**IELTS Speaking Exercise:  
Sentence Building**

**Make better sentences, get a better score!**

**Question:** Tell me about your family.  
**Common Answer:** There are three people in my family.  
**Better Answer:** In China today, a majority of families have three members, and my family is no exception.  
**Note:** This sentence is built with three parts. First is the place, China. Second is the situation, many families with three people. Third is this person's family.

**Question:** What is your hometown like?  
**Common Answer:** My hometown is very nice.  
**Better Answer:** Although my hometown is not very famous, it has several advantages that make it a great place to live.

**Question:** How do you feel about your job?  
**Common Answer:** I like my job very much.  
**Better Answer:** Although you might not believe it, I really enjoy my job every day.

**Question:** What do you dislike about your classes?  
**Common Answer:** Studying is very difficult.  
**Better Answer:** When I think about how hard my classes, I feel like quitting, which is one reason I've decided to go abroad.  
**Note:** The question is about a feeling and the answer is about a feeling. Good!

**Question:** What do you want to do in the future?  
**Common Answer:** I want to be a lawyer in the future.  
**Better Answer:** I first thought about being a lawyer when I was a child, and now, after many long years of study, it seems my dream will become reality.  
**Note:** Excellent! Compare the past dream with the present hard work to show the bright future!

**Question:** What do you do in your free time?  
**Common Answer:** In my free time I like to play sports.  
**Better Answer:** If I ever had free time, I would probably do many different things, including playing sports, listening to music, and going out with my friends.  
**Note:** Good examples.

**Question:** Tell me about a typical day in your life.  
**Common Answer:** My typical day begins when I wake up.  
**Better Answer:** After resting all night, I wake up every morning looking forward to a new day.

**Question:** What will you do when you go abroad?  
**Common Answer:** I want to study Computer Science in Australia.  
**Better Answer:** If I am able to get a visa, I hope to learn about Computer Science in Brisbane, Australia, so that I can come back to China and work for a successful local company.

**Question:** What are some typical jobs that people do in your country?  
**Common Answer:** Many people in China work as farmers.  
**Better Answer:** One of the biggest industries in China is agriculture, so there are a large number of people working as farmers.

**Question:** Tell me about a celebration or festival in your country.  
**Common Answer:** The Spring Festival is the biggest holiday of the year in China.  
**Better Answer:** When winter is coming to an end, which means a new spring is not far behind, and that is when we in China have our largest celebration of the year, the Spring Festival.

**Question:** Do you like to go shopping?  
**Common Answer:** I hate shopping, but I have to do it.   
**Better Answer:** When I think of shopping, I think of all the crowds, all the difficult choices, and all the money I will have to spend, so I hate to go shopping.

## IELTS Speaking Exercise: Connecting Sentences

Do not use too many connectors when you speak, or it may sound unnatural. Here are some of the most common connection words in English.

**1. "after" or "before"**

 After we did that, we ~ed.

 Before we can finish that job, we must ~.

 After that, I went to...

 Before that, I was working in an office.

**2. "although" or "even though"**

 Although my hometown is very small, it has many interesting places to visit.

 Even though my hometown very crowded and noisy, I like living there very much.

**3. "another"**

 Another good thing about my job is...

 Another way to solve the problem would be to...

**4. "as with" or "just like"**

 As with the first question, we must consider this one very carefully.

 Just like Romeo and Juliet, we fell in love.

**5. "at the same time"**

 I wanted to be with her every day. At the same time, I felt I should obey my parents wishes.

 There are too many cars in Beijing. At the same time, the city is building more subway lines and adding more buses.

**6. "besides" or "in addition to"**

 Besides that fact, here is another interesting point...

 In addition to that law, there are many other laws to prevent traffic accidents.

**7. "but"**

 This is usually true, but...

 In most cases that is true, but...

 In a typical situation that may happen, but...

 In an ideal situation we can do it that way, but...

**8. "because"**

 Many people believe that is true. I disagree because...

 My point of view is... The reason I believe that is because...

**9. "except for"**

 Except for that one case, I do not know of any other problems.

 Except for the main character, all the others were bad people.

**10. "for example"**

 I believe ~ is true. For example...

 I believe that ~ is the best way. Let me give you an example...

**11. "however" or "yet"**

 I basically agree with you. However, I don't know if that will be true in the future.

 That is what I have thought most of my life. Yet I wonder if I am wrong.

**12. "rather than"**

 Rather than repeat that process, the hero of the story decided to do something different.

 Rather than just accept the decision, I decided to change my job.

**13. "the reason is"**

 I don't agree with that at all. The reason is...

 The reason I doubt that is...

**14. "this" or "that"**

 Some people say that... and I have to agree with them...

 That was good too, but not as good as...

 That was good, and an even better way is...

