

Preparation for IELTS Speaking Part 1 by Laura Higgins

Age: Adults
Level: Upper intermediate–Advanced
Time: 1 hour 30 minutes
Objective: To practise using idiomatic expressions during a role-play of the IELTS Speaking Part 1 exam
Key skills: Speaking, listening
Materials: One copy of Worksheets 1 and 2 per student; one copy of Worksheet 3 per pair of students; audio player

Procedure

Worksheet 1

Lead in (10 minutes)

- A. Put students into pairs and hand out Worksheet 1. Ask them to discuss the three answers to a typical IELTS Speaking Part 1 question. They should decide which one is the best answer and why.

Key (model answer):

I think 3 is the best because 1 is too short and repeats the question. 2 is better than 1, but it is still a little short and uses simple vocabulary. 3 provides a detailed answer, paraphrases the examiner's question and uses higher-level language like idioms.

Share the IELTS band descriptors for Band 7 Lexical Resource with your students. Point out that Answer 3 addresses the criteria to use less common and idiomatic vocabulary, and effective paraphrasing.

Listening for gist (10 minutes)

- B. Tell students they are going to listen to a typical conversation, similar to Part 1 of the Speaking exam. After they have listened, they should answer the two questions on the worksheet.

Key:

- He used to travel with his parents when he was younger and has carried on the tradition.*
- He normally takes the train.*

Listening for detail (15 minutes)

- C. Tell students they are going to listen to the recording again and complete the conversation. Give students a minute to quickly scan the text before they listen again. Before checking the answers as a class, have students compare their answers with a classmate.

Key:

- really into*
- every year without fail*
- can't bear*
- as often as I can*
- a huge fan of*
- from time to time*
- not my cup of tea*
- donkey's years*
- once in a blue moon*
- take it or leave it*

Categorizing (15 minutes)

- D. Ask students to put the idiomatic phrases from task C into the correct categories and order them from *like* to *dislike* and the frequency phrases from most frequent to least frequent. Allow them to check their answers with a partner first. When going through the answers as a class, make sure to tell them these are fixed phrases.

Key (suggested answers):

Really like	Like / Dislike	How often?	Really often
↓	<i>a huge fan of</i>	<i>as often as I can</i>	↓
	<i>really into</i>	<i>every year/day/week without fail</i>	
	<i>can take it or leave it</i>	<i>from time to time</i>	
	<i>not my cup of tea</i>	<i>once in a blue moon</i>	
	<i>can't bear it</i>	<i>not in donkey's years</i>	
Really dislike			Not for a long time

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If students struggle with the target language, you could point out synonyms for each, for example: *from time to time* = *sometimes* or *once in a blue moon* = *rarely*.

Worksheet 2

Quiz (10 minutes)

Hand out Worksheet 2 to each student. Ask them to match the pictures to the phrases they have just learnt. Check answers together as a class, and clarify any doubts students may have.

Key:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. e | 6. d |
| 2. c | 7. h |
| 3. b | 8. i |
| 4. f | 9. g |
| 5. a | 10. j |

Worksheet 3

Role-play (30 minutes)

Tell students that they are going to practise answering questions similar to Speaking Part 1 and that they should use the new language they have learnt. Hand out a copy of Worksheet 3 to each student.

Student A plays the examiner and Student B the candidate. Once they have gone through the first set of questions, they swap roles. Student A should use the checklist to note when Student B uses the target language. Monitor and note down examples of good use of language along with some common errors. Then, as a class, discuss which examples are correct and which are incorrect.