of fun and creation. Then the drama begins when their mom comes back home after a hard day at work. When just as she enters the front door, she comes to realize that her baby son is having fun with his crayons and **doodling** on the newly-painted wall. Unlike what viewers might guess what happens, the mom looks at her son, who is acting completely innocently, and gives him a big smile. Because the walls are painted with Dulux Easy Clean, all types of dirt can be removed very easily. The advert then ends with a slogan that could be interpreted in two ways; with Dulux Easy Clean, forgiveness is easy, or, with Dulux Easy Clean, erasing **stains** is no problem.

I am so fascinated by this ad for a number of reasons. First, it featured children acting typically - playful, **mischievous** and innocent, which I find super cute. In fact, I can't take my eyes off the TV screen whenever this advert comes on, with the appearance of these little angels. Also, the song played in the advert was "I'm sorry" that amazingly matched the content and the acting of the kids. On top of that, it is the catchy slogan that left viewers with the deepest impression and I believe the marketing team was successful in bringing **brand awareness** to their potential customers.

Thank you for listening

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Commercial break:** an interruption in a radio or television program for the broadcasting of advertisements
- **Doodle:** a line, shape, etc. that you have drawn when you are bored or thinking about something else

- **Stain:** a dirty mark on something, that is difficult to remove
- **Mischievous:** enjoying playing tricks and annoying people
- **Brand awareness:** the extent to which consumers are familiar with the distinctive qualities or image of a particular brand of goods or services.



## 178. Describe an important letter you received

### You should say:

- When you received it
- Who sent it
- What it was about
- Why it was important to you

### Band 8 Sample

I would like to talk about an important letter from one of my besties living in the US.

It was a Sunday morning in May 2 years ago when the postman came to my house and delivered the letter to me. At first I thought it was a mistake as I couldn't think of any of my friends or relatives who still used this outdated means of communication. But then I could not believe my eyes to realize that it was Mia - my best friend from high school who sent me the letter. In fact, we had lost contact for more than a decade since her family moved to the US for a new life, and despite my every **endeavor** to find her on social networking sites; I have always ended up finding different people with the same name.

I immediately felt **blissful**, nervously reading her letter. She was exactly like the Mia that I knew years ago. She was still treating me with **tender loving care**, asking me so many questions that I was just a bit overwhelmed. It was also her sense of humor in every single thing she mentioned that could not be hidden. She didn't forget to tell me what had happened to her over the past 12 years, and I was so happy to know that she was also pursuing a teaching career just like me.

Mia's letter was the longest letter I have read in my entire life, and it was so meaningful to me. I had never thought that I would have such a wonderful chance to reconnect with my soul-mate, who I trusted so much, after such a long time. It gave us the chance to be connected again, and to gossip about everything in life and to remind each other about the beautiful old days.

Thank you for listening

### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Endeavor**: an attempt to do something, especially something new or difficult
- **Blissful**: extreme happiness
- **Tender loving care**: considerate and kindly care



### 179. Describe a comedy TV series that you watch.

#### You should say:

- What TV series is it?
- Who are the main characters there?
- Describe an interesting event from the series.

#### Band 8 Sample

I'm going to talk about "Who wants to be a millionaire", one of my favorite TV shows ever.

As far as I can remember, it was originally a UK TV Game Show, and it made its first **debut** in Vietnam around 10 years ago.

This was kind of a quiz show in which contestants have to go through a set of 15 questions with increasing difficulty. The first 5 questions are pretty silly really, and they always **give me and my family a good laugh**. Contestants are given 4 lifelines to aid them with difficult questions, and most of them are usually used up when the contestant reaches around question 7 or 8. The entire show is **a sea of knowledge**. Many questions from different fields are asked, ranging from trivial things like ingredients needed to make cookies to academic stuff like quantum physics and archeology.

You know, I'm quite a curious man, so back when I was a high school kid, I hardly missed an episode. When the Internet became available in Vietnam, I started to watch the UK and US version as well, and knowledge acquired from those shows were really helpful to me in many of my high school knowledge quizzes.

#### Vocabulary highlights:

- **Debut:** The first public appearance of something
- **Give somebody a good laugh:** Make someone laugh in excitement
- **A sea of knowledge:** a lot of knowledge

#### IELTS Speaking Part 3:

##### 1. Do young people like to watch TV nowadays?

I would say no. The Internet is a much better option; everything from films and TV series to music is available on the Net, some of which are free of charge (or at least in Vietnam I think). Young people, with their smartphones in hand, no longer feel the need to watch TV.

**2. What kind of TV programs do young people like?**

Mostly soap operas, I believe. More women watch TV than men do, and romances are their favorites. Also, cartoons are popular among kids, and students in Vietnam also love quiz shows.

**3. Do you think TV will be replaced by computers?**

Yes, it's very likely. I can **see** that coming really. The Internet has been a much better option; everything from films and TV series' to music is available on the Net, some of which are free of charge (or at least in Vietnam I think). Young people, with their smartphones in hand, no longer feel the need to watch TV. I would call it the "natural" selection of technology.

**4. What do you think about TV advertisements?**

TV commercials help us to know about stuff we need to buy, so I think it's pretty useful. However, at times it can be very annoying when it interrupts our favorite shows.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tài liệu là sản phẩm trí tuệ của đội ngũ học thuật tại Anh Ngữ ZIM. Các hành vi sao chép dưới mọi hình thức mà không có sự đồng ý bằng văn bản từ phía Anh Ngữ ZIM đều là những hành vi vi phạm bản quyền và luật sở hữu trí tuệ.

<https://zim.vn/>

-----

Tham gia cộng đồng IELTS SHARE hỗ trợ luyện thi IELTS hiệu quả:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ielts.share/>

Tủ sách IELTS Band 8 – Tài liệu IELTS chất lượng cao:

<https://zim.vn/tu-sach-ielts-band-8/>

Follow thầy Toàn ZIM (Admin IELTS SHARE) để nhận được những kiến thức hữu ích về IELTS:

<https://www.facebook.com/anhtoan122/>

**Chúc các bạn luyện thi IELTS thật tốt!**

# FROM THE MASTERS OF IELTS



ZIM, a trusted educational organization, focuses on Academic English Training and Test Preparation, and our mission is to make English the second official language in Vietnam. Here we offer a range of high-quality Academic English Training courses and consultancy for students and adults who want to acquire international education and live overseas.

Our coursework is designed thoroughly and systematically by our intensive training experts as well as specialists in English language and teaching methodology in order to help each student study effectively and succeed in their pathway to university. We always pride ourselves on our professional and efficiency-oriented training and student support systems that not only guarantee success but also provide a great deal of learning experience for our students. For putting such priority on quality, thousands of our students managed to obtain their certificates, and we are able to inspire great loyalty and trust from our students.

ZIM School of English and  
Test Preparation

[zim.vn](http://zim.vn)