

IELTS

MAXIMISER

EDUCATIONAL BOOK

SPEAKING

Sample
Interview
Questions

WITH ANSWERS & TEACHER'S GUIDE

FOR & AGAINST

PROS & CONS

CAUSE & EFFECT

Highly recommended for all candidates preparing for

FCE

TOEFL

CAE

یادداشت خنثایم
IELTS امتحان



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INTRODUCTION:

- **Aims of *IELTS MAXIMISER Educational Book*:**

IELTS MAXIMISER Educational Book has been primarily designed for candidates aiming to achieve a band score of **6** or **7** on the Speaking Test of the IELTS exam, although candidates intending to achieve a band score of **5** will also benefit from the book, it covers many aspects of the interview with ample samples and provides a considerable number of highly-focused ideas to improve candidates' performance.

- **Content of the book:**

- This topic-based book consists of three parts, each of which concentrates on various IELTS-type questions.
- **Part 1** presents a range of questions with sample answers mainly connected to *home life, education, job, interests, hometown and future plans*. The suggested answers present a range of functions that students may need during the speaking test.
- **Part 2** contains 100 topic cards with 20 sample answers.
- **Part 3** is divided into 100 A-Z topics. Each comprising a number of key words in which the target key words and ideas are contextualized. In part 3, there is a section entitled 'Discussion Questions' at the end of each topic to activate the students' production of the themes in a discussion.
- contains interview extension activities for further practice or homework. These revision activities specifically designed to consolidate the answers presented.
- includes 'Speaking Test Tips' to help students increase their band scores.
- has a Teacher's Guide, giving many invaluable hints.

- **Special features of the book:**

- designed to be appropriate for all candidates of the IELTS Speaking test.
- provides a rich source of information and language that allows for a great amount of candidate personalisation and response in each topic.
- offers systematic vocabulary development and presents key words in conceptual ideas mainly provided in the format of 'Pros and Cons', 'For and Against' and 'Cause and Effect'.
- contains a large number of controversial issues followed with thought-provoking discussion questions. The aim has been to encourage critical thinking and discussion in IELTS preparation classes.
- provides a rich source of information and language input for **IELTS Writing (Task 2)**.
- can be used in any order, depending on the student's needs, level, aims and available time.
- is suitable for both independent study and classroom use.
- is highly recommended for all candidates preparing for **TOEFL, FCE** and **CAE** examinations.

I hope you enjoy studying *IELTS Maximiser* and have success with the book!

Alireza Memarzadeh

Your comments on this book are welcomed at: feedback@ieltsmaximiser.com

www.IELTSMAXIMISER.com

An Overview of IELTS Speaking

Module format:

IELTS Speaking is a one-to-one interaction between the candidate and an examiner. The three parts give the candidate the opportunity to use a range of different speaking skills.

IELTS Speaking is recorded.

Timing:

11 – 14 minutes

SPEAKING TEST FORMAT		
Part	Task types	Timing
1	Introduction and interview: You answer questions about yourself, your home, family, job, studies, interests and other familiar topics.	4 – 5 minutes
2	Independent long turn: You are given a topic verbally and on a card. You have a minute to prepare a talk. You speak for 1-2 minutes on the topic, e.g. a person, place, object or event. You answer one or two follow-up questions.	3 – 4 minutes
3	Discussion: You answer verbal questions, discussing more abstract ideas linked to the topic of Part 2.	4 – 5 minutes

Assessment criteria:

The aim of the test is to assess your ability to communicate effectively. The interviewer considers this ability in four different ways:

- **Fluency and coherence**
- **Lexical Resources**
- **Grammatical Range and Accuracy**
- **Pronunciation**

All criteria have equal weighting.

Functions:

The speech functions which occur regularly in the test are:

- Providing personal and non-personal information
- Expressing opinions & Justifying opinions
- Expressing likes and dislikes
- Giving reasons
- Explaining & Describing in details
- Pointing out both the positive and negative aspects
- Suggesting
- Discussing situations as they were in the past
- Speculating (Imaging the situation as they might be in the future)
- Expressing a preference
- Comparing & Contrasting
- Summarising
- Narrating and paraphrasing
- Analysing
- Repairing a conversation

Notice: (1st July 2007)

The Writing and Speaking modules are reported in whole or half-band in the same way as the Reading and Listening modules.

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION AND INTERVIEW

TIPS OF PART 1

Speaking test

Part 1:

Introduction and Interview (4 - 5 minutes)

The examiner will introduce himself or herself and confirm your identity. You answer general questions about yourself, your home, your job, your interests and a range of similar topic areas.

DOS AND DONT'S

- Be aware of question types; the areas covered are fairly predictable so practise at home recording ideas onto a tape recorder.
- Keep in mind that examiners can assess what they hear. They will expect you to speak up so **don't give one or two word answers**.
- Make sure to relate your answer to the interviewer's question. **First, answer the question** then give 'Added Information'.

Examiner: Do you have any plans for going to university?

Candidate: That's for sure. I'd like to major in chemical engineering.

Examiner: *Do you like swimming?*

Candidate: Yes, I do, but I don't get much time to go swimming these days.

- Reply by offering a full and appropriate response in each case. Always **add some extra information** to your answer; you are unlikely to get a second chance to answer them, but **don't anticipate related questions**. For example, if you are asked what your job is, a suitable answer would be:
 - *I work for a market research company. We do market research for companies that are planning to develop new products.*
 - *NOT I work for a market research company. We do market research for companies that are planning to develop new products. My job is very demanding. It requires strong communication and interpersonal skills to get the right results. The best thing about my job is the team that I work with. My work starts at 9 am and finishes at 7 pm.*

As this sounds like a 'learned answer' and the examiner's next question might be:

- *How do you like your job? OR*
- *Tell me about your working hours.*
- In order to present yourself in the best way possible, you should **try to sound positive about your past, present and future.**
- Listen to the questions carefully and make sure you answer the question; **answer the questions directly and to the point.**
- It is important to **relax and speak confidently.**
- There are a number of expressions used to **express your feelings.**
 - *I'm very interested in ...*
 - *... seems fantastic*
 - *I'm fond of...*
 - *I am keen on...*
 - *That sounds like fun*
 - *... would be really rewarding/ a lot of fun*
 - *... sounds more interesting than...*
 - *... is so absorbing*
 - *I find it really helpful*
 - *... seems pretty difficult*
 - *... is rather complicated*
 - *... was rather difficult*
 - *... was much more difficult in compared with...*
 - *... sounds kind of boring*
 - *.... doesn't interest me*
 - *To be honest, I don't enjoy...*
 - *I've lost interest in ...*

IELTS MAXIMISER

[GOLDEN IDEAS]

There is no right or wrong answer for this kind of test.

Check the most appropriate answer, underline the key words, and try to keep the ideas in your mind.

GENERAL
Interview

Examiner: I'm [...]; your examiner. Could you tell me your name please?

Candidate: Well, my (full) name is [...].

Alternative answers:

- My first name is [...]. It is a very common name in my country and my family name is [...].
- My first name is [...] ...er...which means [...] and my surname is [...]. I would appreciate if you called me [...].
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What would you like me to call you?

Candidate: Please call me [...].

Alternative answers:

- [...] please.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Could you give me your identification please?

Candidate: Oh, sure, here it is.

Alternative answers:

- Here you are.
- Yep! Here you go.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How did you get your name? ✓

Candidate: Um...I was named after my grandfather.

Alternative answers:

- Well, I was named by my mother, you know, [...] is my mother's favourite name.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Does your name have a special meaning? ✓

Candidate: Yes, it does. The English equivalent of my first name would be something like [...] and also my family name means [...].

Alternative answers:

No, I don't think so. It's just a name of a (an Iranian) poet/writer/etc.

Your answer:

Examiner: Is your name important to you? (Why?) ✓

Candidate: Yes, it is. Names can make unconscious impression on people.

Alternative answers:

No, I don't think it can do anything for me. I believe that I myself should determine my future irrespective of what my name is. Actually, I try to do this by acquiring more qualifications and working hard.

Your answer:

Examiner: How old are you?

Candidate: I am [...] years old. In other words, I was born in 1980. On the third of March 1980, to be exact.

Alternative answers:

I'm [...] years of age. I was born in 1980.

Your answer:

Examiner: Could you tell me where you are from? (Where do you come from?) ✓

Candidate: I was born in [...] city, you know, one of the largest cities in my country. I moved to [...] city just five years ago.

Alternative answers:

I was born in [...] a small town in the south of my country, but I grew up in [...] city.

I hail from a coastal city with lovely weather in the north of my country; called [...].

I come from [...] city. You know, a beautiful city with a great climate. My parents have been living there for the past twenty years or so. I grew up there.

[...] city. You know...a busy city with a population of over one million people. But actually, I live about twenty kilometres out of town on a small farm.

I am from a small village in the mountains; a long way from the capital city of my country.

Your answer:

Examiner: How long have you lived in [...]?

Candidate: Since I was ten.

Alternative answers:

When I was a child; at the age of 10, my parents moved to [...] because of my father's job. We have been living here since 1990.

Ten years in total.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is/are your goal(s)/ambition(s) for the future? ✓

Candidate: I hope I'll have made a career move and taken a management position by the time I'm thirty five. I think, at present, studying management is the right thing to do.

Alternative answers:

- Saving enough money to buy an apartment. Most of my income is spent on rent.
- The future is always uncertain, yet I know what I want to do. My goal is to run a company of my own someday.
- Well, I would like to improve my career prospects by obtaining a university degree.
- One goal I'd like to have reached by next year is to have my own business. In fact, I intend to use my university education practically.
- If possible, I'd like to continue my education in one of the English-speaking countries.
- My ambition is being able to speak Spanish fluently. I'm really interested in Spanish language. I'm bound to learn it.
- Improving my computer skills. In my job, being familiar with office programmes is a must.
- Well, in the next three months, I hope I'll have completed my university degree, and hopefully working as an accountant.
- Travelling around the world. I certainly need a lot of money to do that. Seemingly, the chances are pretty slim.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Tell me about your military service. ✓

Candidate: I completed my military service in the Air Force just five years ago.

Alternative answers:

- Actually, I was exempted from military service because of my poor eyesight.
- I am doing my military service as an officer in [...].
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What was your military service like? ✓

Candidate: Pretty hard. I served in a remote area far from my hometown.

Alternative answers:

- I should admit that I was very lucky to serve in my own hometown...um...it wasn't very hard.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you think your military service helped you become more mature?

Candidate: Oh, very much so. Although it was hard, it helped me develop my character and discipline.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, to a great extent. It really helped me discover my hidden talents.
- Your answer:**

GENERAL
Questions

1. Have you got or had any nicknames?
2. How do you like your name?
3. If you could change your name, what would it be? Why?
4. What is the most common name in your country?
5. Why have you chosen to live overseas?
6. What country do you want to live in?
7. What were the best years of your life?
8. What were the worst years of your life?
9. If you had three wishes, what would they be, and why?
10. What are your short-term goals?
11. How do you intend to achieve your goals?
12. What important goals have you set in the past, and how successful have you been in achieving them?
13. What do you hope to accomplish within the next ten years? How do you seek to fulfil these goals?
14. What personal factors do you consider most important in evaluating yourself or your success?
15. How have your dreams and goals changed through your life?
16. If you could re-live your last 10 years, what changes would you make?
17. As you look back on your life, what accomplishments do you take the most pride in?
18. How would you compare yourself today and yourself with five years ago, in what ways are you the same or different?
19. How would you feel if you failed to achieve any of your goals?
20. Tell me about some of your recent goals, and what you did to achieve them?
21. Describe the most significant success that you had in the last two years.
22. Tell me about something you did that now you wish you had not done.

DAILY ROUTINES

Interview

Examiner: Tell me about a typical day in your life.

Candidate: I have a hectic lifestyle. During the week I usually get up at 6:30 a.m., you know, I am an early bird. I go jogging for about 30 minutes then I usually get dressed and have breakfast around 7:30. Of course, I sometimes skip breakfast. I leave home at about 8 a.m. and get to work by 9 a.m. I take a lunch break about 1:00 p.m. Er...for lunch, I usually heat up a frozen meal or order a takeaway. I leave work around 7:00 p.m. and get home by 8:00 p.m. Most nights I go to bed at about 11:30 p.m. I think the best way to get the most out of a day is to use your time efficiently.

Alternative answers:

- I have a very free and easy lifestyle. I usually get up late, around 10:00. Er...I have lunch about 2:00 pm, in most the evenings, I go walking with my friends. I usually have dinner around 11:30 and go to bed at about 2:00 am. Maybe I should change my lifestyle and break the habit of staying up too late.
- I get up around 7:00 a.m. and work from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. I get home fairly late; about 9:30 and I'm usually in bed by 11:30 p.m. Perhaps my life isn't very exciting, but I like it.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What do you usually do at weekends?

Candidate: Since I live alone, at weekends, I usually stay at home and do the household chores...er... things like doing the laundry, ironing and vacuuming.

Alternative answers:

- At weekends, I usually stay at home and relax. After a busy week, I feel I deserve some rest and relaxation.
- I usually go out with friends. Sometimes, I have my friends over for dinner.
- Your answer:**

DAILY ROUTINES

Questions

1. What is your daily routine like? How do you feel and react when this routine is interrupted for some reason? Would you like to change anything in your daily routine?
2. If you could, what would you like to change in your daily routine?
3. How do you usually schedule your time?
4. How many hours per day do you usually sleep?

FAMILY
Interview

Examiner: Can you tell me a little about your family?

Candidate: Well, I have a brother and a sister. I am the eldest, my brother is the youngest and my sister is the second child.

Alternative answers:

- I have a large family. I have three brothers and two sisters. I am the youngest. One of my brothers still lives with my parents. My other siblings have all married and moved to their own homes.
- I come from a big family of six children. I have three brothers and two sisters. I'm the youngest.
- I come from a relatively large family. I have an elder brother and three younger sisters.
- Well, there are five of us altogether including my grandparents.
- I have one brother and one sister. I'm the middle child.
- I'm an only child. I live with my parents.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Where are your parents from?

Candidate: Um... they were both born and raised in [...] city...er...well, a city in the west of my country.

Alternative answers:

- My mother is from a city called [...], and my father is originally from [...] city.
- They are from [...]; a city located in the east of my country.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you live with your parents?

Candidate: Yes, I do. I live with my parents.

Alternative answers:

- I used to live with my parents until two years ago, but now, I live on my own.
- At present, I live with my parents. Of course, I am going to live independently in no time.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Are you married?

Candidate: Yes, I am. I married three years ago.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, I am. Next month, I will have been married for ten years.
- Well, I got engaged three months ago and I'm getting married next month.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you have any children?

Candidate: Yes, I do. I have a daughter. She is three years old.

Alternative answers:

No, I don't. But we are planning to start a family as soon as we have our own house.

Your answer:

Examiner: Tell me about your grandparents.

Candidate: Actually, my grandparents passed away when I was a child.

Alternative answers:

My grandmother is about eighty years of age, fortunately still hale and hearty, and young at heart. Wow! She used to tell me lots of heart-warming stories when I was a child, but unfortunately I did not have the privilege of seeing my grandfather.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do your grandparents live with you?

Candidate: Yes, my maternal grandmother does. She's been living with us for ten years. She is such a blessing in our family.

Alternative answers:

My grandmother used to live with us, but now, she lives alone.

Your answer:

Examiner: How would you describe your father's character?

Candidate: He is so thoughtful and open-minded. As a matter of fact, he has many good qualities and has been always a model of behaviour for me. I think his life has been an inspiration to me on many occasions.

Alternative answers:

He has a magnetic personality, very dignified ...um... assertive and so sympathetic.

To describe him, I should say he is so hardworking and serious, and I think...um... a little disciplined at times.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is your mother like?

Candidate: It's really difficult to describe her in words, but the only thing I can say now is that she has a heart of gold; extremely kind-hearted and devoted to family. She has done incredible things over the years for all members of my family.

Alternative answers:

She is very patient, understanding and so kind. She is my nearest and dearest.

Your answer:

Examiner: Which one do you resemble more your mother or your father?

Candidate: I look more like my father, mainly in my eyes and facial features. Of course, my hair is darker and curlier, but in character, I take after my mother more, I suppose.

Alternative answers:

- In terms of appearance, I look more like my mother, but in character, I'm more similar to my father.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Who are you closer to, your mother or your father?

Candidate: Um... It's a difficult question, in fact, I adore both of them. Er... but maybe I'm more compatible with my mother. We are mentally very close.

Alternative answers:

- Er... both. Despite the fact that we are from different generations, and age gap exists between us, I get on with them very well. So I can't say which one I am closer to, as I love both of them.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you often argue with your mother or father?

Candidate: To tell the truth, sometimes I do. Of course, after arguing, I ask them to make up with me.

Alternative answers:

- Not really. My parents are so understanding and I have the greatest regard for them. Our parents love us, that's what...er...called 'unconditional love' and we should always respect them.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Are you going to bring up your children any differently to the way your parents did? Why?

Candidate: Yes and no. Let me explain, I believe my parents raised me well, and gave me a good education. If I could do the same for my children I would be happy. Maybe I would be a little more flexible. For example, I believe my parents were unreasonably strict at times. I would try to keep a balance between discipline and flexibility.

Alternative answers:

- I intend to raise my children in the same way I was brought up.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you get on with your brother/sister well?

Candidate: Oh, that's for sure. My brother/sister and I get along so well. We are mentally very much alike. I usually share my secrets with my brother/sister.

Alternative answers:

- Although my brother/sister and I are characteristically kind of different, we get along very well.
- Oh, yes, totally. My brother/sister and I are so like-minded. We have a lot of things in common.
- Yes, so well. Although there is a ten year age gap between me and my brother/sister, we get along very well. We spend most of our time together...um... we share the same interests and have lots of fun together.

Alternative answers:

- In terms of appearance, I look more like my mother, but in character, I'm more similar to my father.
- Your answer:**

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Alternative answers:

- Although my brother/sister and I are characteristically kind of different, we get along very well.
- Oh, yes, totally. My brother/sister and I are so like-minded. We have a lot of things in common.
- Yes, so well. Although there is a ten year age gap between me and my brother/sister, we get along very well. We spend most of our time together...um... we share the same interests and have lots of fun together.

- Yes, very much. We are very close and....um...have the same tastes. For instance, we both like documentaries, and neither of us ever watches chat shows.
- Oh, yes, of course. In spite of our age difference, we do get along well.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you spend a lot of time with your siblings?

Candidate: Yes, exactly so. I come from a very close-knit family. We're so dependent on each other, and spend lots of time together.

Alternative answers:

- Unfortunately not very much. Um...I wish I could. Actually, we don't live in the same city.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What is the most important quality of your brother/sister?

Candidate: The most remarkable quality of my brother/sister is having a sense of humour. He/she is really fun to be with. I think he/she has a great talent for making people laugh; always ready to crack jokes.

Alternative answers:

- His/her determination for sure. He/she is so decisive and hardworking. His/ her lifestyle has instilled a lot of confidence in me.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: In what ways are you similar to your brother/sister?

Candidate: In fact, we are very similar in character, for example, we are both outgoing.

Alternative answers:

- We are very similar in personality, and have lots of things in common. For instance, we enjoy the same sort of sports and music.

