

IELTS Speaking Day 12 - 18

7 Common Question Types

The seven common question types that appear in IELTS speaking part 3 are:

1. **Opinion**– What do you think about ‘this’? Remember to say why you think that way and give examples.
2. **Evaluate**– What do you think about someone else’s opinion?
3. **Future**– What do you think will happen in the future?
4. **Cause and Effect**– What caused ‘this’ and/or what effects has ‘it’ had?
5. **Hypothetical**– Talk about imaginary or unreal situations.
6. **Compare and Contrast**– Talk about the difference and/or similarities between two things.
7. **Past**– How were things different in the past and how have they changed?

Grammatical Structures

Opinion

One thing you should not do is start every sentence with ‘I think...’ or ‘In my opinion...’ The IELTS examiner will be looking for how you vary your language. Below are a number of ways you could do that:

Opinion Markers

General opinions	Certain / Strong opinions	Uncertain / Weak opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think• In my opinion• As I see it,• Personally,• For me	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I’m convinced that....• I’m certain that....• I’m sure that...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I guess that...• I suppose that....• I’d say that.....

Example Question

What are some of the ways people can help others in the community?

As I see it, there are many ways one can help the needy, but the best way is by making charitable donations. People can choose a charity and simply donate a sum of money and leave it to them to help others in need. For instance, I recently gave money to an orphanage. I don’t have time to help them personally, so I’ll leave it up to them to use the money as they see fit.

Evaluate

In these kinds of questions you will be asked what you think about someone else's opinion or a general/popular opinion . We will therefore need to use expressions that allow us to agree or disagree.

Agreement	Disagreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I couldn't agree with you more.• That's so true.• That's for sure.• That's exactly how I feel.• No doubt about it.• I suppose so./I guess so.• You/they have a point there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't think so.• I'm afraid I disagree.• I totally disagree.• I beg to differ.• I'd say the exact opposite.• Not necessarily.• That's not always true.• That's not always the case.

Remember that you will have to extend your answers with explanations and examples.

Example Question

Some people say that people helped others more in the past than they do now. Do you agree or disagree?

I don't think so. When it comes to my parent's generation I think they are quite sceptical about helping other people in the community, but my generation are regularly doing things to improve it, such as volunteering for various environmental and charitable organisations. Young people are actively encouraged to help out in the community and I don't think this happened in the past, so I'm afraid I'd disagree.

Cause and Effect

You may also be asked to discuss what has caused a certain situation and what effects this has. This language will also help you in IELTS writing task 2.

To talk about cause and effect you can use:

Cause and Effect Markers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...because...• ...as a result....• ...resulted in...• ...as a consequence...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...due to....• ...caused...• ...led to....• ...means that....

These are just some examples and the form of the words may change depending on the words around them in the sentence. Only use them if you are sure your sentences are grammatically correct.

Example Question

How does advertising influence what people choose to buy?

I think advertising has a big influence on what people purchase and often leads to them always sticking with the same brand. For example, I always drink Coca Cola and I believe this is because I grew up watching all those ads on TV and I instinctively buy it as a result. I mean, why would companies spend so much money on adverts, unless it led to more sales?

Past

- We may use the **present perfect continuous** to talk about something that started in the past and continues up until the present. Example: They have been developing the city centre for the past five years. For this tense we use the structure has/have + been + past participle.
Used to + infinitive to talk about past habits or states that are now finished.
- Would + infinitive to describe past habits.
Past simple to talk about things you did in the past that you no longer do or are no longer true.
- Past continuous to talk about the background of a story or how you felt at a particular time.
Past perfect to say something happened before something else in the past.

Example Question

How has teaching changed in your country over the past few decades?

In the past, teachers simply lectured students and the students just listened to what they said. We were given lots of facts to learn and there was no room for creativity or freedom of expression. I remember learning lots of things without thinking about the theory behind it. Now, there's been a movement towards students thinking for themselves.

Hypothetical

The second conditional is used to talk about 'unreal', 'unlikely' or 'impossible' situations. You might get asked a question about an 'unreal' situation, for example 'If you were mayor of your city, what would you do to improve it?'

The grammar we use for this is:

If + (subject 1) + past participle, then (subject 2) + would + verb

Example Question

If you could choose any country to live in, where would you choose?

If I could live in any country, I would probably choose Australia. The weather is great; the people are super friendly and just imagine living beside all those beaches. If I could choose another country, it would have to be Italy, for the architecture, the culture and its fascinating history.

Compare and Contrast

To compare two things, use a comparative adjective + than e.g. He's taller than his sister.

Some comparative adjectives are irregular Ex:

Good- better / Bad- worse / Far- further

For short adjectives, add -(e)r. If they end in -y change to -ier. Ex:

Hard- harder / Cheap- cheaper / Easy- easier / Lazy- lazier

For longer adjectives, use more. Ex:

More interesting / More difficult

Example Question

Do you think primary school children should learn a second language or should they wait until secondary school?

It's obvious that the earlier children start a language the easier it becomes in later life. However, some parents might think that subjects like Math and Sciences are more important than languages at primary level. They may also think that a foreign language is less important than their first language and this should be prioritized.