 Not only is that interesting, but ~ is also quite fascinating.

**15. "when" or "whenever"**

 When I think about such a topic, I think about...

 When I remember how I grew up, I realize...

 Whenever I think about my studies, I wonder how I survived!

**IELTS Speaking Exercise:  
General to Specific**

**A useful skill for IELTS speaking AND writing**

Students often say or write sentences that are too simple such as:

 This is important.

 My hometown is very good.

 I like to eat pizza.

 I will go to another country.   
  
These sentences are okay if you want to be Band 4 or Band 5. However, these will be much better IF some explanation comes after. For example, instead of saying "This is important", you should explain WHY it is important:

 "This job is very important for our company. (a very general sentence)

 If we can sell over 10,000 of these items, we will have earn enough money to build a new factory." (a very specific sentence!)   
  
Now let's look at the other three examples. Instead of "My hometown is very good", could say:

 My hometown is a very nice city in Shandong Province. (rather general)

 Because it is between the sea and the mountains, there are many beautiful places to visit. (Very specific.)   
  
Instead of saying "I like to eat pizza", you could say:

 Pizza is my favorite food in the whole world. (general)

 I not only love the cheese, but the bread, tomato sauce with meat and vegetables on top make pizza a complete meal! (specific)   
  
Finally, instead of saying "I will go to another country", you should say something like this:

 I hope to go to New Zealand to study in the future. (general)

 If I can arrange the visa and a job, I will work in the sheep herding industry where I will have a peaceful and enjoyable life in the mountains, away from the crowds and the pollution! (specific)

**IELTS Speaking Exercise:  
Paraphrasing**

**When you can't remember an English word,   
use other words!**

**1. How to explain what you mean:**   
  
There are five ways to explain your meaning: 1) use simple words to explain, 2) use opposites, 3) compare to other things, 4) say what it is NOT, and 5) use examples.   
  
  
**2. Examples:**

**snake:**   
a living thing that is frightening

Is this a good example of paraphrasing? NO! There are MANY living things that are frightening! How can we make this better? First of all, a snake is long, isn't it? And it has no legs, right? And why is it frightening? Because if it bites us, we may get sick or die! So here's a better way to paraphrase:

**snake:**   
a long animal with no legs, and if it bites us, we may die!

Here are some more bad examples of paraphrasing. Can you make them better?

**fingers:**  
part of our body, we use it to eat

**smile:**  
we do this when we get a good score on the IELTS

**hungry:**  
how we feel at 3 o'clock in the afternoon

Here are some better ways to explain these words:

**fingers**  
part of your hand, you have five of them

**smile**  
you do it with your mouth to show you are happy, you turn it up

**hungry**  
how we feel when we don't eat for a long time

**IELTS Speaking Tasks**

IELTS researchers have found that students perform 12 different tasks during the IELTS Speaking Test. The first two are easy - giving personal information and giving non-personal information. Here are the other ten, which you must practice:   
  
**1. Expressing a Preference**

 I prefer A to B because...

 If I have a choice, I will... (a real possibility)

 If I had a choice, I would... (not a real possibility, just wishing)

 For me, A is much more attractive / interesting / preferable than B because...

 I would much rather do / have / eat / listen to / blah blah blah A than B...

**2. Narrating**

 When I was a high school student, I went to Guizhou to visit some friends.

 After I graduated from high school, I ...

 During my visit to Guizhou last year, I...

 Last year during the Spring Festival, I went to Guizhou to visit some friends.  
(Also use "Whenever" or "While")

**3. Comparing and Contrasting**

 A is much better / worse than B.

 A is not nearly as good as B.

 A is not quite as important as B.

 A is almost as tall as B, but not quite.

 When I compare these two items, it's clear that...

**4. Suggesting**

 Maybe, Perhaps, Possibly

 One possibility that I can think of is...

 Another idea to think about is...

**5. Expressing Opinions**

 It seems to me that...

 This is only my opinion but...

 After a lot of thought, I have come to the conclusion that...

 I've never thought about this question much before, but it seems to me that...

**6. Justifying Opinions**

 The reason I believe this is...

 The most important evidence supporting my belief is...

**7. Speculating**

 I'm not sure what might happen, but one possibility is...

 It's hard to predict the future, but I suppose it / we might...

**8. Analyzing**

 There are several points to consider, first of which is...

 We can break this question down into several parts. First...

 Let's look at this step by step. To begin with...

**9. Summarizing**

 Altogether, there were...

 In the end, they had to...

 When we consider all the factors...

 Considering all of these ideas, maybe the best thing would be to...

**10. Conversation Repair**

 Maybe I'm not making myself clear. I want to say that...

 What I mean to say is...

 What I'm trying to say is...

 Another way to put it is...

*Source: http://teacherjoe.us/IELTSTasks.html*