- Your answer:**

Examiner: In what ways are you different from your brother/ sister?

Candidate: We are totally different in character, for example I'm outgoing whereas he/she tends to be more reserved.

Alternative answers:

- Um...we are rather different in appearance...um..., for example I have dark skin while he/she has fair skin, and also he/she is slightly taller than me.
- We are so unlike that no one would think we are brothers/sisters. For example, my brother/sister is very tall and athletic, but I am average-height.

- Your answer:**

Examiner: What does your brother/sister look like?

Candidate: Well, he/she is about my height, sort of thin, he/she has a full head of hair and...er... wears his/her hair up. Um...he/she still has a very youthful appearance for someone who is over fifty. Er... he/she has inherited my mother's good looks.

Alternative answers:

- My brother/sister is nearly as tall as I am, but a bit slimmer. He/she is so nice-looking, and has fine delicate features; round and smiling face. He/she is a carbon copy of my mother!

- My brother/sister and I look very similar...er... there's a striking resemblance. He/she is medium height...er... has straight black hair and brown eyes. We are so alike that people often get us muddled up; like two peas in a pod!
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How do you usually help your family members with housework? (How is housework usually shared in your family?)

Candidate: I usually help my wife with the housework and the children with their school assignments.

Alternative answers:

- To help my parents, I usually do the shopping and ...er... household errands.
- I do the cooking ...um... ironing and so on.
- I usually take care of the household affairs by doing the shopping.
- Although responsibilities have been relatively divided in our home. We willingly help one another. I mean there is great sense of cooperation in my family. For example, everyone helps with the washing up.

- Your answer:**

Examiner: Who does most of the shopping in your family?

Candidate: Er...my mother, she usually does most of the shopping, but my father and I do some shopping from time to time.

Alternative answers:

- I usually do the shopping myself.

- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you like being an only child?

Candidate: Um... not really, I think I would be happier if I had brothers or sisters, you know, sometimes I feel lonely.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, why not! Perhaps the reason is that I get all my parents' attention. When you're an only child, you'll be the apple of your parents' eyes!

- Your answer:**

Examiner: What would you like best about living in an extended family?

Candidate: Well, the best thing that I like about living in a large family is enjoying family gatherings, um... you never feel lonely at all because there is always lots of interaction.

Alternative answers:

- I would say feeling secure, being supported and sympathised.

- Your answer:**

Examiner: How often do you see your family?

Candidate: If you mean my immediate family, pretty frequently; three or four times a week. But if you mean my extended family, not very often; maybe once or twice a month.

Alternative answers:

- Um...roughly once a month. It's a matter of distance.
- Actually, I live with them. Being with my family gives me a wonderful sense of well-being.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How often do you have a family get-together?

Candidate: Mainly on holidays.

Alternative answers:

- Fairly regularly; at weekends.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Are you happy with you married life?

Candidate: Yes, very much. I have a good partner and feel truly blessed with my family life.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, indeed. I have a good life and owe it all to my wife/ husband.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you think you are compatible with your wife/husband? (Why do you think so?)

Candidate: Yes, absolutely. We have a lot of things in common; a well-matched couple. We enjoy the same things and have the same ideas, and generally were just made for each other.

Alternative answers:

- Um...like most married couples, we have had our own ups and downs, but now...um... we usually have the same perspectives and interests. Successful marriages don't occur, they are created. From my point of view, the real secret of any successful marriages is to 'forgive and forget'.
- Yes. I'm happy with my life in spite of the fact we sometimes get into trouble. In my view, 'give and take' is an important element of any successful marriages.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Would you like to live with your parents after you get married?

Candidate: Um... I don't think so...er... I prefer to stand on my own feet.

Alternative answers:

- No. I'd prefer to be independent...er..., you know, in my own self-contained place.
- Your answer:**

FAMILY
Questions

1. Do you live in a nuclear family or an extended family?
2. Do you have any siblings?
3. Have you got any twins brothers/ sisters?
4. How close and warm is your family?
5. How much do you remember from your grandparents?
6. How many aunts and uncles do you have? How many first cousins do you have?
7. Is there anyone in your family who is not related but considered part of the family any way?
8. Have you got any members of the family living with you?
9. How many children do you have/want to have? What hope or fears do you have for them?
10. Do you have any 'black sheep' in your family? (A person who is strongly disapproved)
11. What do you like best about your family?
12. How would you describe your relationship with your parents?
13. Do you think your parents understand you?
14. How was your relationship with your parents while you were growing up?
15. Did your mother or father ever tell you what their childhood was like?
16. How is your relationship with your siblings?
17. Do you share your personal secrets with your family?
18. Who do you usually speak to when you have a problem?
19. How much influence do you have on your family?
20. Who is the breadwinner in your family?
21. Who takes the greatest responsibility for bringing up the children in your family?
22. Who does most of the household chores in your family?
23. What job do you least enjoy doing in the house?
24. Do you have any particular rules in your family?
25. Do you enjoy spending time with your family?
26. How much time do you usually spend with the members of your family?
27. How often do you have a family get together?
28. Have you ever had a big family reunion? On what occasions does your family get together?
29. Which of your relatives do you spend the most time with?

30. Do you have much contact with your distant relatives? If so, when?
31. Are there any special times in the year that you spend with your relatives? Do you socialise with them at other times?
32. Tell me about one of your family's important traditions.
33. In what ways are you proud of your ancestry?
34. Do you have any in-laws? Do you get along well with them?
35. How did you meet your spouse and what attracted you?
36. What kind of person do you want to get married to?

FRIENDS
Interview

Examiner: Who is your best friend? (How would you describe him/her?)

Candidate: My best friend's name is [...]. We've known each other for about ten years. To describe him/her I should say he/she is so understanding and confidant...um... he/she also has a great sense of humour...er... so lively and full of fun; always running around and laughing.

Alternative answers:

The name of my best friend is [...]. In fact, he/she's a distant cousin of mine. He/she is a true friend in all senses of the word. He/she is such a supportive person that I can always count on. You know, when a problem occurs, he/she is always ready to back me up.

Your answer:

Examiner: Why do you call this person your best friend?

Candidate: Because of his/her unique qualities. 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' He/she is really supportive and always willing to help me out when a problem comes up...um... he/she is such a caring person. I always treasure his/her friendship.

Alternative answers:

I regard him/her as my best friend because he/she is the kind of person you can always rely on. He/she is really and truly encouraging and helpful. I think very highly of him/her.

Your answer:

Examiner: Name three words that can be best used to describe your best friend.

Candidate: I would say 'inspiring', 'conscientious' and 'understanding'.

Alternative answers:

I would say 'outgoing', 'trustworthy' and 'thoughtful'.

Um... let me think. 'articulate', 'supportive' and 'cheerful'.

Well, I would think 'dignified', 'tactful' and 'perceptive'.

I think the best words would be 'loyal', 'bright'; and 'genuine'.

Maybe I should think for a few seconds. Er... 'energetic', 'lively' and 'full of life'.

It's an interesting question. Words like 'motivation', 'perseverance' and 'creativity' would best describe his /her personality.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you have a lot friend?

Candidate: Yes, quite a few. I have friends from all walks of life. Of course, some of them are only casual friends like my friends at work, but I also have some intimate friends.

Alternative answers:

Yes. You could say a load of friends! In general, I prefer to socialise with all people who are around me, that's why I have so many friends.

Er...not a lot, only a few friends. I prefer having a few close friends to having many causal friends. Perhaps, it is because of my personality type.

Your answer:

Examiner: In your free time, would you prefer to be alone or to be with friends?

Candidate: I tend to be with my friends. At work, I spend most of my time alone in my office, so after work, I enjoy the company of my friends. I often invite my friends over, we chat the whole evening. I wish I had a larger circle of friends.

Alternative answers:

It depends, for example, sometimes I prefer to be with my friends and sometimes I just want to relax without anyone disturbing me.

Your answer:

Examiner: What does friendship mean to you?

Candidate: In a word, 'trust'.

Alternative answers:

Friendship means a lot to me. I feel a good friendship is a blessing and a gift from God. Truly good friends are hard to find, harder to leave, and impossible to forget.

I can hardly define the word 'friendship' as it goes further than a simple sentence, but the only thing that I can say is that it is the source of inspiration, affection and encouragement.

A good friendship is priceless. It is a lifelong, and worthwhile job. It is truly the basis of any good relationship. It can be defined as a harmonious relationship between two people.

To me, friendship is a sweet responsibility; never an opportunity.

True friends are like diamonds, precious and rare. False friends are like autumn leaves found everywhere.

A mutual relationship. Within a good friendship, we feel totally free. There is no need to pretend anything because we know we are accepted as we are.

Your answer:

Examiner: If you had to choose three words to describe your roommate, what would you say?

Candidate: Well, it is a difficult question...er...I would say 'sociable', 'considerate' and 'helpful'.

Alternative answers:

I would think 'diligent', 'agreeable' and a little 'bookish'!

Let me think 'independent-minded', 'introspective' and has a 'competitive spirit'.

Your answer:

FRIENDS

Questions

1. In general, what are friends for?
2. Talk about your best friend. How long have you known him/her?
3. How did you get acquainted with each other?
4. What makes this friend closer than your other friends?
5. What do you like best about your friendship?
6. What are some of the ways your best friend has influenced your life in a positive way?
7. What are your expectations of your friend?
8. What qualities help you to have good relationships with your friends?
9. In what ways are your friends important to you?
10. What influence do you have over your friends?
11. How do you choose your friends?
12. What kind of people do you make friends with?
13. Are your friends mostly your age or from different ages? (Why?)
14. Have you got many friends? Are they casual acquaintances or close friends?
15. Is the time you spend with your friends as much as the time you spend with your family?
16. Do you usually see your friends during the week or at the weekends?
17. What kind of things do you and your friends like to do together?
18. Did your friends ever get you in trouble when you were younger?
19. Have you remained friends with people from your childhood?
20. What is your longest friendship that you have had?
21. What do you do to maintain a friendship?
22. Talk about a friend you used to have, but now you have lost touch with.
23. Do you think it is better to have a large group of friends or a few close friends?
24. Do you have any English speaking friends?
25. Have you got any long distance friends? How do you keep in touch with your pen pals?

HOME
Interview

Examiner: Can you describe your home?

Candidate: I live on the top floor of a building. It's quite small; about sixty square metres. It has one bed room and a small living room. Everyone says it's too small but I think it's just the right size for me.

Alternative answers:

- Well, we have a two-roomed flat... um... two bedrooms and a small sitting room overlooking the yard. In spite of being small, I think it is very cosy and convenient.
- Our flat is medium-sized. Um... we have two bedrooms, a study and a living room.
- We live in a flat in the old section of the city. It was once a three-story house that was converted into several flats. Now ten families live in our building. We live on the third floor. We have three bedrooms...um...the spare bedroom also serves as a study. There is a large living room and a kitchen with a small balcony overlooking a street.
- Our flat is kind of small for four people. Its about sixty meters. Of course, we are used to it. We share a garden with other residents in the block.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What is your favourite room?

Candidate: My favourite room would have to be our sitting room. Since it is north-facing, it is brighter than the other rooms. Secondly, the balcony of our living room overlooking a beautiful flower bed full of climbing roses.

Alternative answers:

- It would have to be our living room...um... because I have tried to create an inviting atmosphere by using different combination of colours. It is so lively, and tastefully-decorated. I always try to keep it neat and tidy.
- Probably our living room. Because we often gather together there, after we come home from work.
- Our family room. It's a comfortable and well-lit room with a pleasing décor. It's traditional-looking with lots of antique furniture. There is a rocking chair in the corner of the room.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Describe your sitting room.

Candidate: Well, It's L-shaped, quite spacious and airy. It is so bright and we get a lot of sunlight; there are windows on two sides of the room. There is a fireplace in the corner of the room and wallpaper is matched with the furnishings. We have a TV, sofa ...um...and bookcase in our sitting room.

Alternative answers:

- We have a rug, a set of chairs and a dinner table and a TV set there. Er...the floor of our sitting room covered with fitted carpet. It's not very large, I like it though.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Where do you live?

Candidate: Well, that is not so easy to answer...er...during the weekdays I live in the dormitory of my university, but over the weekends, I live with my parents in a small town called [...]. At present, I really do not know which one to call my home.

Alternative answers:

- At present, I am sharing an apartment with a couple of friends. It is in a city called [...]. Er...it has three rooms; one of the rooms is mine.
- I live on the outskirts of [...], a city close to [...] city...er... it's just 30 kilometres west of [...] city.
- I live in an area called [...]; a densely populated area of the town.

Your answer:

Examiner: What do you like best about the place you are living?

Candidate: Er...its location. Our flat is very well-located. We have easy access to most major motorways.

Alternative answers:

- Its green space for sure. I live in a house overlooking a large garden. It has made our home so beautiful.
- Its location. It's perfectly situated between two main streets called [...] and [...] so there are lots of stylish shops and boutiques close to our home.

Your answer:

Examiner: How far is your home from your workplace?

Candidate: We live in one of the suburbs of the city. My workplace is about ten kilometres away from my home. It usually takes me about half an hour or so to get to my work.

Alternative answers:

- My home is quite close to my workplace. I can walk there in about ten minutes.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What would you like to change in your home?

Candidate: Well, I would like to do up our sitting room. I think the walls need painting...er... and if I can afford, I'll refit the kitchen, change the cabinets and have the floor tiled. Now it's in poor condition.

Alternative answers:

- I would like to redecorate our guestroom and use livelier colours.
- I think I should rearrange the furniture in the sitting room. 'variety is the spice of life.'
- I would certainly enlarge our sitting room. That's kind of small.
- Adding an extension to our living room to remodel my home, I guess. Fortunately, there is room for that.

Your answer:

Examiner: Would you prefer living in a house or a flat?

Candidate: On balance, living in a flat is more convenient and secure. On the other hand, the maintenance costs of having a house are usually higher.

Alternative answers:

Although most apartments in big cities enjoy modern facilities, I still prefer living in a house. In my opinion, house-living provides more comfort and independence. Secondly, one of the common problems of flat-living is that not all residents of flats consider the rights of other neighbours.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is the most important feature that you consider when you choose a house or apartment?

Candidate: Well, a house should basically meet the personal needs of the owner. To me, its facilities are the most important of all.

Alternative answers:

Well, personally speaking, price is the most important aspect, however I consider the things like age, size...um... style and location.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you live with your parents?

Candidate: Actually, I used to, but now, I'm living on my own.

Alternative answers:

Yes, I do. I live with my parents.

Your answer:

Examiner: Describe your dream house.

Candidate: Er...let me think, the only thing that comes to my mind is that it would be somewhere on a hillside overlooking a beautiful lake with lots of rooms. The window of the sitting room would be like a framed painting.

Alternative answers:

Um... If I could choose my dream home, I would say somewhere out of town with a good climate. It would be quite roomy, with a large yard and the view of mountains; a place remote from the noisy cities where you can experience the beauty of nature. Er...I can't think of anything else now.

Well, it should be a rambling, well-decorated and stylish penthouse with good facilities in a quiet residential area.

Of course, I believe home is where the heart is. Er...to describe my dream house, I should say a country house in an elevated position, overlooking a lake.

Your answer:

HOME
Questions

1. How many rooms are there in your apartment/house?
2. What do you consider to be the most important room in your home?
3. Does your home have a yard? If yes, what is it like?

4. Which room do you spend most of your time in?
5. Do you like the place where you live?
6. How long have you lived there?
7. How long do you expect to continue living there?
8. Where do you think you will be living five years from now?
9. Describe a (an imaginary) room that you would like to spend time in.

NEIGHBOURHOOD
Interview

Examiner: Describe your neighbourhood.

Candidate: I live in a quiet neighbourhood in the north of [...] city. Fortunately, there are plenty of public facilities in our neighbourhood, such as parks...er...cultural centres and libraries.

Alternative answers:

- I live in [...] city. Even though it is a very large city, we live in a part that is like a small village. We know everyone there. There is a very large park just in front our home...um...there is a bus stop so we can easily go anywhere in the city.
- I live in a neighbourhood which is quite close to the city centre. It's so convenient for shopping. There are many shops, restaurants and a variety of businesses.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How long have you lived there?

Candidate: I have lived there since I was ten...um... for about eighteen years.

Alternative answers:

- I have lived there since 2003.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Have you noticed a lot of changes during that time?

Candidate: Yes, I have witnessed lots of changes; beyond recognition. It's a much nicer place to live now than it used to be. Also, over the last few years, the municipality of our city has planted trees everywhere. It's much greener now. Above all, the transport facilities of our area have been considerably developed.

Alternative answers:

- Not really, unfortunately, our neighbourhood has been kind of overlooked.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you like the place where you live?

Candidate: Absolutely, the main reason is that it is right in the heart of the city and whatever I need is just outside the door.

Alternative answers:

Oh, sure. We live in a quiet neighbourhood, there is no noise at all, more importantly, neighbours are very nice and friendly.

Um...not very much, the reason is that, unfortunately some of our neighbours are inconsiderate and noisy.

Your answer:

Examiner: What do you think your neighbourhood/area is missing?

Candidate: Um... a community centre, I think.

Alternative answers:

Er...a medical centre, unfortunately, there's no hospital in the immediate vicinity.

Your answer:

Examiner: What are your neighbours like?

Candidate: We have good neighbours. Most of them look out for each other and are always willing to help. In other words, there is a sense of belonging in our neighbourhood.

Alternative answers:

Generally speaking, the people who are living in our building are warm and friendly.

Noisy, gossipy and selfish. With neighbours like that who needs enemies!

Your answer:

Examiner: How would you describe a good neighbour?

Candidate: In my opinion, a good neighbour respects the rights of other neighbours and possibly makes contributions to the development of the neighbourhood.

Alternative answers:

To my view, a good neighbour is helpful, considerate and caring.

Your answer:

NEIGHBOURHOOD
Questions

1. What do you like best about your neighbourhood?
2. How do you think your neighbourhood could be improved?
3. How safe is your neighbourhood compared with other areas?
4. What do you like best about your neighbourhood?
5. Is there anything that you don't like about your neighbourhood?
6. How do you think your neighbourhood could be improved?
7. Can you describe the neighbourhood you grew up in?

HOLIDAY
Interview

Examiner: Describe a tourist attraction/holiday resort/ landmark/ traditional market/ park/street/ stadium/ climbing trail in your country. (What is it famous for? Explain.)

Candidate: Mashad, a holy city in the north east of Iran. Its name literally means 'place of martyrdom'. The city is blessed and...er... notably known as the resting place of Imam Reza (Peace be upon him). Every year, millions of people come from near and far to go on a pilgrimage to Imam Reza's shrine. You can absolutely experience a great spiritual journey.

