

IELTS Speaking Part 1: Practice Questions

1. Do you read a daily newspaper?
2. What kind of books do you like to read?
3. How often do you use a library?
4. How many hours a week do you spend reading?
5. Is there anything you find hard to read?
6. What kind of books did you read as a child?
7. What's the last thing you read and enjoyed?
8. Have you ever kept a diary?
9. What's the most popular newspaper in your country?
10. Would you ever write your own autobiography?

IELTS Speaking Part 1: Sample Answers and Analysis

1. Do you read a daily newspaper?

I don't, I'm afraid. Like a lot of people, I get my news from the internet. It's so much faster.

2. What kind of books do you like to read?

Oh, all kinds really. I've got about a hundred books at home, actually: fiction, non-fiction, and lots of books about art.

3. How often do you use a library?

Well, I'm a student so I'm in the library almost everyday. I don't always use it to find books, though. I'm more likely to use the computer facilities to look for information online.

4. How many hours a week do you spend reading?

These days I only spend one or two hours reading a book, to be honest. But when I was younger I used to spend almost all my free time reading.

5. Is there anything you find hard to read?

Yes there is, actually. I'm studying to become an accountant and the textbooks are really difficult. I have to read them if I want to pass my exams, though.

Questions 1-5 deal with everyday or current topics and are therefore quite straightforward. This IELTS candidate scores highly by:

- Using fluency expressions to sound natural: *well; oh; I'm afraid; to be honest; actually.*
- Using substitution or ellipsis to avoid 'parroting' the question: *I don't; yes there is; all kinds.*
- Using the present simple tense to talk about regular actions: *get; use; spend.*
- Using the present progressive tense to talk about a current action: *I'm studying.*
- Comparing a present situation with a past situation: *used to spend.*
- Expanding answers by giving reasons and examples, and by making concessions.

6. What kind of books did you read as a child?

When I was in primary school I used to really like adventure stories. Huckleberry Finn was probably my favourite book. I think I read it more than five times!

7. What's the last thing you read and enjoyed?

This might sound a bit strange but I got my mobile phone bill yesterday and it was much lower than I expected. That was a nice surprise!

8. Have you ever kept a diary?

I have, actually. Last year I tried to write one but it only lasted about two weeks. When I have more time, I'd like to try again.

9. What's the most popular newspaper in your country?

I'm not sure, to be honest, but the Times of India seems to be sold everywhere so it must be that.

10. Would you ever write your own autobiography?

I don't think I would, no. My life just isn't interesting enough to write a book about, I'm afraid.

Questions 6-10 are more difficult as they deal with a variety of times or with topics outside the candidate's own experience. This IELTS candidate scores highly by:

- Being positive and showing a willingness to expand answers (Q6, Q7).
- Using intensifying expressions such as *much* and *just* to add interest (Q7, Q9).
- Providing a commentary on his or her own answer (Q7).
- Switching between different verb tenses with great accuracy (Q8).
- Using a modal verb of speculation (*must be*) when he or she doesn't know the answer (Q9).
- Recognising when a question is hypothetical and responding using *would* (Q10).

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