Alternative answers:

- I would like to talk about Esfahan (city); one the most important tourist centres in Iran. It is famous for its unique architecture and considered as the home of traditional arts. There are many absolutely wonderful examples of Iranian handicrafts; the best silverware and embroidery are made there. Er... there are many tourist attractions in this city. Visitors come from quite long distances to do sightseeing. You can hardly save time to rest while you are there!...er... there are so many places of interest. One of the most famous picturesque places of this city is called 'Siyoseh-pol', you know, it is a bridge, made of a series of 33 arches. It's definitely a sightseer's paradise.
- Shiraz. It is certainly one the most attractive cities in my country. You know, a delightful city in the south west of Iran. It's also known as the city of poetry; Shiraz is the birthplace and resting place of the great Persian poets, Saadi and Hafez. In a word, it is a city full of culture and history.
- Persepolis; a historical site from the Achaemenid period, situated near Shiraz (city). You can see many splendid monuments, amazing columns and breathtaking stone carvings. It's absolutely a great place to visit.
- Bam city, an ancient mud-walled citadel in Kerman province; a major tourist attraction in Iran. Unfortunately the tragic earthquake which broke out in 2003 destroyed many parts of this mud structure. Now, it's is being rebuilt and restored. Visiting Bam isn't just about looking at a mud brick city; it is also about observing history, culture and ancient lifestyle of a city. It's definitely worth visiting.
- Ali Sadr Cave, an amazing natural water cave. As far as I know, it's located about hundred kilometres north of Hamedan (city). The cave has a river flowing through it. The water is crystal clear. Most of the trip is done by boat. Er...only some parts of the cave corridors have been discovered, it's stunningly beautiful.
- Of course, I think every city has a lot to offer, but if I had only one choice I would choose Yazd (city); an ancient city in the centre of Iran. It's called the city of 'wind catchers' or 'wind towers'; a structure built to create natural ventilation in buildings. They are usually seen in various designs, such as square and octagon and other shapes....er...impressively beautiful. Well, the people of this city are so hospitable and welcoming. Yazd is a beautiful city that no visitor should miss.
- That's the mausoleum of Ebn Sina (Avicenna) in Hamedan (city), a genius Iranian scholar, philosopher, physician, astronomer and mathematician. It attracts numerous visitors each year. This monumental towering structure has great architecture; so impressive and unique. There is an exhibition and a library with a number of manuscripts about his life and his works in the building. I'm sure you'll have an unforgettable memory.

- I'd like to talk about the Traditional Bazaar of Tehran (city); the focal point of the city. It's a great place to stroll through and shop around; there are lots of shopping opportunities in that market. The best way to explore the Bazaar of Tehran is simply to wander its labyrinth of streets and alleys. Its architecture rooted in Iranian lifestyle. You know, it's more like a maze...um...you should be careful not to get lost. It is said that if you wait long enough there, you'll meet everyone you've ever known!
- Yes. The bazaar of Tabriz (city) located in the city centre and considered as an important place for commerce. It consists of some sub-bazaars or traditional markets in various fields including the bazaar for gold and jewellery, shoe bazaar...er...carpets and many other businesses for other goods.
- 'Azadi sport complex'. It is located in the west part of Tehran (city) and has a seating capacity of 100,000 spectators. Most of the top matches of Iranian leagues are held there.
- Well, 'Azadi square'. Let me explain, it is in the west of Tehran ...er...and is the first landmark that visitors come across when arriving from the Mehrabad airport. This structure has a beautiful exterior; made of white marble and....um... is very tall, maybe forty metres high or so. Its architecture has become an icon for Tehran (city).
- 'Milad Tower'...um... it is situated in the north west of Tehran and can be easily seen from anywhere in the city. It's strikingly beautiful especially at nights. As far as I know, it is the world's fourth tallest free standing structure.
- There is a very large forest park located just outside Tehran called 'Chitgar'. It has hiking and cycling facilities....um... It has a purifying effect on the air quality of Tehran (city) too.
- I'd like to talk about 'Valiasre Avenue'; the longest street in the Middle-East as far as I know. It is a tree-lined street which runs from south to north and divides Tehran (city) into western and eastern parts. It's the hub of many business activities. There are numerous shops, cool restaurants, parks and cultural centres situated along this avenue.
- There is a very popular climbing path in Tehran (city) called 'Tochal'. The trail is divided into seven stations. On Fridays, you see lots of people walking, mountain climbing or using the cabin car. What I like most about 'Tochal' is the panoramic views of Tehran (city). The views are absolutely spectacular. Er... you can enjoy the mountain air and the scenery. As far as I know Tochal is the closest ski resort to Tehran. I'd recommend anyone to go to there.
- Darband is a great mountain resort. The trail is usually crowded at weekends. The path is lined with cafes, tea houses, drink stalls selling things...er... goodies like, tamarind, dried fruit, fresh raspberries, cranberries, mulberries and so on. You can enjoy its fresh and unspoiled air in all four seasons.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What do you like most about traveling?

Candidate: Visiting new places. Traveling to different places is one thing, exploring these places is quite another. It's always thrilling to get to know new and exotic places.

Alternative answers:

- I would say visiting different places and meeting new people. These are the things I'd definitely be fascinated by.
- What I like most about traveling is visiting new places and trying new foods. It can be both exciting and pleasurable.
- Architecture is something I'd be enthusiastic about. Looking at buildings is one of my favourite things to do in a new city.
- Its relaxation. I have a busy life. The only time I can really switch off is when I'm on vacation.

- Exploring new places, especially on foot and poking around in museums, stores and restaurants.
- To me, the most interesting thing about traveling is learning how people in other cultures live and think. Traveling to other places is always a priceless opportunity which promotes cross-cultural understanding.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What kind of holiday do you like best? (Why?)

Candidate: I like sightseeing a lot because it gives me an opportunity to get acquainted with the history and culture of other cities and countries.

Alternative answers:

- I like camping a lot. To my view, camping is a great way to get close to nature.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Which would you prefer, traveling alone or traveling in a group?

Candidate: Traveling alone appeals to me more. Actually, I usually travel to get away from my daily routine ...er... you know, to get peace and quiet.

Alternative answers:

- The more the merrier. I much prefer traveling in a group, especially with good conversationalists where I can enjoy my journey and simply share the tasks.
- Traveling in a group sounds to be more fun, you know...er... with entertaining travelling companions.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What method of travel do you enjoy most? (Why?)

Candidate: I'd prefer traveling by train because in my country, trains are more comfortable to get some sleep at night, besides, traveling by train allows us to visit more places.

Alternative answers:

- Traveling by air. What I like most about traveling by air is getting to different places fast. I like sensing the sudden changes in social atmosphere and climate.
- By airplane, because it is the fastest and safest mode of transport.
- I adore traveling by ship. The reason is that it gives me a great feeling of serenity and peace of mind.
- Traveling by car can be a good choice provided that you travel with family members or close friends. One more point is that you can simply stop by to take rest or...er...enjoy the scenery.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: In your opinion how can we cope with culture shock? (What would you do to overcome culture shock?)

Candidate: A good way to deal with culture shock or clash of cultures is to avoid having negative stereotypes about other cultures.

Alternative answers:

- That's an interesting question. In my opinion, the best way to avoid culture shock is not to think about the cultural behaviour of your country as 'right' and other people's as 'wrong'.

HOLIDAY
Questions

1. Have you ever been abroad? If yes, how many countries have you been to?
2. If you could take a holiday anywhere in the world and money weren't a consideration, where would you go?
3. How often do you go on holidays? How long do you usually spend on holiday?
4. What is something you would never travel without?
5. Who is the person you would most like to go abroad with/ go on holiday with?
6. How would you overcome your homesickness if you lived abroad?
7. If you lived abroad, what would you be most nervous about?
8. Who is the first person you would call or e-mail after arriving somewhere new?
9. What do you find difficult about travelling?
10. Where did you spend your last holiday?
11. Would you feel insecure about travelling alone?
12. How many foreign countries, (if any) have you been to?
13. Describe your family's favourite holiday destination.
14. Describe your best/worst holiday.
15. Have you ever been in a difficult situation while travelling?
16. Would you rather visit foreign countries or travel within your own country?
17. Talk about the most beautiful place that you have ever been to.
18. Would you prefer to go to a place where there are a lot of people or to a place where there are few people?
19. Talk about your favourite holiday resort or picnic spot.
20. What do you usually do when you are on journey/ picnic?
21. Have you ever gone backpacking?
22. Do you prefer summer holidays or winter holidays?
23. Would you prefer to stay at a hotel or camp while on holiday? Why?
24. Which one would you prefer, one long holiday or several short holidays in a year?
25. How do you like taking a self-catering holiday?
26. Do like tours organised by travel agencies? Have you ever taken a package holiday?
27. What is the most interesting gift or souvenir you bought while you were on a journey?

HOBBIES
Likes, Dislikes
Interview

Examiner: What do you usually do in your free time? (What is your favourite pastime/hobby?) (Why?)

Candidate: I'm so busy that I can hardly make any free time. If I ever had free time, I would probably do many different things to fill my spare time, including playing sports, listening to music and going out with my friends.

Alternative answers:

- Well, I have lots of interests, but I'm mainly interested in reading books.
- Well, I do a lot of things in my spare time, but mostly, I listen to music; classical music. It puts me in a good mood.
- I'm an avid reader. I spend my free time catching up on studying my university books. In my view, it's important to spend time productively.
- Well, I am fond of photography, especially landscape photos. It's great fun.
- My favourite hobby is painting. I love colours and I do some oil and watercolours in my free time. It's a hobby that I get absolutely engrossed in. I usually lose track of time and paint for hours. I particularly like to do landscape. It's great to be able to capture a scenery on your canvas.
- I usually do crossword puzzles in my free time. Mental activities help sharpen memory.
- I do various things in my spare time, but cooking is my passion. I took a cooking class just two months ago.
- To be honest, all my friends say that I'm a real 'mouse potato', perhaps I am. But you can call me a 'movie buff' too. I spend lots of time surfing the internet looking for film reviews.
- I love hiking. I belong to a hiking group we go to different places almost every weekend. It's not an expensive leisure activity, and you don't need much equipment for it, all you need is a pair of hiking boots and strong legs for walking. It's a great way to keep fit and healthy in this way.
- I go rock climbing for fun. I love its challenge. It's thrilling.
- I have itchy feet; just want to travel to different places. You can always learn a lot when travelling.
- I usually go camping with my friends if the spirit moves me. My favourite camping destination is an area which is amazingly lush and green, you know, camping allows me to get away from stress and preoccupations.
- I love anything that involves being active and being outdoors. I usually go walking in my spare time. I think walking is a great way to decrease daily stress.
- I'm a bird of passage! a real outdoor type. I never ever stay indoors. I usually spend my free time outside enjoying the nature. Sometimes, I do need R&R (Rest & Recreation) to let my hair down!
- I have a fondness in gardening. Maybe you'd like to know why. To me, gardening is a great way to spend quality time...um... develop patience and relieve stress. It also gives me physical exercise, and I feel rejuvenated while gardening.
- I'm a real fitness freak. I go to the gym to work out almost everyday. I do different kinds of exercise. It refreshes my body and mind.

- I'm a fitness fanatic! I work out everyday for a couple of hours to keep fit and...er... keep my spirits up.
- I go running with friends on alternate days. In a job that is largely sedentary, it's important to stay physically healthy.
- Well, in winter, I usually go skiing, and in summer, I tend to go outdoor swimming, such leisure activities help us cope with mechanical life.
- I'm a keen swimmer. I love swimming and lazing by the pool. It's so relaxing.
- I'm crazy about skiing! In fact, I'm a ski instructor and give lessons. I first went with my father when I was ten years old and I've been skiing ever since. I'd recommend anyone to go for it.
- Well, I'm very sporty, but my most favourite sport is table tennis. I would play everyday if I could, but...well...I usually end up playing about once or twice a week.
- In my spare time, I participate in community service activities. It helps me meet people from all walks of life, thereby help to develop my interpersonal skills.
- I'd rather indoor hobbies like doing crosswords, playing chess and so on. You know, doing such things help me concentrate better.
- I am keen on DIY activities (Do it yourself). I love repairing, decorating and things of the same kind. I think it is a very good hobby for those who want to make the best use of their time.
- I love playing the piano. I really do. I'm pretty good at it. I can pick up a tune instantly on the piano. Playing the piano gives me a sense of peace.
- There is no hard and fast rule on how I spend my leisure time or weekends. I do things as they come. Sometime I go out with my friends, and sometimes I just flip through magazines to fill my free time.
- I'm into collecting antique furniture in a big way. In fact, my collection is my most treasured possession. I'm even thinking of turning it into my job. It would be quite a lucrative business.
- I collect coins for pleasure. To me, coin collecting is a great way to learn about history and culture of other countries.
- I really take pleasure in collecting stamps. You know, I took up this hobby when I was a school student. Um...in a word, my stamp collection is my pride and joy. For me, it brings back lots of good memories.
- I'm a philatelist. I've been collecting stamps for five years. I also collect postcards and coins from all over the world. I've made load of new friends through this hobby.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Why have you chosen stamp collecting as your hobby?

Candidate: Stamp collecting is a hobby which provides enjoyment and education. When you collect stamps, you can learn more about the world, one more point is that you can meet new friends through your hobby. It also helps me have a common interest with others. Most importantly, this hobby teaches me some sort of self-discipline....er... and how to be organised.

Alternative answers:

- I consider stamps as works of art; colourful, well-printed and well-designed. Stamp collecting is a good way to increase general information about other countries.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Do you belong to a health club?

Candidate: Yes, I do. I am a member of a health club. I go there every other day.

Alternative answers:

Not at present, actually...um... my health club membership is up. I should renew my subscription.

Your answer:

Examiner: What was your childhood hobby?

Candidate: Well, I used to paint. Actually, I still do. I have some paintings in a gallery right now.

Alternative answers:

I used to collect stamps when I was a kid.

Your answer:

Examiner: Did you have a favourite game when you were a child?

Candidate: Sure, I did. My favourite game was chess. My grandfather taught me how to play. In my view, childhood is the most formative period of life.

Alternative answers:

Oh, sure. I was very naughty when I was a kid; a ball of fire, really. I was fond of playing hide and seek. It was always a lot of fun. My friends and I used to play almost every day.

Yes. I have vivid memories from my childhood. I used to play...er... board games, yo-yo and...er.... kite-flying.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like visiting art galleries? (Why/ not?)

Candidate: Yes, to a great extent. I'm a real art lover. From my perspective, museums have an important role in preserving our historical heritage.

Alternative answers:

Yes, especially painting exhibitions. 'A picture is worth a thousand words.'

Yes, a lot. They are certainly of cultural value. But I rarely go to such places these days. I'm more involved with university exams.

Your answer:

Examiner: How often do you go to an amusement park?

Candidate: I'm not sure. Um...once in six months or so.

Alternative answers:

Almost never. Unfortunately, I'm too busy with my work.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like going to amusement parks? (Why /not?)

Candidate: Yes, a lot. In my opinion, theme parks provide fun and thrills for all members of family. Moreover, such places promote family outings.

Alternative answers:

Very occasionally. Once a year, maybe.

No, I don't. You know, such places are usually crowded. I'd much prefer natural places...er... where I can enjoy the scenic beauty.

Your answer:

Examiner: How often do you go to the cinema?

Candidate: I'm a real cinema-goer. Maybe six times in a month. I usually follow the latest films.

Alternative answers:

Not very often. Only when my favourite actors play lead roles.

Pretty often. Four times or so in a month.

I go to the cinema whenever I can. It depends whether there's something worth watching or not. I'm quite picky about what to see.

Your answer:

Examiner: When did you last go to the cinema?

Candidate: Pretty recently; just a few days ago.

Alternative answers:

Three months ago, I guess.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like watching films? (Why /not?)

Candidate: Yes, I do, especially, romance films.

Alternative answers:

Um... It usually depends on the type of the film.

Your answer:

Examiner: What kinds of films do you like?

Candidate: I am very keen on comedy films. Most of them are amusing and hilarious.

Alternative answers:

I particularly like action films because most of them are dramatic and gripping. You know, action-packed films are full of adventure and exciting events.

I tend to go for horror films, especially the films directed by [...]; you know, a director of considerable merit.

I am very much fascinated by comedies. First of all, most comedies are great fun. Secondly, they seldom have violent scenes, above all, comedies often contain brilliant acting by famous actors.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like science fiction films? (Why /not?)

Candidate: Not really, because of the excessive special effects which are usually used in such films and also the plots are usually overdramatic.

Alternative answers:

Oh, of course, such films usually increase imagination power.

Your answer:

Examiner: What sort of television programmes do you like watching? (Why?)

Candidate: I like sitcoms a lot because they are usually humorous and entertaining.

Alternative answers:

- I like soaps. Most of them are good fun.
- I tend to watch documentary programmes. The reason is that, most documentaries are educational and often have items about nature. In other words, there is always something new to be learned.
- My favourite type of TV programme is documentaries because I usually learn a great deal about different subjects. For example, when you watch a programme related to animals, you can learn about their habitats, survival and that sort of thing. I don't usually miss them.
- Almost all types of TV programmes, but mainly news. I usually keep up with world affairs by watching news.
- Reality TV shows. They aren't scenario-based. You can see natural scenes and behaviour. My favourite programme is [...]; a top-rated TV show.
- I usually follow the news. I also enjoy round-table talks.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like listening to music?

Candidate: Yes, music means a lot to me. I enjoy almost all types of music. I can't imagine what my life would be like without music. Music always brings comfort and pleasure to us.

Alternative answers:

- It depends on the type of the music. I particularly like classical music. I have a large collection of classical CDs.
- Yes, I do. In fact, a love of music runs in our family.
- Yeah, it helps me unwind after a busy day.
- Your answer:

Examiner: What kind of music do you enjoy most?

Candidate: Well, I usually listen to traditional music. I don't think there is any other type of music that has such soothing melodies. The lyrics are usually deep and meaningful.

Alternative answers:

- I like pop music very much. The reason is that pop music is usually lively and makes me feel more energetic.
- Well, I like almost all types of music, but I don't care for traditional music. It makes me feel bored or something. I guess classical music is my favourite.
- Oh, sure, I am really into music, particularly classical music. To my mind, classical music is the most expressive type of music in terms of the range of feelings that it can convey; classical music usually has slow rhythm and pleasant melodies.
- In fact, I enjoy almost all kinds of music except loud and obnoxious music. These songs aren't really to my taste.
- Almost all types, except electronic music. To be frank, this type of music is not my cup of tea!
- I have very eclectic tastes in music; there isn't really one music style that I like. I tend to choose what to listen to, according to my mood. Sometime classical...er... and sometimes popular music.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Has your taste in music changed?

Candidate: Yes, to a great extent. I used to listen to folk music, now I'm more attracted to classical music. I have quite a few DVDs at home.

Alternative answers:

No, I don't think so. Classical music has always been my favourite type of music.

Your answer:

Examiner: Who is your favourite singer? (Why?)

Candidate: I'm a real admirer of [...]; a man of many talents. He is gifted with a superb singing voice. In my opinion, he is the most perfect singer in all aspects...um... music knowledge, voice flexibility, style of singing and ...um... stage performance. You know, his last album had huge success. I believe he deserves his reputation.

Alternative answers:

I am a big fan of [...]. He's blessed with a wonderful singing voice. I think he is perfectly able to convey all the emotions that are necessary in a performance of a song. His best-known song is [...]; a massive hit which was released last year in [...] album. He is regarded as a representative of the youth of his generation.

My favourite singer is [...]; a great singer with velvety voice. I love the texture of his voice. From my point of view, his style of singing is really emotional. His music has wide appeal. He has kept his fans enthralled with his voice for many years. All these years, the quality of his voice has never wavered; always sweet, always divine.

[...]. Although his music is sort of individualistic and may not appeal to everyone. I adore his style. I believe his music is an integration of tradition and new technology. One more point is that his knowledge of music is impressively extensive.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like reading? (Why /not?). (What kinds of books do you enjoy reading?)

Candidate: Oh, certainly. Reading is the best way to enhance our knowledge. It's very important from that point of view. I usually read [...] magazine, you know, a scientific magazine with a weekly circulation of over 10,000.

Alternative answers:

I enjoy reading quite a range of books, but mainly autobiography, the reason is that I just enjoy reading about famous people's lives, and the adventures they've got into. In fact, you get to know these people, their works and what they have done from another perspective, and sometimes it can be quite different from what you might hear about them by the media.

Yes, I do. I believe that all of us should devote enough time to reading. When you read books, you acquire new knowledge which in turn broadens your views on important matters.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you enjoy reading novels? (Why /not?)

Candidate: Yes, I do. The main reason is that I can usually get away from my daily grind by following the plot of the novel and getting involved in the characters and their dreams.

Alternative answers:

No, really. You know, most of them have too many characters and are very complicated to follow.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like reading fiction? (Why /not?)

Candidate: Yes, I do, especially poetry fiction. You can always find pithy and enlightening points in such books. They also enhance imagination.

Alternative answers:

Um...On a case by case basis. For example, I like the books written by [...]. He/she is simply a writer of great imagination and originality. His/her works are very highly regarded, and appeal to every taste.

Your answer:

HOBBIES
Likes, Dislikes
Questions

1. What activities do you like doing in your free time? (What are your interests outside your studies?)
2. How did you start doing this activity at first? How did you become interested in?
3. How often do you do this hobby?
4. Do you need any special equipment for it?
5. Do you belong to a club or an interest group related to this hobby/activity?
6. Who do you usually spend your spare time with?
7. What hobby would you take up if you had more time?
8. Would you prefer indoor hobbies or outdoor activities?
9. Is there any kind of entertainment you don't like?
10. Do you like leisure activities that require teamwork?
11. Have you given up anything you used to do in your free time?
12. What kind of hobbies and talents have you developed, either as a child or as an adult?
13. What kind of things did you enjoy doing as a kid?
14. Do you play any games? What games are you good at?
15. Who are your favourite sporting personalities?
16. What type of art do you appreciate most?
17. Do you enjoy watching films?
18. What is your all-time favourite film?
19. What is the latest film you have seen?
20. What are some of the good films you have recently seen?
21. Are there any kinds of films you dislike?
22. What is the scariest film you have ever seen?

23. What is the funniest film you have ever seen?

24. Do you like thrillers/ science fiction films/ horror films/ romance films?

25. Do you usually watch films at home or at the cinema?

26. Have you ever seen a stage play in a theatre?

27. What kind of TV programmes do you like watching? Think of documentaries, news, roundtable programmes, reality shows, chat shows, celebrity shows, game shows, soap opera and sitcoms. Why?

28. Who are your favourite TV personalities?

29. Give the name of your favourite novel, novelist/ book, author/ film, director/ drama, dramatist/ musical composition, composer/ painting, painter? Why?

30. Do you follow the latest entertainment news and gossips?

31. What kind of music do you enjoy most/ least?

32. Do you like country/ pop/ classical/ traditional music?

33. What is your all time favourite song?

34. When do you usually listen to music?

35. Can you play a musical instrument? If so, what and how well do you play?

36. What is your favourite musical instrument?

37. What are some good books that you have read?

38. What sort of things do you like reading? Think of scientific books, textbooks, historical books, novels, myths and legends, cookbooks, romance, news, magazines, tabloids, science fiction, horror and short stories.

39. What is the best book you have ever read?

40. What was the last book you read?

41. Which do you find more interesting, fiction books or non-fiction books?

42. Do you read newspapers? If so, which sections and how often? Think of sport news, foreign news, home news, reader's letter, editorial, classified ads, business and money news, reviews and advice columns.

43. Are you computer literate?

44. What do you usually use your computer for?

45. Do you like browsing the internet?

HOMETOWN
Interview

Examiner: Can you tell me something about your hometown? (What's it like? Explain.)

Candidate: I live in a small town located in the centre of my country. It is called [...]; a town full of colour and attractions. Although it is not very famous, it has many advantages that make it a great place to live in. There are plenty of things to do, for example, it has many cultural and recreational centres. [...] is a really lively place ...er... in all four seasons, the weather is pleasantly mild. July and August tend to be the busiest months. It's absolutely an amazing city to visit.

Alternative answers:

- I come from a fairly large city which is called [...]. It's quite multicultural. It is located hundred kilometres south of [...]...um... about two-hour journey by car or bus from the capital. Um...it is located in [...] province and has about five hundred thousand inhabitants. [...] is a modern manufacturing city. It has many machine, chemical and textile industries. Generally speaking, most people who live in my hometown enjoy a high standard of living. I love the city life of [...], it's full of bustle and variety; you never feel bored. About its climate, I should say it's quite cool in winter, but very warm in summer. Try to avoid taking your holiday during the busy peak tourist season. It's more crowded and expensive. If possible, come in the quieter off-peak period. Anyway, be sure to have plenty of time to explore and see the sights.

Your answer:

Examiner: What do you like best about your city/town/village?

Candidate: What I like most about my hometown is its efficient freeway network. There are a lot of motorways, flyovers, underpasses which make my city different from other cities.

Alternative answers:

- Its sense of space, my hometown is located in a delightful area, and is so spacious...um...the land is virgin, and everywhere is green. There is a great deal of natural beauty and a huge variety of plants and animals.
- There are so many things that I can mention, but the most important of all is its cultural sites. There are tons of cultural places and museums in the city where I live in...um...lots of things for people to do and be interested in. It's a lovely place; big enough to have everything and small enough to visit the whole city.
- What I like most about my hometown is its people. You know, there's a strong sense of community in our area. Everyone knows everyone else and that makes you feel very safe and comfortable.
- I love my hometown. It's my birthplace after all. I love its simplicity of life, the pace of life is pleasantly slow. No stress, no tension.
- Its lovely weather, especially in spring.
- Simply, the beauty of the countryside and friendliness of people.

Your answer:

Examiner: How would you describe the climate of your hometown?

Candidate: Broadly speaking, my hometown has moderate winters and hot summers.

Alternative answers:

- My hometown is warm in summer and cold and rainy in autumn and winter. The best time to visit my hometown is spring. You know, in spring, the weather is pleasant and the flowers are in full bloom all over the city. Um... it's neither warm nor cold.
- Generally speaking, [...] is depicted as a cold city. In winter, it usually goes below zero.
- My hometown has changeable weather. For example, in winter, temperature usually reaches 15 degrees, but at nights it falls as low as minus 5 degrees. Of course, we are used to this kind of climate.
- My hometown has a mild climate with a temperature of about 20 C in the hottest months and about 10 C in the coldest months. [...] never gets extremely hot or cold.

Your answer:

Examiner: What are the main crops in your region? Tell me about some of its agricultural products.

Candidate: In fact, in our region, many crops are grown. For example, one would find all kinds of vegetables in the fields of that area. In addition, almost all farmers have orchards. They grow different kinds of fruit, such as apples, pears and peaches.

Alternative answers:

- The people living in my hometown mainly cultivate rice and beans.

Your answer:

Examiner: What are the people like in your hometown?

Candidate: The people of my hometown have reputation for being warm-hearted and helpful.

Alternative answers:

- It's really difficult to generalise, broadly speaking, they are warm and friendly.
- Well, the people of my hometown are often perceived as being very hospitable and welcoming.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is the most important problem in your hometown/city?

Candidate: Air pollution. You know, most large cities have high levels of pollution, and my city is no exception. Unfortunately, it has been getting worse over the last decade.

Alternative answers:

- Traffic is the most critical problem in my hometown. The volume of traffic has increased in recent years and the incessant roar of vehicles makes the city centre an extremely noisy place. My city suffers from serious air pollution too. In view of the seriousness of these problems, effective measures must be taken before things get worse.
- Heavy traffic jams. Since my hometown is very spread out. It can sometimes take hours to go from one part of the city to another, especially, in rush hours, traffic is chaotic; the roads usually become congested and people get held up in traffic jams...um... [...] is one the most car-dependent cities in the world.

Your answer:

Examiner: Is there anything special that you don't like about your hometown/city?

Candidate: Yes, there is; its air pollution. It has caused many health problems in recent years.

I'd feel like a fish out of water! To put it in a nutshell, I'm not really a city person!

Alternative answers:

Um...its fickle climate. Sometimes it's so changeable that I don't know what to wear.

No, not really...um..., but many people don't like its heat and humidity in the summer.

Yes. Air pollution, it's a serious health hazard.

Your answer:

Examiner: Can you tell me a little about the transport in your hometown?

Candidate: Although my hometown relies heavily on private cars, it is fairly easy to get around. Public transport system is available at reasonable prices.

Alternative answers:

Public transport in my hometown mainly consists of private cars, trolley buses and taxis.

In my hometown, public transport is safe, reasonably-priced and relatively efficient.

There are all means of transport in my hometown, but people usually choose to travel by subway. Although the subway routes are limited, it is still known as the most convenient way of intercity travel. The subway fares are quite low-priced and environmentally-friendly compared with other modes of transportation.

In my hometown, the most significant mode of transportation in terms of the number of people carried is bus transport. There are four bus terminals which provide connections at low fares; however buses are usually crowded during rush hour.

Although all modes of transport exist in my hometown, transport is mainly road-based. Buses...er... and taxis are readily available. My hometown benefits from many highways.

Your answer:

Examiner: Is your hometown changing? (How has it changed over the last ten years?)/ (Is it a change for the better?)

Candidate: Yes, in many ways. It is greatly spreading and the population of my hometown is growing at an incredible speed.

Alternative answers:

Yes, in recent years, the population of my hometown has increased dramatically; my hometown has become much more congested and polluted.

Yes. Now, you can see many modern buildings which have made my hometown different from other cities.

Your answer:

HOMETOWN

Questions

1. Would you say your hometown is a good place to live in?
2. How long have you lived there?
3. What is the population of your hometown?
4. Is your hometown well-known for something? For example a building or a type of food.
5. What are the main economic resources in your hometown?
6. What is the average temperature in your hometown in the summer/ winter?
7. Does it much rain in your hometown?
8. What is the high season (the most popular with tourists) / low season (the least popular with tourists) in your hometown?
9. Can you describe the main geographical features of your hometown?
10. What are some things in your hometown that are part of history?
11. Describe a well-known building in your hometown.
12. What recreational facilities are available in your hometown?
13. Tell me about a popular form of public entertainment in your hometown.
14. Talk about the most crowded area in your city/ town.
15. Are there any local festivals/ traditions in your hometown?
16. What is people's favourite food in the region where you live?
17. How easy is it to travel around in your city?
18. What problems, if any, are there with public transport where you live?
19. Do traffic jams occur in your hometown or the city that you live?
20. If you could, how would you improve the public transport system of your city?
21. Is there any environmentally-friendly transport in your country?
22. Is there anything special that you don't like about your hometown?
23. What are the major social problems in your hometown?
24. What environmental problems do you think are most serious in your city?
25. What would be the best way for a visitor to get to know your city?
26. If you could change one important thing about your hometown, what would it be?

COUNTRY
Interview

Examiner: What is the population of your country?

Candidate: According to the latest census, approximately seventy million.

Alternative answers:

About seventy million.

Your answer:

Examiner: How would you describe the climate of your country?

Candidate: The climate of my country is very varied due to its geographical location and the differences in altitude. Generally speaking, there are usually four distinct seasons in all areas.

The climate of my country varies considerably depending on the area. You can see almost all types of climates in my country; hot, warm, dry, temperate....er... wet and cold.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is the most popular sport in your country? (Why?)

Candidate: Well, various kinds of sports are practised in my country, but I think football is the most popular of all. For one thing, it has numerous enthusiasts.

Alternative answers:

Wrestling is certainly the most popular sport in my country and often considered as the national sport...um... it's rooted in Iranian culture. In my country, wrestling is the symbol of power, bravery and sportsmanship.

Your answer:

Examiner: Who do you consider as the most influential writer or poet in your country? (Why?)

Candidate: I think the most prominent poet in the history of Iran's literature is Ferdowsi; an Iranian epic poet who has composed a brilliant masterpiece called 'Shahnameh', an enormous opus written in pure Persian. It includes numerous heroic and historical poems. In fact, it is known as the national identity of Persian language.

Alternative answers:

In my opinion, 'Hafez' has been the most eminent poet in the history of Persian literature. He is the creator of artwork named 'Divane Ghazaliat'. He is known as the greatest master of Persian lyrical poetry. His poems are impressively deep and pithy.

Saadi, a genius Iranian poet. He's recognised not only for the quality of his writing, but also for the depth of his social thoughts. His best known works are Bustan (The orchard) and Gulestan (The rose garden), containing numerous sweet and invaluable points. His elegantly phrased verses are still commonly used in conversation. His tomb has become something of a pilgrimage site.

Your answer:

Examiner: Can you describe a national festival of your country? Are there any traditions associated with it? Explain.

Candidate: The last night of the Persian month 'Azar' which is the longest night of year is called 'Yalda' and celebrated by Iranians. On this occasion, people usually stay awake until midnight and read poems. Different kinds of dried nuts and winter fruits are usually served. In Iranian culture, Yalda represents the victory of light over darkness.

Alternative answers:

- The 13th of the Persian month, 'Farvardin' - the last day of 'Norooz' holidays; you know, holidays celebrated for the coming of spring and new year, is celebrated by Iranians and called 'Sizdahbedar' which literally means 'avoid bad luck associated with the number 13'. On this day, Iranian families leave their homes and head for the countryside to have a family picnic. You know, 'Sizdahbedar' is one of the world's largest family outings and in Iranian calendar has been named 'the day of nature'; a day to respect the environment.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Talk about an important/ some handicrafts of your country. (Talk about the most important handicraft in your country.)

Candidate: The most important handicraft of my country which has a worldwide reputation is the industry of weaving carpets. In fact, the art of carpet weaving is deeply rooted in the culture and the customs of Iranians.

Alternative answers:

- In fact, there are many handicrafts which are made in my country, such as hand-woven textiles, embroidery and...er...mat-making.
- Well, there are a number of traditional arts which are created in my country, such as engraving, miniature painting and enamel work.
- Your answer:

COUNTRY
Questions

1. Which part of your country do most people live in?
2. Are there any areas in your country where very few people live?
3. What is the largest city in your country? What is it famous for?
4. How has the countryside changed in recent years in your country?
5. What are popular tourist destinations in your country?
6. Which area of your country attracts the most number of tourists?
7. If you had the choice, where would you choose to live in your country?
8. What difficulties would a foreigner have when he learns your native language?
9. How would you describe the economy of your country?
10. What are the main industries in your country?

11. What currency is used in your country?
12. What do you think of the health service in your country?
13. In terms of character, how would you describe the people of your country?
14. Are there any customs in your culture that you particularly like?
15. Are there any traditions in your culture that you don't agree with?
16. Describe a national garment from your country.
17. Do you have a large number of public holidays in your country?
18. What is the most popular holiday in your country?
19. What hobbies and interests are popular in your country?
20. In your country, what is the most popular hobby amongst people of your generation?
21. What kinds of music do most people listen in your country?
22. Is it easy to travel around your country?
23. How do people in your country usually travel on long journeys?
24. How have the methods of transport been improved in your country?
25. What are some problems with the transport system in your country?
26. When people from other countries think about your culture, what do they usually think of?
27. A friend wants to get to know your country and is planning a tour. What advice would you give about sightseeing, accommodation, travelling, eating out, shopping, things to bring and souvenirs to buy?
28. What is the most important thing your culture has given to the world?
29. If you were asked to send one thing representing your country to an international exhibition, what would you choose? Why?
30. Who are some famous artists in your country?
31. Who are some famous scientists in your country?
32. Describe how people entertain guests in your country.
33. What kinds of social events are most popular in your country?
34. Is there any traditional food from your country that you would recommend to eat?
35. How does the etiquette of eating together in your country differ from other countries?
36. Has your country changed much since you were a child?

HEALTH
Interview

Examiner: Do you have any specific diet?

Candidate: Yes, I think I do. I'm kind of vegetarian. My diet includes plenty of fruits and vegetables. And...um...I never eat junk foods. Unhealthy foods cause many health problems. To me, the healthiness of food is much more important than its taste.

Alternative answers:

- Um... sort of, since I am a bit overweight. I have to watch my weight and consume less red meat. I eat a lot more fish and vegetables. It's easy to make a plan for losing weight, but it's always much harder to carry it out!
- More or less. Although I like greasy food a lot, I usually eat plain and organic food. To stay healthy, we should take care of our eating habits.
- Yes, to a great extent. Let me explain, I suffer from high blood pressure that's why I should cut down on cholesterol, so I have stopped eating deep-fried foods and cut salt out of my diet. A good diet is beneficial to health.
- Yes, pretty much. Since I'm trying to put on weight, I have started eating more meat and dairy products. Sticking to a diet isn't always very easy.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How often do you go for medical check-ups?

Candidate: On a regular basis...er... once every six months.

Alternative answers:

- Every six months. Health is God's gift.
- Twice a year.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you like playing sport?

Candidate: Um... it depends on the type of sport. But generally, I am interested in outdoor sports.

Alternative answers:

- Oh, certainly. I like almost all sports except [...] and [...].
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How often do you exercise or play a sport?

Candidate: Three times a week. I usually either go walking or do aerobics.

Alternative answers:

- Almost everyday. I usually go to the gym of my university to work out. It's well-equipped...er... has a treadmill, rowing machine and...er...other things.
- Well, I've tried to make exercise a part of my daily routine. I go jogging everyday.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What is your favourite sport? (Why?)

Candidate: My favourite sport is mountain climbing. In my opinion, mountain climbing is a great way to increase overall concentration. Another reason is that it gives me an amazing feeling of accomplishment.

Alternative answers:

- I like swimming very much. Swimming is very relaxing, besides, it keeps me in shape. I am pretty good at it.
- Well, my favourite sport is karate. I have been doing it since I was ten.
- Well, I'm fond of football. First of all, it's so exciting. I mean the result of the match is almost always unpredictable, and secondly this sport demands speed, strength and teamwork.
- Cycling. I go cycling everyday. It's a good way to burn up body fat and calories.
- I am good at volleyball, basketball, tennis...er... running. I'm a bit of an all-rounder.
- Your answer:**

HEALTH
Questions

1. How healthy is your lifestyle? What do you do to stay healthy?
2. What kind of exercise do you do to keep fit?
3. How much do you weigh?
4. Do you think you need to put on weight/lose weight? What do you want to do gain weight/lose weight?
5. Have you ever tried to lose/ gain weight? If so, what motivated you to start a diet or physical activity? In what ways is your diet different from when you were a young child?
6. How many portions of fruit and vegetables do you eat everyday?
7. What is your favourite (summer/ winter) sport? What are the rules?
8. What sports are you good at?
9. Do you ever read articles which are about sport and health?
10. Do you take an active part in sports?
11. Talk about a sport you would like to learn.
12. What sports and games did you most enjoy playing when you were a child?
13. What sports do you enjoy watching?
14. What do you like about watching sports?
15. Are there any sports you don't like?

FOOD
Interview

Examiner: What is your favourite food? Tell me about its main ingredients.

Candidate: My favourite food is called 'Ghormehsabzi'; an Iranian stew which is served with rice. In Persian language, the word 'Ghormeh' is used to refer to diced meat and 'Saabzi' means vegetable. The main ingredients are a mixture of diced meat, beans, certain types of vegetables...er...dried lime, spice and salt.

Alternative answers:

- My favourite food is 'Baghali polo'; rice mixed with broad beans and vegetables served with meat.
- Well, my favourite food is called 'Fesenjoon'. You know, a stew of chicken or beef with ground walnut and pomegranate paste.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Are you good at cooking?

Candidate: I think I am. Actually, I took a cooking class just three weeks ago. I do the cooking almost every day.

Alternative answers:

- Pretty good. I enjoy trying out new recipes, and no one has complained yet!
- Not good. I've tried hard but it's no use. I have a pile of cookery books. I follow the instructions, but the result is almost always terrible!
- Not really, I don't have the time or the talent for cooking.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: When/ how often do you eat out?

Candidate: Well, mostly, at weekends when I don't feel like cooking.

Alternative answers:

- Once in a while. I much prefer home-made food, but not convenience food.

Your answer:

Examiner: Where do you usually eat out? (Why?)

Candidate: To dine, we usually go to [...]; it's a small restaurant with a homely atmosphere. It serves a wide variety of ethnic cuisine. I'd much prefer sit-down restaurants to fast-food restaurants.

Alternative answers:

- I usually go to [...]; a restaurant in downtown. It's a cheap and cheerful restaurant with great food. I don't like grand restaurants. It's not the expense, it's just that I don't feel at ease in them. The menus are so complicated that you don't know what to choose!
- I usually go to a specialty restaurant called [...]; an elegant restaurant in the city centre. The reason why I go to this place is that it offers quality foods at reasonable prices. It has an excellent atmosphere too.
- Your answer:**

FOOD
Questions

1. What kind of food do you like to eat?
2. What are some foods that you know are healthy for your body?
3. Are there any types of food which you should not eat too much of?
4. What is your favourite drink?
5. What type of snacks do you usually eat between meals?
6. What is your favourite starter?
7. What is your favourite dessert?
8. Do you like trying new foods?
9. What food today brings back your childhood memories?
10. Do you like ethnic foods? What country's food do you like most?
11. Do you like trying exotic foods?
12. What is the strangest food you have ever eaten/seen?
13. What are some kinds of food you never eat?
14. Do you ever eat unhealthy food? How do you feel about it?
15. Is there any food that you really dislike to eat?
16. Have you ever eaten something you didn't like? What was it?
17. Talk about a food or drink you used to dislike, but now you like.
18. Who do you usually have lunch /dinner with?
19. Is cooking a pleasure for you?
20. Do you usually cook your own meals?
21. How often do you eat takeaway food?
22. Do you prefer home-made food or food from restaurants? Why?
23. What kind of foods do you like to eat in restaurants?
24. What is the best restaurant you have ever been to?
25. How do you choose which restaurant to go?
26. What is your favourite fast food restaurant?
27. Do you worry about calories and fat content when you eat out?
28. If you lived abroad, what food would you miss from your home?
29. Do you think people's diets in your country are getting better or worse?

SHOPPING

Interview

Examiner: Where do you usually go to do your household shopping?

Candidate: I usually buy my household goods from a convenience store which is near my home. You could buy almost anything at reasonable prices. I don't have lots of money to burn!

Alternative answers:

- There is a small shop called [...] just near my home. In fact, it's a corner shop. You can find lots of locally-produced goods there.
- I usually do my shopping from a department store called [...]. It is so time-saving and convenient for shopping. Besides, the prices are usually lower in compared with other places; a lot cheaper. 'A penny saved is a penny earned.'
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Do you enjoy shopping for clothes?

Candidate: Oh, sure. To be perfectly honest, I'm a compulsive shopper! I love hanging out at the malls and seeing what they have to offer ...um... I usually pick up good bargains.

Alternative answers:

- Actually, shopping is one of my favourite pastimes. I think I'm a smart shopper. I know where to do my shopping to save money and time.
- Um...not really, because it usually takes me a lot of time to shop around, compare prices and make choices.
- No, I don't...um... I'm not much of a shopper! I find shopping a real chore. When I think of shopping, I think of all the crowds, all the difficult choices, and all the money that I have to spend.
- Yes, very much. I like buying expensive things. Sometimes, it's a good idea to let your heart rule your head.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: When you go shopping for clothes what influences your decision?

Candidate: Well, I would say style. I usually follow the latest trends. You know, in my job, being smartly-dressed is very important ...um...I am not a price-conscious shopper.

Alternative answers:

- Good question! I'd certainly say quality. It's always worthwhile to buy quality products.
- I would think brand. To me, 'money is no object'. Although famous brands tend to be more expensive, they are usually of higher quality; more durable and stylish...er... they are usually worth every penny!
- Price. I'm not a big spender! To me, we all need to save money for a rainy day.
- Your answer:**

SHOPPING

Questions

1. Are you a brand conscious shopper?
2. What are some the household things that you buy everyday?
3. Where do you usually go to do your household shopping?
4. What kind of small shops are there near where you are living?
5. Do you like shopping in the sales?
6. What kinds of shopping do you like most? Think of shopping at discount stores, shopping at department stores, television shopping, catalogue shopping, online shopping and shopping at a mall. Do you enjoy window-shopping and browsing around shops?
7. Do you know any one who is a shopaholic?
8. Have you ever bought anything from a catalogue or shopping website?
9. Have you ever bought something on impulse and then regretted it? If so, what was it? What made you buy it?
10. What is the best bargain that you have ever got?

COLOUR & SEASONS

Interview

Examiner: What is your favourite colour? (Why?)

Candidate: Well, my all-time favourite colour is yellow. You know, it symbolises the sun, what I mean to say is that it reminds me of energy and warmth.

Alternative answers:

- Well, green is my favourite colour. It is the symbol of nature, renewal of vegetation and...um...promise of new life.
- The colour that I like very much is light blue. The reason is that it makes me feel livelier. I think it suits me too.
- My favourite colour is red. It's a vibrant colour which symbolises affection. I often choose red clothes because wearing red lightens and brightens my mood.
- Well, my much-loved colour is white. Let me explain, 'w' for will, 'h' for hope, 'i' for initiative, 't' for thought and 'e' for enthusiasm.
- Red is a great colour. To me, the colour red stands for resistance, efficiency and diligence.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Is there a colour that you don't like?

Candidate: Er... yes, personally, I don't like dull colours, for example, grey makes me feel depressed or something.

Alternative answers:

Um... I can't say I don't like a particular colour, as each of them has its own features and beauty. But I can say my least favourite colour is purple.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do colours have some symbolic meaning in your country?

Candidate: Yes, they do. Some of them symbolise different concepts. For example, the colour black has a special meaning to us. To be more specific, at times of sadness and mourning, we use this colour to express our feelings.

Alternative answers:

Yes, they do. For example, in Iranian culture, the colour white conveys simplicity, purity and peace.

Yes, some of them do. For instance, the colour green signifies vitality, growth and freshness.

Your answer:

Examiner: Which of four seasons of the year appeals to you most?

Candidate: I adore the greenness and freshness of spring. I would like to call it 'the season of blossom'. In my opinion, spring is the loveliest season.

Alternative answers:

My favourite season is summer. What I like about this season is traveling, family holidays and different outdoor activities.

I would say summer. It's a time to regroup, relax and...er... catch up on all the things you've been putting off all the year.

I'm quite fascinated by autumn. I love the crisp mornings of this season. Autumn reminds me of red and gold leaves.

To my mind, winter is the most beautiful season. It usually reminds me of cleanliness, purity and of course, winter holidays.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do seasons represent symbolic messages in your country?

Candidate: In Iranian culture, spring symbolises new life and awakening, summer signifies cultivation and fruitfulness, autumn represents the celebration of harvest, and winter is the season of purity and whiteness.

Alternative answers:

Yes, they do. For instance, in my country spring conveys vitality and rebirth.

Your answer:

COLOUR & SEASONS

Questions

1. What do you like best about spring/ summer/ autumn/ winter?
2. What does spring/ summer/ autumn/ winter remind you? What season do you like least?
3. Are there any special traditions associated with different seasons in your country?
4. Describe the clothes that you usually wear. How important are clothes and fashion to you?
5. What kind of clothes do you feel most/least comfortable in?
6. What are some of the clothing styles that you used to wear when you were a child?

VOLUNTEER

Interview

Examiner: Have you ever done any volunteer work? (Why?)

Candidate: Yes, I have. Once I volunteered to help the victims of the earthquake broke out in Bam city; a historic city in Iran. I also contributed some money to the earthquake fund. It is always fulfilling to assist people who are in urgent need of help. You know, volunteer work gives me a sense of purpose.

Alternative answers:

- Actually, I belong to a non-profit organisation which assists the elderly that do not have the financial means to afford private hospitals. In my opinion, helping people is such rewarding work. You know, it gives me a sense of self-worth.
- Yes. I work in a charity which is run on a purely voluntary basis. Its mission is to raise money for the needy.
- Your answer:**

VOLUNTEER

Questions

1. Have you ever volunteered to help victims of a natural disaster? What did you do to help / contribute?
2. What do you like best about doing volunteer work?
3. What is the most difficult aspect of your volunteer work?

EDUCATION

Interview

Examiner: Can you tell me a little about your education?

Candidate: I have a BA in history. I graduated in 2001 from [...] University.

Alternative answers:

- I graduated from [...] University with a degree in law.
- I graduated in electrical engineering at [...] University.
- I majored in business management with a minor in insurance management. I received my BA just two months ago.
- I have a BA and graduated from [...] University in the major of English translation.
- I was accepted to [...] University two years ago. At present, I'm a university student and studying sociology.
- I'm currently studying at the University of [...] and will graduate with a degree in Economic.
- I hold a BSc degree in mechanical engineering from [...] University. I have recently applied for the University of [...].
- BA in English literature. I got my degree through a distance learning programme.
- Last year, I won a scholarship to study chemistry. Now, I am doing an undergraduate course in [...] University.
- I am an undergraduate student at [...] University.
- I attended the University of [...] from 2002 to 2006. I graduated with a degree in industrial management.
- I'm a third-year student at [...] University. I'm studying economics.
- I'm a postgraduate student and writing my master's thesis on Persian literature. By next month, I will have completed it.
- I have an MA in contemporary history. I'm studying for my doctorate.
- I have a high school diploma and hoping to go to university next year.

Your answer:

Examiner: What led you to choose your field of study?

Candidate: I think it suits my personality and strengths, for example, it has made me be more methodical.

Alternative answers:

- Well, I have always dreamed of becoming a graphic designer as I have always been good at designing. Now I feel my desire has been fulfilled.
- To tell the truth, when I chose this major I didn't have much information, I was more encouraged by my brother to major in psychology, now after six years, I'm quite convinced that I have made the right choice. That decision was a turning point in my life.
- I chose to study this major on one of my high school teachers' recommendation...um... a lifesaver in my academic life.
- My father pushed me into majoring in electrical engineering. Now, I find it a very practical major with lots of job opportunities.

- I majored in business administration with an emphasis in accounting and finance. I was drawn to that area of study because I always enjoyed dealing with numbers and people and felt that business would be best for me.
- Information technology was my major in university. The reason for selecting this was due to the considerable increase in the number of IT segments. It was also because I have always had a passion for computers since I was a child and that simply led me to this field.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like your major /studies? (Why?)

Candidate: Yes, very much. I really like the challenges of my studies and I'm really thrilled by what I've learned. It's great to know that I'm able to do something I never thought I was capable of. Learning new things is always fulfilling.

Alternative answers:

- Oh, sure. It's absolutely glamorous. I feel it has given me a new vision to life. Another reason is that it is so practical.
- Your answer:

Examiner: What course(s) do/did you find most interesting? (What were your favourite subjects at school?)

Candidate: I'm very interested in the courses which are related to maths. ... er... such courses are so practical and help us be able to think more analytically.

Alternative answers:

- The course that I really enjoyed was research method. It provided me with a broad overview of my field of study. It also helped me develop my ability to work as a team member.
- I found the course management principles very useful and interesting. I think it has helped me sharpen my analytical skills. It also helped me develop my confidence to come up with new ideas. As a result of this course, I feel more confident about tackling unfamiliar problems.
- My favourite courses have been the ones pertaining to my major; that is marketing. These classes have laid the groundwork for my career in marketing. They have also taught me skills ranging from communication to interacting with others.
- Maths and science were my favourite subjects at school. I also enjoyed learning physics. I passed all these subjects with flying colours!
- My favourite subjects were social sciences and history because they deal with the reality of society. There are always weighty matters to discuss.
- Your answer:

Examiner: What subject did you find most difficult to pass? What were your worst subjects at school? (How did you manage to learn/ pass it?)

Candidate: When I was a university student, I was weak in physics. Of course, with some help from some classmates and lots of hard work on my own, I was able to pass the course and became fairly good at it.

Alternative answers:

- To me, the most problematic subject was chemistry; it was just like a torture! You know, to pass the exam I had to memorise just a bunch of formulas without having a solid understanding of the concepts. With a bit of luck, I could pass the exam!

- Biology. It was like a nightmare! To pass the biology exams, I had to burn the midnight oil, you know, staying awake; studying and studying. I think I am not very good at memorising.
- When I was a senior at high school, I failed this exam twice. And finally, when I passed it, I felt like a star and was in seventh heaven!
- Er...maths. It was always a struggle to get the pass mark. The subject is of no interest to me at all.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Have you ever failed a lesson during your school years?

Candidate: Yep! To be honest, once, when I was in the second grade of high school. I couldn't get through the chemistry exam. It was all my fault. I didn't crack a book!

Alternative answers:

- Er...yes, as far as I remember. Once I couldn't pass the math exam when I was in high school. Admittedly, It was partly my own fault; I wasn't very prepared , but the exam was difficult too.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you think your present subjects are relevant to your major?

Candidate: Yes, most of them are. However, there are some subjects which aren't directly related to my major.

Alternative answers:

- Fortunately, our lecturers and some advisors from the relevant industries have designed our study material. I mean the people who are going to work for one day have the opportunity to tell the university what they think they should be taught.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you think your present subjects are practical?

Candidate: Yes, they are. Because we often use case studies in our classes and most of our university professors give us samples from real-life to examine and report on. The fact is that one can't fully understand a subject through rote learning.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, most of them are. However, there are subjects which are more theory-based.

Your answer:

Examiner: Does your university specialise in any particular subject?

Candidate: Yes, it does. My university is generally recognised for engineering majors.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, the university that I am studying at has a reputation for medical majors and is widely recognised by many medical centres around the world.

Your answer:

Examiner: Has your major helped you in your life?

Candidate: Yes, in many ways. Going to university has made a big difference to my life. It has helped me immensely in my personal life. For example...er... it has helped me a lot to learn and experience interpersonal and teamwork skills.

Alternative answers:

Yes, it has. I consider it as a turning point in my life. I've learned many individual skills, for instance, my university major has helped me be able to think more systematically.

Your answer:

Examiner: Why did you choose [...] University?

Candidate: I chose to attend [...] University because I got a scholarship, and...um... it is relatively close to my home.

Alternative answers:

I chose [...] because it has a great reputation, people are incredibly impressed when you say that you study at [...]. This was not the main reason however, in terms of the academic aspects, our university provides quality education and our teachers are so encouraging. For example, I have one to one tutorials fortnightly. Lastly, [...] is situated in one of the most exciting cities in the world.

Your answer:

Examiner: How do/did you like your university life?

Candidate: I absolutely love it. I live with three of my best friends, have a brilliant social life, enjoy my studies and love the city I'm living in. I don't think it can get much better.

Alternative answers:

I've met some wonderful people and I'm really enjoying myself. Coming to [...] University is not just about studying hard and getting a degree; it's also about developing and maturing as a person and taking advantage of a vast number of opportunities open to you.

Marvellous. It was a tremendous experience. Going to college helped me gain lots of confidence and made me become more independent.

Your answer:

Examiner: What did you like most about your university?

Candidate: I enjoyed many things about my university. It was a new challenge and an opportunity to expand my horizons both educationally and personally... er... the courses are varied and interesting and the lecturers genuinely want to help.

Alternative answers:

What I liked most about my university was the opportunity of being involved in extracurricular activities. It is a small campus that allows students to take responsibility, organise events and be a part of a planning team.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you have any professional certificates?

Candidate: Yes, I do. I have a certificate in computer programming from [...] University.

Alternative answers:

I have a diploma in nursing. I graduated in 2001 from [...] College. It is a well-known college which gives excellent training to students and medical staff.

Your answer:

Examiner: Tell me about your educational goals.

Candidate: One of my educational goals is studying for a master's degree in biology and eventually pursuing my doctorate. The idea is great on paper, but really hard to do.

Alternative answers:

- I'm planning to earn my degree in law, and eventually I would like to become a lawyer.
- I want to go to university, and major in architecture, no matter how hard it is.
- I'd like to obtain a postgraduate degree in civil engineering. I think such a qualification can open up many career opportunities for me.
- My goal is to become a psychologist, so I'll have to get a doctorate degree. Although I have a lot of years of study ahead of me I think I'm on the right track.
- I want to get my BA in the major of [...]. I believe having a degree at this level will benefit my future career. Um... I look forward to this opportunity to broaden my horizons and build up my skills and confidence.
- I'm considering several colleges to attend, but I haven't made up my mind yet.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you intend to continue your education abroad?

Candidate: Most probably, if things go according to plan, next year I'll be studying in [...] University. It's something that I'm really looking forward to.

Alternative answers:

- Of course, if I am lucky enough to get my student visa.

Your answer:

Examiner: Are there many graduates with the same expertise in your major?

Candidate: Yes, there are. And the number of them is on the increase...um... the job market is too competitive.

Alternative answers:

- Not so many, since it has been recently introduced, not many people are studying this major.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you still remember your schooldays?

Candidate: That's for sure. School days were the best days of my life. I don't think I forget those memorable days.

Alternative answers:

- Yes. I have many memories. Unforgettable, vivid and always sweet.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do /did you have any teachers of special significance?

Candidate: One of my university teachers who used to teach us maths. I was very fortunate in having such a good teacher. He/she was so supportive ...er... encouraging and resourceful. Er... his/her smart appearance and friendly expression made me like him/her immediately. He/she was really a role model for all the students. I was fascinated by his/her teaching method. Now, I've come to realise how important maths is, in my field of work.

Alternative answers:

I had an excellent teacher who had an enormous impact on me when I was a university student. He/she really had all necessary qualities for being a teacher. He/she was so inspiring, approachable, knowledgeable; a mine of information, and...er... always open to new ideas. Um... he/she was both an authority and a good friend, and was always able to achieve a great balance between humour and seriousness. To my mind, he/she was a dedicated professional not only for all students, but for the other teachers as well.

Your answer:

Examiner: What did you like best about your school days?

Candidate: Um... carefree days, what I mean is that I had no worries. I was only expected to get good marks, you know.

Alternative answers:

Um...I would say my school friends; I'm still in touch with some of them. We have great memories from schooldays.

Your answer:

Examiner: Can you sum up your study habits in a few points? (What method of learning works best for you?)

Candidate: Well, I have well-established study habits. For example, I almost always start promptly at seven in the evenings. I study for two hours, then have a ten-minute break, and I study for another two hours. I follow this approach for weekdays, but over the weekends I usually spend more hours. I don't think cramming the night before the exam can ever help.

Alternative answers:

I learn best when I make a list of key words and classify them. You know, read them several times or work out the questions. 'A dull pencil is greater than the sharpest memory'.

Your answer:

Examiner: Tell me about the schooling system in your country.

Candidate: Well, in the past two decades the education system of my country has been reformed several times. In my country, primary education is free and compulsory from the age of six, although private schools do exist and are permitted to charge tuition fees. In brief, the education system is comprised of 5 years of primary, 3 years of lower high school, 3 years of high school and one year of pre-university education.

Alternative answers:

Children go to school when they are six years old. It takes them 5 years to finish primary school, then they enter junior high school which takes 3 years, after that high school which is 3 years, and in the end, one year for pre-university. The language of instruction is Farsi.

Your answer:

Examiner: Are there any private universities in your country?

Candidate: Yes there are. In addition to the public system, my country has a private system of higher education.

Alternative answers:

Yes, there are. There are private educational centres which are allowed to offer university courses.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is the best university in your country?

Candidate: Um...I would say [...], a prestigious university. It benefits from the best university professors and provides students with high quality education, and is recognised by most professional bodies. As far as I know, [...] University is amongst the top three in my country.

Alternative answers:

I would think [...] University, because it has usually the highest percentage of university graduates who pass postgraduate exams.

Your answer:

Examiner: How are students evaluated in your country?

Candidate: Mainly based on written exams, of course, there are other criteria which are usually considered by teachers ...er... such as oral exams and class participation.

Alternative answers:

Students should take written exam; the scores are given out of 20, and the pass mark for a subject is 10.

Your answer:

EDUCATION
Questions

1. What was your major at university? What degree did you earn at university?
2. What did you find most interesting about your major?
3. Do you have any regrets about your college life?
4. How will your degree help you to succeed?
5. Did you enjoy any particular part of your studies more than the rest?
6. Which courses do you consider to be the most beneficial?
7. What parts of your education do you see is most relevant to your job?
8. How will your studies help you with your future career?
9. If you could, what would you change about the curriculum of your major?
10. Were there any courses or subjects that you didn't like at all?
11. In what courses did you get the best/worst marks?
12. Are there any professors that you can learn from more easily than others?

13. How many credits did you pass to complete your education?
14. How many credits are you taking this term?
15. What motivates you to strive for good grades in university?
16. What do you usually do the night before an exam?
17. If you have two exams on the same day, how do you usually prepare?
18. How would you manage your time with a heavy load of classes?
19. Is there anything you have been involved in at college that you are really proud of?
20. What was the most difficult aspect of obtaining your university degree?
21. How do you keep up with new developments in your university field?
22. What impact has attending university had on your relationships with others?
23. What changes would you like to make in your overall campus life?
24. Describe your most rewarding university experience.
25. Have you ever given a lecture at university?
26. Tell me about a research that you did at university? What was it about? Did you do it alone?
27. What was the most successful team project you worked on? What were your duties?
28. Have you ever given a seminar paper?
29. What are the sporting facilities like in your university?
30. What are the big differences between your university life so far and your high school days?
31. Do you plan to further your education?
32. Are there any qualifications or certificates you would like to gain?
33. What personal characteristics do you think are necessary for success in your chosen field?
34. If you could start again, what major would you choose?
35. Have you thought about which university to study at and why?
36. Why have you chosen to study overseas?
37. Can you tell me a good memory from school?
38. What do you remember about your first school, when you were a child?
39. Were you a prize student or did you just barely pass?
40. What is your high school GPA (Grade point average)? How do you feel about it?
41. If a professor were asked to describe you, what would he/she say?
42. How did you feel when you graduated from high school?
43. Are there any professors that you can learn from more easily than others?
44. How do you think your high school has prepared you for university?
45. Apart from classes, what else did you enjoy at school/university?
46. What is the most important thing you've learned in school extracurricular activities?

47. If you could go to high school again, what is something that you would get involved in that you haven't yet?

48. What do you enjoy/dislike about studying?

49. What kind of subjects do you enjoy studying?

50. Describe the process of gaining entry to university in your country. How could this process be improved?

51. What sort of exams do students have to pass to go to university?

LANGUAGES
Interview

Examiner: What language do you like most (to learn)?

Candidate: English. It is the most widespread language in the world today, though not the most widely used language, as far as I know. It is the major language of news, higher education and business across borders.

Alternative answers:

- Spanish language. It makes a lot of sense to me. It's so melodic, and ...er...more important than anything else, it is spoken in many countries. I've recently enrolled on a Spanish class and made lot of progress.
- I find French language really attractive. I'd love to be able to speak French well, you know, with good accent. Unfortunately, the language classes are very much based on the formal teaching of grammar. To improve my French, I'm going to French to take a crash course.
- Chinese language. Chinese speakers far outnumber the speakers of other languages.
- Arabic language. I've signed up for an intensive course to improve my Arabic.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Are there any other languages that you can speak?

Candidate: Yes, I speak Italian reasonably well. I had a golden opportunity to pick up some Italian when I was in Italy.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, I'm pretty fluent in Turkish, and I speak a little Russian. As we all know, it takes years to master a language.
- I speak Polish, but it's a bit rusty. Maybe I should take a refresher course to improve it.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Would you say you are good at speaking other languages?

Candidate: Yes, I think I am. I'm pretty good at French, but I think I still need to practise more.

Alternative answers:

- I am fairly good at Arabic language, of course as far as grammar is concerned.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What do you do to improve your English?

Candidate: To learn more natural English, I'm practising English with a native speaker.

Alternative answers:

- I usually watch English films or read English newspapers to brush up on my English.
'Practice makes perfect.'
- I try to spend more time and energy... er...to improve my English, but specifically, I try to use my dictionaries as often as I can. In general, learning languages is just a matter of hard work and practice.

Your answer:

Examiner: How often do you use English?

Candidate: On a regular basis when reading English newspapers, listening to English news and speaking to friends via the internet.

Alternative answers:

- Practically everyday. Since I work in the foreign department of a marketing company, I usually speak English with our clients and we often write e-mail in English too.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Why are you trying to improve your English?

Candidate: The fact is that English is known as an international language, and considered as a necessary requirement for most educational and employment opportunities.

Alternative answers:

- Um... being able to communicate with people from other countries.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Why are you taking the IELTS?

Candidate: Well, I am applying for the citizenship in [...]. You know, IELTS is one the requirements.

Alternative answers:

- Basically, I want to evaluate my English knowledge. But I'm sure in the near future, my band score will help me to obtain my goals, you know, any job or educational opportunities.
- Before studying at a good university, you should be proficient in English. I've chosen IELTS for this purpose.

LANGUAGE
Questions

1. Is your language phonetic? (Is it pronounced as it is written?)
2. How could you convince someone to learn your native language?
3. What languages do you like learning?
4. Have you ever tried to learn a language and then gave up?
5. How would you outline some of the main differences between a language you studied and your native language?
6. At what age foreign language instruction included in the education system of your country?
7. What do you enjoy about learning languages?
8. Which English skill do you find easiest to learn?
9. In your opinion, what is the most challenging part of learning English?
10. What do you think is the most effective way to learn a language?
11. Give some tips on how to learn a foreign language successfully.
12. How often do you use your dictionary?
13. When did you first start learning English?
14. How did you learn English?
15. Have you ever had an English tutor?
16. In what ways do you practise your English?
17. What do you do to increase your vocabulary range?
18. How important do you think grammar is in learning a new language?
19. What is/are the most useful English book(s) that you have studied so far?
20. How do you plan to use your English in the future?
21. Which do you think is easier, to speak English or write it?
22. How will a better knowledge of English help you in your present situation?
23. Why have you chosen the IELTS exam?
24. What if you fail the IELTS exam?
25. Are there any other English exams that you are preparing for?
26. How would you compare IELTS with other English courses or skills that you have taken? In what ways are they the same or different?

JOB
Interview

Examiner: What is your job? (Tell me about your main responsibilities.)

Candidate: I have a part time job. I work as an accountant. It involves a variety of activities, such as keeping financial records, preparing balance sheets and financial statements.

Alternative answers:

- I am a mechanical engineer. I work for an international company called [...].
- I am an office holder. I deal with overseas clients. My job involves writing letters and doing a lot of paper work. The company that I work for is located in [...].
- I work as an enrolment manager for a university. My specific job is recruiting new students into the programme. Of course, at present, I'm on leave.
- I am in charge of handling all aspects of sales, customer services, warranties, ordering supplies and tracking orders. I love my job because I know what's what!
- I work in a private company. My job mainly involves organising meetings and events. To be honest, it's not much of a job but it pays the bills! It's no joke trying to find a job these days.
- For the time being, I work in an insurance company. My job involves many different things, but basically, I deal with customers' complaints. Actually, I just consider my job as a stepping stone to a more lucrative career.
- I have a part time job. I work in a computer institute which is located in [...]. I am in charge of their computers. It's mostly a bunch of students there. We have a lot of fun.
- I work in the computer business. I mainly buy and sell computer components. Besides my job, I accept any kind of computer repair work and that sort of thing. Er...it's a so-so job; neither very good, nor very bad.
- I am an electronic engineer. I have two years of experience in supervising a team of technicians. My parents support me a lot in my choice of career.
- I am a civil servant. I work for the department of health in a hospital, and I am responsible for keeping the patients' records in the emergency ward.
- I am a nurse, I do shift work. Being a nurse makes the worries of everyday life seem unimportant. We're not paid like millionaires, but we're rewarded in other ways. For me, this is definitely a millionaire job.
- Teaching. I tutor high school students in mathematics. There is a lot of job satisfaction, but I wouldn't want to do it for a living.
- I am a freelance website designer. I have designed more than hundred websites.
- I'm in the business of antique furniture. I think success in business is the result of experience.
- I am a student but I do have a part time job to help support myself. I work for a business firm and do marketing. My job involves a lot of online research, looking for stuff all over the internet. You know, how difficult it is for a student to hold down a job.
- I am a self-employed law consultant. I usually visit three to four clients and help them with their problems.
- I'm a lawyer...er... but as a sideline, I sell some of my paintings.
- I work for a private school. We run after-school classes for kids. Mainly for maths. I consider teaching a worthwhile career that requires total commitment.

- I work as a sales person in a department store. I work in clothing section.
- I'm working as a tour guide in [...]. It involves a lot of traveling. It is kind of fun. I take people around the city and show them all the places of interest, you know, the old buildings, museums and places like that. Working as a tour guide has always been my lifelong ambition.
- I am a civil engineer. I work for a large construction company. To be more precise, I specialise in building of railway bridges. I am in the designing department.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: On a basic level, what skills do you think your job demands?

Candidate: Well, my job requires sharp business analysis and lots of creativity.

Alternative answers:

- My job entails lots of physical work.
- You know, as a website designer, you should have a solid grasp of the online marketplace and computer skills.
- My job demands a high degree of managerial skills. Um...this is not a job for someone who lacks decision.
- In my job, experience is an invaluable asset and it's much more important than paper qualifications.
- My job requires high concentration. You need eagle eye to monitor everything. There is no room for error in my job.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Why did you choose this job?

Candidate: I'm extremely grateful to my parents. They helped me a lot in my choice of career.

Alternative answers:

- Well, I have always enjoyed accounting and felt that working as an accountant would offer me this opportunity to expand my skills in this field
- Well, I've always enjoyed being with people and thought being a [...] would suit me. More importantly, my university major is related to my job. Now, I think I've gained practical qualifications too.
- Purely by accident. I came across an ad looking for a receptionist. Goodness! a lucky break; a big moment in my life because I was out of work for about two years. I applied, was interviewed, and started to work in May 2005. I love my job and see a great future.
- I have always wanted to have a management position in a business firm and I have recently gained a certificate in management. You know, my job has given me this opportunity to put my skills into practice.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Tell me about your working hours.

Candidate: I have a nine to five job. I'm a bit single-handed. I sometimes work overtime.

Alternative answers:

- I work six hours a day. I should clock in before 8 am and clock out after 2 pm.
- I do shift work. I work on odd days.
- Well, I get to choose my own hours as long as I work six hours a day. I can come in at any time from 8 am to 6 pm.

I have a flexitime schedule and usually work on even days.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you ever work overtime?

Candidate: Sometimes. When I'm behind my work, I have to stay more and work overtime.

Alternative answers:

Er...hardly ever. I believe it is important for any family person to spend time with their family while I always try to get the job done on time. I think I should give my family the time they deserve. Another point to consider is that it is so important to have time to relax. As we all know, too much time in work deceases productivity and increases errors.

Your answer:

Examiner: What have you gained from your work experiences?

Candidate: Um... my job has given me a deep insight into interpersonal skills. I think I know how to interact with people.

Alternative answers:

I have gained new perspectives on how to be efficient and team up to get the best results.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you like your present job?

Candidate: Yes, of course, I love it. It is so rewarding and gives me a sense of achievement.

There is always chance for personal development. In addition, it matches my qualifications.

Alternative answers:

Yes, so far so good!...er... I have convenient working hours, besides my salary is good.

Yes, Indeed. The best aspects of my job are ongoing training courses and benefits package which are offered by the company that I work for.

Yes, very much. I have always dreamed of having my own business. It's great that I've achieved my goal.

Oh, yes. You know, my job allows me a lot of opportunities to serve people and gives me a lot of satisfaction. Meeting new people and helping them has always been something I found pleasure in.

Yes, really. You know, I get to meet a lot of new and interesting people. Also, I have the opportunity to travel a lot... um... I simply love my job.

I think I do. I'm too busy to think about it!

On the whole yes. Although it's kind of stressful, I like its friendly atmosphere. Um...its benefits outweigh its drawbacks.

Your answer:

Examiner: What is/ are the best aspect(s) of your job?

Candidate: I would think regular promotion, this is to say, there are many prospects for promotion.

Alternative answers:

Fortunately, the company that I work for is very well-managed. It has clear objectives and strives for success .There is a friendly teamwork atmosphere...um... the policy of the management is to offer many career growth opportunities.

- Working as a member of a team. I firmly believe working in a team usually yields greater results. You certainly come up with better ideas.
- Communicating with different people. Let me explain, since I interact with diverse groups of people every day. I have been able to improve my communication skills. In addition, my job is so varied that no two days are ever the same.
- Um...being part of a team. I like it when the team pulls together to achieve a common goal and everyone can take some credit. The rewards can be enormous.
- What I like most about my job is the fact that it incorporates both my education and practical work skills to be the best I can be.
- Helping people. I am in a position that I can talk to many people during the day. I can help them with their concerns.
- My colleagues....um... they are helpful to me and to each other and this creates an encouraging atmosphere in my workplace. It's certainly a privilege to work with them.
- Being up-to-date. I'm always challenged to expand my technical knowledge.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What do you dislike about your job?

Candidate: Well, there is only one thing that annoys me very much ...um... that's my boss; he's very impatient and...er...lacks personality.

Alternative answers:

- I would say limited opportunities for advancement. Unfortunately, my job offers very little scope for promotion, but the other side of the coin is that it is high-paid.
- I think the most important drawback of my job is the unsocial hours....um... when I'm called, I have to be there at any time of day or night.
- Actually, I enjoy everything about what I do. I suppose if I had to give up something, it would have to be paperwork. It is a bit of a problem!
- What I like least about my job is the paperwork. It is an important task, but a challenge to keep up with. I have to document all the letters received and sent carefully.
- Lack of structure in the company that I work for. Er...unfortunately, responsibilities, job descriptions and positions haven't been clearly defined. It allows some of my workmates to slack off and I often end up having to pick up the extra work.
- The only problem is the distance, my workplace is situated out of town, I have to spend lots of time commuting between [...] and [...].
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Why do you want to leave your present job?

Candidate: I feel I should experience new work environments, this is to say, I want use my capabilities fully by taking on new responsibilities.

Alternative answers:

- Lack of attention to the opinions of the staff. The truth of the matter is that new ideas are not appreciated there. The management is resistant to change. It causes job dissatisfaction. There was no point in staying in that job.
- I find that my main interest is in marketing. Unfortunately, my present job doesn't offer much scope in that area, you know, it's a tough a decision. Er... I should weight up all the options and then come to a decision.
- My work has become kind of stagnant, I am looking for more involving tasks where I can apply my skills and experience practically.

As a matter of fact, I love my job, I really do but there's hardly any job security in it. Unfortunately due to the downturn in the market, the company that I work for, is unable to sustain their workforce.

Actually... I am seeking a position with a company that is more growth-oriented and where my contributions will be more visible.

I am thinking of giving up my job, because there is no room for growth at my current job. I am looking for a company with long-term growth opportunities. Job satisfaction is very important to me.

'Nothing ventured, nothing gained'. To achieve your goals, sometime you need to take some risks; calculated risks. That's the price of success.

To be frank, I really don't like office work. Now, I have heavy workload every day. It really bores me and I'm not moving ahead. I'd much prefer to have a more challenging job where I can improve work skills.

I'm sick and tired of my job. It's so mechanical.

Your answer:

Examiner: Why did you leave your previous job?

Candidate: I left my job that's only because I found a better company to work with.
‘Opportunity seldom knocks twice’.

Alternative answers:

I was commuting to the city and spending a significant amount of time each day on travel. I wanted to save my time somewhere closer to my home.

To be honest, I was fed up with my job. My previous job was very stressful and kind of monotonous. It involved lots of paperwork that's why I quit. Of course, I've talked to a number of people, but it is very difficult to find a job that is the right fit.

I was laid off. Unfortunately, the company that I used to work in, was restructured and my position along with a number of others were eliminated. Of course, I've come across a few good job opportunities, but honestly speaking, so far, I haven't found a position that pays what I feel I am worth.

I decided to leave because I wanted to have a job with greater prospects where I could continue to fulfil my career goals. Now, I have an opportunity to explore the jobs that better suit my qualifications and interests. However, I looked back on my previous job with great satisfaction.

Your answer:

Examiner: What are your strengths at work?

Candidate: I'm a quick learner. I have good organisational skills, and willing to learn new things to get the job done.

Alternative answers:

I think I am good at delivering projects on time...er... even tight schedules. In my experience, a key element of this ability is my attention to detail. All in all, I think I'm sufficiently qualified for my job.

I'm good at managing my time. But my greatest strength is my ability to effectively handle projects and deadlines.

I have a strong determination and ability to get things done. At the same time, I have strong analytical and problem-solving abilities. These skills have given me a unique ability to find creative solutions to deal with problems.

- My ability to communicate well with others. It is something that I am proud of personally and professionally.
- Listening to criticism and feedback, especially if they are constructive.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What is/are your weakness(s) at work?

Candidate: Er...I think it should be judged by others. At times, I have a tendency to be impatient when things are not done properly.

Alternative answers:

- I certainly admit that I'm not perfect. I occasionally feel impatient with inefficiencies and...er... colleagues who don't work as quickly as I do. Of course, I try not to let it affect my work performance.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What is /are your occupational goal(s) for the future?

Candidate: I have a solid plan for my career. Within that plan I am looking for additional responsibility and more room for growth. I want to upgrade my qualifications. In fact, I'll do anything to further my career, you know...er... to climb the career ladder. Maybe I'm too ambitious!

Alternative answers:

- After college, I hope to pursue a career in civil engineering. I'm really determined to do that at any price.
- Well, my career goal is to move into a position with a higher level of responsibility for marketing. I want to be successful in my career plan, both for my own personal satisfaction and for the company that I work for.
- I want to progress in my career; learn more technical skills, gain more experience, and save some money to have my own business. Also, within the next 3-5 years I plan to pursue an MBA. I believe it fits well with these plans.
- Although it is difficult to predict things far into the future, I know what direction I want to go. I would like to take up a job...er... related to my university major; that's interior designing. It will give me endless opportunities for making money.
- Er...within a couple of years...er...I would like to have a business of my own. Er...maybe I should give it more thought.
- Obtaining an internship to increase my knowledge and get more experience in my university field to excel in my job.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What are some of your occupational accomplishments from the last five years?

Candidate: I've been able to make an important career move. I was promoted to supervisor.

Alternative answers:

- Being selected as the most creative employee of our company. My proudest moment was the time when I received my award.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: If you could start again, what career decisions would you make differently?

Candidate: In fact, I'm not the kind of person who looks back with regrets. I prefer to invest my energy looking forward. Um...but If I could do that, I would most probably choose a career in business management.

Alternative answers:

I would take more training courses to increase my technical knowledge.

Your answer:

Examiner: What skills do you think your university major has provided for your job?

Candidate: I think my major has given me a deep insight into interpersonal skills.

Alternative answers:

I feel that the courses I have taken within my field, such as statistics and accounting have taught me the quantitative skills that can be applied in my job.

Your answer:

Examiner: How would you describe your boss?

Candidate: I would say level-headed, well-rounded, and awe-inspiring. He/she is one of the most colourful characters that I've ever seen.

Alternative answers:

My current boss is very good. He/she is a person with lots of personality. He/she deals with his/her staff firmly but fairly and enjoys our respect.

Great. He/she is such a nice a person; a real gentleman in every sense of word. He/she has a very warm personality. He/she never hurts anyone's feelings; for one thing, he/she uses tact. I'm fortunate to have such a caring boss.

He/she is so fair and treats all his employees with respect. He/she is so competent in his/her work. I really like his/her businesslike manner. He/she is very diplomatic in dealing with the staff. In addition, he/she always encourages any creativity. In some senses, he/she is my role model.

My boss has strengths and weaknesses. He/she is always there available with a sympathetic ear. He/she is very good at listening to people, but sometimes, in my view, doesn't deal with underperformers firmly enough. This affects team morale sometimes. It is widely agreed that being a good manager is partly innate and partly learned.

Down to earth, cultivated and full of bright ideas.

Very creative. He/she has a pragmatic approach to management problems. He/she is able to solve problems in a practical and sensible way.

Your answer:

Examiner: Describe your worst boss. Why?

Candidate: I had a supervisor who was vague when issuing assignments. I learned how to ask questions so that I knew what was expected.

Alternative answers:

Last year, when I used to work in [...]. I had a boss who was so moody, temperamental and money-minded. He/she was really something! just wanted to boss around. He/ she wasn't even familiar with the ABC of management. He/she was very hard to predict. Of course, after a while, I managed to learn how to behave towards him/her.

- When I used to work in [...], I had a boss who was kind of disagreeable and...er... self-willed and had a sharp tongue; so sarcastic. Of course, after some months, I could understand how to behave towards him/her. And our relationship changed for the better.
- I'm not sure I like my current boss. To be honest...er... I've always thought he/she was a little difficult, but these days, I find him/ her impossible! He/she's so unpredictable; sometimes cheerful and a few minutes later...er...so angry. I think he/she should have personal problems or something!
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How do you think your colleagues/ staff describe you? (What three adjectives would you choose to describe yourself as an employee/a manager?)

Candidate: That's a rather difficult question. They perceive me as someone who cares about them personally and have high expectations.

Alternative answers:

- Um...I'm not sure, let me think...um... 'positive', 'approachable' and perhaps 'serious'.
- I'd like to think...er... 'supportive', 'responsive' and 'authoritative'.
- Er... I'm not quite sure how to answer this question, but perhaps my employees would describe me as a tough, but fair person who is easy to approach.
- They would probably say I'm good at dealing with people and can make a good manager.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Name three adjectives that best describe your ideal colleague.

Candidate: My ideal colleague should be 'understanding', 'co-operative' and 'helpful'.

Alternative answers:

- It's difficult to think of an ideal colleague. In fact, I work well with most people. If I had to choose three qualities, I would say 'communicative', 'dutiful' and 'caring'.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How do you think your boss would describe you?

Candidate: Well, that's not something I've ever really thought about, but I suppose he/she would say I have a good sense of business.

Alternative answers:

- Well, that's an interesting question. Um...I suppose he/she would perceive me as a person who has a good sense of direction.
- My boss would say that I have a strong sixth sense for markets and I learn new information and procedures quickly. I think these skills have been the main factors which helped me be promoted in the last two years.
- My boss would describe me as a hard-working, loyal and committed person. He/she would say that I work well on my own initiative and deliver what he/she wants on time with high standards.
- I've never really thought about that. My boss would describe me as a person who has good head for business.
- He/she would say I'm determined, hard-working and goal-oriented. He would also say I'm so active and efficient that no one in the office can keep up with me.
- My boss would say I'm very hard-working and my efforts usually go beyond the call of duty.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What type of people do you work most effectively with?

Candidate: I prefer to work with people who are understanding and helpful.

Alternative answers:

- I admire and work best with people who are of good character and have integrity.
- I tend to work well with people who are confident and straightforward.
- I work well with anyone who delivers what they promise. At the same time, I always try to keep my word. Er...let's say, a 'win-win' situation.
- I like to work for someone who allows me the autonomy to perform my job to the best of my knowledge and abilities.

Your answer:

Examiner: Do you work best by yourself or as part of a team? (Why?)

Candidate: I prefer to work in teams. I find that better decisions are made when people work together and share ideas. Of course, I'm happy to work alone when required too.

Alternative answers:

- Both. I can work independently and also enjoy working as a part of a team if required.
- I work very well by myself because I'm self-motivated and conscientious if not selfish. I'm comfortable working in teams too.

Your answer:

Examiner: Which one do you usually devote more time, your family or your work?

Candidate: Well, both are important...er... let's put it this way, I have always tried to achieve a balance between my career and my family life.

Alternative answers:

- Well, I tend to spend more time with my family.

Your answer:

JOB
Questions

1. Describe your workplace. What kind of place is it? How long have you been doing this job?
2. How do you like the environment of your present job?
3. Are you allowed to have some time off whenever you want?
4. How did you become interested in the type of work you do?
5. How do you feel about your job security?
6. On holiday, what do you miss most about your work?
7. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
8. On a scale of 1-10 how important is your work to you?
9. What are some of your occupational accomplishments from the last five years?
10. What was/ has been a major failure in your career so far?

11. Are there certain aspects of your current job that you feel more confident doing than others?
12. How do you determine your priorities at work?
13. Did you take any training courses before being employed?
14. How important is English for your work? What is the most important skill in your job?
15. What area of your job skills do you want to improve?
16. How is your work performance usually evaluated?
17. Have you ever had any managerial experience?
18. What is it like to work with you? How would your colleagues describe you?
19. Do you often get together with your colleagues after work?
20. How much time do you spend with your colleagues in a day?
21. At your work, who usually helps you when you get into trouble?
22. Have you had difficulty getting along with a supervisor or co-worker?
23. What kinds of people do you find difficult to work with? Why?
24. If you had the opportunity to change your job, what would you do instead?
25. How do you usually handle work pressure?
26. If you could start again, what career decisions would you make differently?
27. Will any possible future changes affect your job in any way?
28. Would you be happier if you were self-employed?
29. What are your long-term career objectives and what steps have you taken toward obtaining these goals? What plans do you have to improve your job skills?
30. Do you have any plans to change your job in the future?
31. Tell me about a time when you set specific work goals for yourself.
32. Have you made any plans for your retirement?
33. Have you ever had a part time job? Have you been a full timer? Where?
34. Would you like to take up a job which requires travelling a lot? Why/not?
35. What jobs have you had throughout your life?
36. What job did you do most of your life? What did you like most about it?
37. How would you describe your first job? How old were you when you got your first job?
38. Would you like to have or follow the job of your father/ mother?
39. Have you ever been fired? Why were you made redundant?
40. Have you ever been offered an enticing job? Did you accept it or turn it down?
41. When do you hope to retire? What plans, if any, have you made for your retirement?
42. Are summer jobs taken by students common in your country?
43. What do you like best about having a summer job?

ers?

PERSONALITY

Interview

Examiner: What do you perceive as your greatest strength?

Candidate: I would say I am good at managing my time. I suppose I am a good problem solver too.

Alternative answers:

- I think one of my strengths is being able to handle stress. I've tried a lot to learn how to deal with stress.
- I am task-oriented, and a self-starter. I work well in a team and have good leadership skills.
- I have a very positive outlook on life—I look on the bright side of life; very optimistic. I look forward with just as much pleasure as I look back. I have lovely things to look back on, and I'm sure I'll have lovely things to look forward to.
- My perseverance. I believe perseverance and success are closely linked.
- I'm more of an extrovert. I enjoy being with people.
- I have the ability to read people's thoughts. I think it's a god-given gift.
- My memory; I have a very good visual memory.

Your answer:

Examiner: Describe your overall weakness.

Candidate: Well, I'm a bit of a perfectionist and sometimes focus too much on details. Now, I've come to recognise this weakness, and taken steps to correct it.

Alternative answers:

- Being too organised! It helps me do many things I like to do, but surprisingly, it is a weakness as well. Because I tend to be over-organised and might seem less friendly or fun-loving than I actually am.
- I had difficulty saying 'no' to people until I learned to set better priorities.
- Um...spending too much time to learn new things! Sometimes I am too curious and want to know more about things.
- Maybe I'm obsessively tidy. Er... I can't help it!

Your answer:

Examiner: How would your friends describe you?

Candidate: They would probably say that I am easy-going, sports-minded and sort of overactive.

Alternative answers:

- They would say I am very determined, goal-oriented, and sociable. They would also say that I am very excited about my future plans.
- Let me think. They would say I'm very free and easy with my money.

Your answer:

Examiner: What three words describe you best?

Candidate: Um... 'confident', 'self-motivated' and 'methodical'.

Alternative answers:

- I would say 'creative, and 'sensitive' and a little 'shy'.
- It's an interesting question. Um... words which best describe me would be 'innovative', 'perceptive' and 'decisive'.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What is your personal mission statement or motto?

Candidate: This is an interesting question. 'Treat others as you'd like to be treated.'

Alternative answers:

- Um... 'Honesty is the best policy.'
- 'Actions speak louder than words.'
- 'Where there is a will, there is a way.'
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Tell me about the types of people you have trouble getting along with. (What three adjectives would you say to describe them?)

Candidate: I find it very difficult or impossible to get along with people who are self-opinionated, self-seeking and...er... insensitive.

Alternative answers:

- Getting on with people who are stubborn, overbearing and ...er...self-centred.
- I have difficulty getting along with people who are judgmental, sarcastic and...um... egotistical.
- 'Selfish', 'self-willed' and 'quick-tempered'.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: Would you consider yourself a good team player?

Candidate: I think I am. I've had opportunities in both athletic and academic fields to develop my coordination skills. In academic fields, I've worked on many team projects, serving as both a member and team leader. I've experienced the value of working together as a team to achieve a greater goal than anyone could have achieved individually.

Alternative answers:

- Yes, you could say that! 'Many hands make light work.'
- Your answer:**

Examiner: What people's characteristic(s) do you find most attractive?

Candidate: Um... honesty. I do admire people who are honest and say what's on their mind.

Alternative answers:

- To me, the most important characteristics are willpower, determination and perseverance.
- Your answer:**

Examiner: How do you respond to criticism?

Candidate: Honestly speaking, it usually makes me upset, but later on, I try to get over my feeling and correct my behaviour.

Alternative answers:

- Very well, especially if it's constructive. Accepting constructive criticism is a good way to learn. We can certainly learn a lot from any piece of advice that we are given.
- Your answer:

Examiner: What does usually make you stressed? (How do you usually cope with stress?)

Candidate: Family problems and ...maybe... excessive expectations. Um... I usually speak with my elder brother. You know, to get it out of my chest.

Alternative answers:

- Traffic. I do a lot of driving to my job and the streets are usually crowded. It really stresses me out. When I get home, I try to do something fun to relax; curling up with a good book, listening to music, watching a movie or whatever...er.. anything to take my mind off work.
- Your answer:

Examiner: How do you usually relieve stress?

Candidate: By being calm. I'm naturally a very cheerful person. I think the best way to overcome stress is to maintain humour; even in a disaster!

Alternative answers:

- There are certainly lots of dos and don'ts to deal with stress. But personally speaking, I try to have a positive attitude towards everything. In this way, you never think about what stress is, let alone finding a way to cope with it.
- I usually do meditation and yoga; breathing, stretching and ...er... concentration exercises to relax, find peace and...er... ease my mind.
- Your answer:

Examiner: Would you consider yourself as a creative person?

Candidate: Yes, I would say that I can be very creative when the occasion calls. Er...to explain, I would like to say 'Necessity is the mother invention.'

Alternative answers:

- That's difficult to judge. Er... I think I am. I believe creativity is the secret of uniqueness.
- Your answer:

Examiner: How do you usually go about solving a problem? Explain.

Candidate: When I need to solve a problem, I usually write down as many ideas as I can think of. Next, I look for relationships among causes so I can group the causes of the problem. Usually after I consider them, the real cause becomes readily apparent, and I decide how to deal with the problem.

Alternative answers:

- I usually consult the elders of my family.
- My approach involves a systematic process of gathering relevant information about the problem, this is to say; clearly identifying the problem, setting a strategy, and then dealing with it. As long as I have enough information and a deep insight into of what the problem is, I simply can tackle any problems.
- Your answer:

PERSONALITY

Questions

1. Do you think the future will be good?
2. Do you have definite plans for your future?
3. Who is your role model in your personal life? Why do you look up to this person?
4. How do you think a professor who knows you well would describe you?
5. Who might a colleague describe you?
6. Can your friends depend on you?
7. Psychologically speaking, what type of personality do you have? (Think of ambitious, argumentative, sensible, artistic, realistic, optimistic, social, calm, outgoing, dynamic, etc.)
8. What are your pet hates / pet peeves (things that annoy you a lot)?
9. What roles do you usually take on when working in a team?
10. Do you enjoy the company of other people? Do you keep your feelings to yourself?
11. Are you a worker bee (team member), team leader, or both?
12. Do you put off until tomorrow what you could do today?
13. On a scale of 1 to 10, how organised are you? What kind of person were you as a teenager?
14. Are you the type of person who likes to try new things or just stay with regular routines?
15. Are you the type of person who likes to try new things or just stay with regular routines?
16. Do you think you are creative and self-expressive in different areas?
17. Is there anything that you are obsessed with? What are you most frequently criticised for?
18. Do you enjoy learning new skills?
19. Do you actively seek new skills to master?
20. Do you have special talents that you have developed?
21. Do you think you are more introverted or more extraverted?
22. Do you consider yourself to be thoughtful, analytical or do you usually make up your mind fast?
23. Do you notice other people's feelings?
24. Do you keep your feelings to yourself?
25. Are you a goal-oriented person?
26. Are you a self-starter person?

100
'MY Questions'

To prepare for part 1 of the IELTS speaking test, make notes about yourself; using the key words below.

	'100 'MY QUESTIONS'	PERSONALISED NOTES
1	MY marital status	Married and have two sons
2	MY daily activities	
3	MY qualifications	
4	MY military service	
5	MY strengths	
6	MY weaknesses	
7	MY purpose of taking IELTS	
8	MY accomplishments	
9	MY short-term plans	
10	MY long-term plans	
11	MY volunteer work	
12	MY diet	
13	MY parents	
14	MY siblings	
15	MY grandparents	
16	MY wife/ husband	
17	MY children	
18	MY responsibilities at home	

	'100 'MY' QUESTIONS'	PERSONALISED NOTES
19	MY relationship with family members	
20	MY daily routines	
21	MY best friend	
22	MY best friend's qualities	
23	MY home	
24	MY favourite room	
25	MY dream house	
26	MY neighbourhood	
27	MY neighbours	
28	MY education	
29	MY favourite course	
30	MY least favourite course	
31	MY studying habits	
32	MY extracurricular activities	
33	MY favourite teacher	
34	MY favourite subject	
35	MY memory from school/ university	
36	MY educational goals	
37	MY favourite English skill	
38	MY earliest memory of learning English	
39	MY problems in learning English	

	100 'MY' QUESTIONS'	PERSONALISED NOTES
40	MY job	
41	MY working hours	
42	MY workplace	
43	MY work experience	
44	MY career plans	
45	MY responsibilities at work	
46	MY last promotion	
47	MY boss	
48	MY colleagues	
49	MY problems at work	
50	MY previous job	
51	MY retirement plans	
52	MY last holiday	
53	MY free time activities	
54	MY favourite sport	
55	MY favourite restaurant	
56	MY favourite TV programme	
57	MY favourite newspaper	
58	MY favourite website	
59	MY favourite writer	
60	MY favourite books	

	'100 'MY' QUESTIONS'	PERSONALISED NOTES
61	MY favourite music	
62	MY favourite food	
63	MY favourite shop	
64	MY favourite clothes	
65	MY favourite actor	
66	MY favourite singer	
67	MY favourite athlete	
68	MY role model	
69	MY favourite colour	
70	MY favourite season	
71	MY hometown's history	
72	MY hometown's population	
73	MY hometown's climate	
74	MY hometown's agricultural products	
75	MY hometown's fame	
76	MY hometown's tourist attractions	
77	MY hometown's historic monuments	
78	MY hometown's holiday resorts	
79	MY favourite method of travel	
80	MY hometown's public transportation	
81	MY hometown's entertainment facilities	

	'100 'MY' QUESTIONS'	PERSONALISED NOTES
82	MY hometown's problems	
83	MY hometown's future	
84	MY country's population	
85	MY country's climate	
86	MY country's language	
87	MY country's tourist attractions	
88	MY country's industries	
89	MY country's public transport	
90	MY country's customs/ traditions	
91	MY country's festivals	
92	MY country's handicrafts	
93	MY country's music	
94	MY country's clothes and costumes	
95	MY country's public entertainment	
96	MY country's typical dish	
97	MY country's popular sport	
98	MY country's national heroes	
99	MY country's currency	
100	MY country's national holidays	

NOTES:

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PART 2

INDEPENDENT LONG TURN

TIPS OF PART 2

Speaking test

Part 2:

Independent Long Turn (3- 4 minutes)

The examiner will give you a topic card, and hand you some paper and a pencil to make notes. You have one minute to prepare before speaking for 1-2 minutes. Topic cards are very general and related to your personal experience. The examiner will remain silent while you are speaking then will ask one or two rounding-off questions.

DOS AND DONT'S

- **Read the topic card carefully.**
- Make the best use of the minute given to organise your answer, and **make brief notes** for each key word, such as *who, what, when, where, how or why*. A common criticism of some candidates is that they don't plan; you don't impress the examiner if you start immediately without planning, whatever your level is. Candidates who don't take notes, tend to describe the general aspect of the question rather than covering the prompts of the card and giving specific information.
- **Don't write on the topic card.**
- **Write notes not sentences.**
- It may be easier to read and use your notes if you write them in a **vertical list** and **in order**.
- It is important to **keep talking, but don't talk about things which aren't related to the topic.**
- As you speak, **refer to your notes to organise your answer**. If your talk is not organised, you will lose marks.
- **Remember that the IELTS test is a communication test; not a memory test.** If there is something you can't remember, simply use other words and explain about it.
 - '*I'm not really sure when it happened to me, but I'm sure I was very young.*' is just as good as giving a date.
- **Don't worry if you decide to change a little of what you have planned to say.** Keeping your talk natural and fluent is much important than sticking rigidly to your notes.

- There are some ways to extend your talk. For example, talking about your **preferences, comparing or contrasting with other subjects**.
- In IELTS books, you can see a number of topic cards which are thematically the same, but have different prompts. **Make sure to talk about the question you are asked to talk about NOT the one you have prepared.**
- **Don't miss out any questions.**
- **Don't hesitate for too long when it is time to speak.** It's better to speak about anything than not to speak at all!
- Some introductory prompts that you may use are:
 - *I'd like to talk about...*
 - *I'm going to talk about...*
 - *I'd like to begin with...*
 - *What I'd like to talk about is...*
 - *I've chosen to talk about...*
 - *What I'm going to cover is...*
 - *To start with...*
 - *I'm going to describe how...*
 - *There are quite a lot of..., but the one I've chosen is...*
 - *It's quite a long story.*
 - *The aspect/factor/ issue I've looked at is...*
- Some phrases to talk about background detail.
 - *I particularly/vividly/distinctly remember (the day we first met).*
 - *To the best of my memory*
 - *What I most remember about him/her is...*
 - *I vividly recall the day I first met him/her*
 - *...if (my) memory serves me well/ correctly,*
 - *The story goes back to the time when I was in school/ college*
 - *It took place...*
 - *... happened to me...*
 - *...happened when I was a kid; at the age of ten, I think*
 - *...is called.../which is called...*
 - *...is located/ situated...*
 - *The town has changed somewhat/ dramatically since I was a child*
 - *...has been going on...*
 - *I have known him/her since/for...*
 - *I met him/her by chance*
 - *He/she happened to be there*
 - *I suddenly realised...*

- *I regretted not working harder/ I have no regrets about...*
- *I regretted not doing it earlier*
- *I wish I'd read more*
- *I wish I hadn't given it up*
- *Unfortunately, I didn't keep it up*
- *...even now, when I think of that day, I feel nostalgic*
- *If I had been more ambitious, I would have been more successful*
- *I should have made more pragmatic decisions*
- *I was first inspired by...*
- *What impressed me most was...*
- *I was very impressed by...*
- *...had a strong influence on me*
- *What influenced me a lot was...*
- *...had a profound impact on me*
- *...made an enormous impact on me*
- *...made an impression on me*
- *... strikes me as a very efficient/ clever/ hard-working person*
- *What first attracted me to him/her was...*
- *...was a big shock to me*
- *...profoundly affected my life*
- *...had a lasting effect on me*
- *...changed the way I look at things*
- *One of the most interesting thing about him/her was...*
- *I find ... (very/extremely/fantastically) relaxing/exciting*
- *It was such a great experience*
- *...was an unforgettable experience*
- *...was truly a memorable occasion*
- *It was so enjoyable*
- *It was a pleasurable experience*
- *It was such a sweet memory*
- *I was so happy; on the top of the world!*
- *I was extremely happy and excited; over the moon!*
- *The interesting point was...*
- *The thing I liked about ...was...*
- *The (main) reason why I like/ dislike...*
- *...that appeals to people of all ages*
- *One thing I'd be enthusiastic about is...*
- *I'm still proud of...*
- *Of course, ...sounds like a great idea*
- *... has been my proudest possession.*
- *I could not believe my ear /eyes! /I could hardly believe my luck!*
- *...was completely unexpected*
- *It was so surprising*

- ...has never appealed to me
- I find it so boring
- ...was/is so tedious
- ...so boring; ...is/was such a pain, drag, chore, nightmare, torture!
- One thing I'd be worried about is...
- ...totally different/ slightly different/ very similar/exactly the same
- The (main) reason why I...
- My first reason why I ...
- Another reason behind my decision was...
- I had always been attracted by the idea of...
- The best/worst thing about...was...because...
- What strikes/ impresses/ delights visitors about the resort most is its unique surroundings.
- Without doubt, the most interesting thing about [...] is ...
- In my country, it's the custom to.../ it's customary to...
- First, Next, Then, At this stage, Subsequently, Meanwhile, Later, Then, During this process, Afterwards, Eventually, Finally

- **Use a number of adjectives to describe the situation:**

- It was exciting, thrilling, interesting, pleasing, fascinating, amazing, absorbing, enticing, appealing, amusing, entertaining, relaxing, refreshing, embarrassing, soothing, breathtaking, astonishing, rewarding, deserving, satisfying, fulfilling, promising, challenging...
- It was boring, tiring, exhausting, confusing, puzzling, perplexing, worrying, frustrating, embarrassing, depressing, heartbreaking, frightening, horrifying, shocking, nerve-racking, soul-destroying, hair-rising, nail-biting, discouraging, disappointing, annoying, disturbing, irritating, distracting, disgusting, tempting...

- Make your talk as lively as possible.
- Try to relax and tell your interviewer as much **interesting information** as you can. Don't be afraid to use humour!
- **Don't worry if the examiner doesn't look at you.** He or she will be listening and checking the criteria needed for assessing you.
- To cover all the prompts of the topic card, you need to talk about each question for about 30 seconds. **Practice speaking with a watch and get an idea of how long two minutes is** and approximately how much content you need to cover the task.

TOPIC CARD 1	TOPIC CARD 2
<p>Describe how to use a piece of equipment. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how often you use it • what you use it for • what you can do to be able to use it for a long time • and explain how to use it/ its software/programmes/etc. 	<p>Describe a member of your family who are very close to. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she is • in what ways you are like him/her • how you differ from him/her • and explain why you are so close to him/her.
TOPIC CARD 3	TOPIC CARD 4
<p>Describe someone that you admire. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she is • why you admire him/her • when you first saw him/her • and explain how he/she has influenced the way you think. 	<p>Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she was • why he/she didn't like you • how your behaviour was • and explain what his or her reaction was.
TOPIC CARD 5	TOPIC CARD 6
<p>Describe a useful website that you have visited. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • how you found the address • what it contains • and explain why it was /is useful to you. 	<p>Describe a gift you have received that was important to you. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who gave it to you • on what occasion it was given to you • how you would describe it. • and say why it is important to you.
TOPIC CARD 7	TOPIC CARD 8
<p>Describe a room that you like. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which room it is • what makes this room special • what it looks like • and explain how you feel when you are in that room. 	<p>Describe an exam experience you had. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the exam was • how hard you studied • how you felt the day of the exam • and say whether you passed the exam or not.

TOPIC CARD 9	TOPIC CARD 10
<p>Describe a popular person who lives in your neighbourhood.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she is • when you first met him/her • how you would describe his/her character • and say what the reason of his/her popularity is. 	<p>Talk about your favourite free time activity.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when you first started it • how often you do it • whether you would like to do it on your own or with others • and explain what you like about it.
TOPIC CARD 11	TOPIC CARD 12
<p>Describe a dish that you know how to make.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if it is difficult to prepare • how much time it takes to be prepared • what the ingredients are • and explain how it is prepared. 	<p>Talk about the best city/country that you have been to.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it was • how long you were there • what you like or dislike about it • and say if you would like to travel again.
TOPIC CARD 13	TOPIC CARD 14
<p>Describe your favourite piece of clothing.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is and when you bought it • where you bought it from • why you decided to buy it • and explain why it is your favourite. 	<p>Talk about one of your friends.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how long you have known each other • how you met • how you spend time together • and explain why this person is so special to you.
TOPIC CARD 15	TOPIC CARD 16
<p>Describe the process of getting a job in your country.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what options are available to a job seeker • what documents are usually required • what stages are involved • and explain how this process could be improved. 	<p>Describe a serious problem in your hometown/city.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • what has caused this problem • what can be done about it • and explain why you think it is serious.

TOPIC CARD 17	TOPIC CARD 18
<p>Talk about your favourite actor/actress. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she is • what his/her best film is • what he/she looks like • and explain what you like most about him/her. 	<p>Talk about an important festival or national holiday in your country. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it is celebrated • how it is held • if it symbolises something • and explain why it is so special to you.
TOPIC CARD 19	TOPIC CARD 20
<p>Describe a special occasion when you had a really enjoyable meal. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the occasion was for • who was at the meal • what was served, and you ate • and explain why you found the meal so enjoyable. 	<p>Describe a place where you go shopping for clothes. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is • how often you shop for clothes • how you choose what to buy • and explain why you choose to go there.
TOPIC CARD 21	TOPIC CARD 22
<p>Describe a TV programme that you have seen and that interested you. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when and where you saw the programme • what happens during the programme • what you felt about the programme • and explain why you enjoyed the programme so much. 	<p>Describe a beautiful work of art that you have seen. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • where and when you saw it • how you would describe it • and explain what makes it impressive.
TOPIC CARD 23	TOPIC CARD 24
<p>Describe a game that you have played and enjoyed. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the name of the game is • when you last played the game • how you felt when you played it • and explain why you found it so enjoyable. 	<p>Talk about your hometown. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the most crowded area in your hometown is • what your advice is for someone intending to visit your hometown • how it could be a better place for tourists. • how you see your hometown growing in the next 20 years.

TOPIC CARD 25	TOPIC CARD 26
<p>Describe the happiest person you know. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you know him/her • how he/she looks like • how you would describe his/her character • and explain why you consider him/her as the happiest person you know. 	<p>Describe a picture/ photo that you like. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the picture/ photo depicts • when the picture/photo dates from • how the picture makes you feel • and explain what makes this picture/photo so special to you.
TOPIC CARD 27	TOPIC CARD 28
<p>Describe the most important thing you learned at school /college. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • when and where you learned it • how you were taught • and explain why you consider it so important. 	<p>Talk about your favourite season. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you like most about this season • how it is different from other seasons • if your daily activities are different in this season • and explain what it is like in your country.
TOPIC CARD 29	TOPIC CARD 30
<p>Talk about an important phone call that you received. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who called you • where you were at that moment • what you were told • and explain why you consider it as an important call. 	<p>Describe a school which you went to. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when you went there, and how long you spent there • what the school was like • how many students it had • and explain what you liked or disliked about it.
TOPIC CARD 31	TOPIC CARD 32
<p>Describe an important event in your life. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it happened • what happened exactly • how it affected your life • and explain how you feel about it now. 	<p>Talk about a time when you had to make a difficult decision. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you had to do • why you consider it as difficult, and what the outcome was • if it changed your life • and explain how you felt about it.

TOPIC CARD 33	TOPIC CARD 34
<p>Describe a time when you lost something. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • where and when you lost it • how important it was • and explain what you did to find it when you realised it was missing. 	<p>Talk about an activity that you do to stay healthy (diet, some kind of physical exercise, etc.) You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you do exactly • when you started this particular activity • how it has affected your life • and explain what benefits you get from this activity.
TOPIC CARD 35	TOPIC CARD 36
<p>Talk about your country. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what cities have the most number of tourists • what your advice is for someone planning to visit your country. • what could be done to attract more number of tourists. • and explain what changes you think your country might see in tourist industry. 	<p>Describe a film that had a great impression on you. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when and where you saw it • what type of film it is • what happens in the film • and explain why you found it so impressive.
TOPIC CARD 37	TOPIC CARD 38
<p>Talk about colours. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If certain colours make you feel happier • If your favourite colour changed as you have grown older • what colours you think look good on you • and say if there is a colour that you don't like. 	<p>Describe a zoo or a wildlife park that you have visited. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is located • when you went there • how you felt about it • and explain if you want to visit it again.
TOPIC CARD 39	TOPIC CARD 40
<p>Describe your neighbourhood that you live in. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how long you have lived there • what it is like • what you like or dislike about it • and explain how it could be improved. 	<p>Describe a happy event in your childhood. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what happened exactly • where it happened • how you liked it • and explain if it affected your life.

TOPIC CARD 41	TOPIC CARD 42
<p>Describe the process of getting a driving license in your country.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what organisation is responsible • what qualifications or documents you need to offer to apply for • what stages are involved • and explain how you are tested. 	<p>Talk about something that you have created/ made. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • when you created/ made it • how long it took you to make/create it • and explain why you decided to create/ make it.
TOPIC CARD 43	TOPIC CARD 44
<p>Describe a day you spent in the country.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where and when you went • who you went with • what you did • and say what makes it worth remembering. 	<p>Describe a funny thing which happened to you.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where and when it happened • what happened exactly • why you consider it as a funny memory • and explain how you feel about it now.
TOPIC CARD 45	TOPIC CARD 46
<p>Describe a situation in which you were embarrassed.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it took place • where it took place • what happened exactly and what you did • and explain why you consider it as an embarrassing memory. 	<p>Talk about your personality.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what kind of person you were as a teenager • who has been the most important person in your self-improvement • which of your qualities you would like to pass down to your children • and explain what you do to improve your personality.
TOPIC CARD 47	TOPIC CARD 48
<p>Talk about an important day in your life.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it was • whether you were alone or with others • what happened exactly • and say why this day was important to you, and if it changed your life. 	<p>Talk about your favourite sportsman/sportswoman.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she is • what his/her sport field is • what is special about him/her • and say how popular he/she is.

TOPIC CARD 49	TOPIC CARD 50
<p>Describe a wedding you have been to or heard from.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the party was • whose party it was • what the wedding was like • and explain how you felt about this wedding. 	<p>Describe a skill you want to learn.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • why you think it is important • how you want to learn it • and explain how it will help you in future.
TOPIC CARD 51	TOPIC CARD 52
<p>Talk about a situation in which you laughed a lot.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it was • where it was • who you were with • and explain why you laughed so much. 	<p>Talk about your favourite/a famous writer.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she is • what he/she usually writes about • what he/she is famous for • and explain what you like most about his or her works.
TOPIC CARD 53	TOPIC CARD 54
<p>Describe a tourist attraction that you have visited.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is located • what it is famous for • what you can see there now • and explain what you like most about it. 	<p>Describe a traditional garment from your country.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is, and made of • whether it is worn only on special occasions or not • how you would you describe it • and explain what you like most about it.
TOPIC CARD 55	TOPIC CARD 56
<p>Describe a celebration you attended and enjoyed.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it was celebrated • what the purpose of the celebration was • who you celebrated with, and describe some activities that you did as part of the celebration • and explain why it was so enjoyable for you. 	<p>Talk about a song or a piece of music that you like.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what type of music it is • where you first heard it • who the singer/performer is • and explain what sort of effect it has on you; why you like it.

TOPIC CARD 57	TOPIC CARD 58
<p>Talk about a domestic animal/ pet which is usually kept by the people of your country.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • what it looks like • what you like/ don't like about it • and explain how people in your country generally feel about it 	<p>Describe a competition/contest that you have entered.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when and where it took place • what you were expected to do • if you did it well. • and explain how you felt about it.
TOPIC CARD 59	TOPIC CARD 60
<p>Describe your journey to college or work.</p>	<p>Describe a product that you buy regularly.</p>
<p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what forms of transport you usually use • how long it usually takes • how you usually spend your time while traveling • and explain how you would make your journey more pleasant if you could. 	<p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where you usually buy it from • how you would describe it • what you do with it • and explain what makes it different from other products.
TOPIC CARD 61	TOPIC CARD 62
<p>Describe a place you have visited that really impressed you</p>	<p>Describe a picnic that you had</p>
<p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it was • what it is used for • what it looks like • and explain why you find this place particularly impressive. 	<p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where you went • who you were with • how you would describe it • and explain what you like about it.
TOPIC CARD 63	TOPIC CARD 64
<p>Describe a particular situation in which you were successful.</p>	<p>Talk about your personality.</p>
<p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • what you did • how you felt after achieving this success • and explain if it changed your life. 	<p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what are you most frequently criticised for • what your greatest strength is • how would a close friend describe you • and explain what things about yourself would you most like to improve.

TOPIC CARD 65	TOPIC CARD 66
<p>Describe how you behaved in a stressful situation. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where and when it happened • what happened exactly • how you behaved • and explain how you felt about your reaction afterwards. 	<p>Talk about one of your future plans. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you want to do • how you intend to achieve it • when you think you will do it • and explain how it will help you.
TOPIC CARD 67	TOPIC CARD 68
TOPIC CARD 69	TOPIC CARD 70
<p>Describe a market or shopping centre that you like. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is and what is it like • how frequently you go there • what sort of things are sold there • and say what you like most about it 	<p>Describe a trip you have taken recently. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where you went • who you went with • what you saw and did on your trip • and explain what makes it worth remembering.
TOPIC CARD 71	TOPIC CARD 72
<p>Describe a transport problem in your town/city. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the problem is • what the main causes are • how it affects you • and explain how you think this problem can be addressed. 	<p>Talk about something which annoys you. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • how it annoys you • what you usually do to cope with it • and explain why it is so annoying.

<p>TOPIC CARD 73</p> <p>Talk about your favourite day of week. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you like about this day • if your daily activities are different • what makes this day different from other days. • and say if you have a good memory of this day. 	<p>TOPIC CARD 74</p> <p>Describe a popular food from your country. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • how often you eat it • what the main ingredients are • and say if it is served only on special occasions.
<p>TOPIC CARD 75</p> <p>Talk about a pet that you or someone you know once had. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what kind of animal it was • what you liked/ didn't like about it, and why. • how people in your country generally feel about it. • and explain what kind of animal makes a good pet. 	<p>TOPIC CARD 76</p> <p>Describe a time when you worked hard and felt a great sense of achievement. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what you did • what made you try so much • if anyone helped you • and explain why you consider it as an achievement.
<p>TOPIC CARD 77</p> <p>Describe a leisure activity that is popular in your country. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is done • if you do it yourself • what you like about this activity • and explain why it is so popular. 	<p>TOPIC CARD 78</p> <p>Talk about the emails you write to a particular person. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who you email or write to • what you usually write about • how often you email • and explain why you send email to this person.
<p>TOPIC CARD 79</p> <p>Describe a situation where you had to work with a difficult principal, professor, supervisor, etc. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who he/she was • what he/she was like • what you had to do • and explain what you did to manage the situation. 	<p>TOPIC CARD 80</p> <p>Describe a music video or a concert that you have recently seen. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who the singer/ performer was • what kind of music it was or, was performed • what the music was like • and explain how you feel about it.

TOPIC CARD 81	TOPIC CARD 82
<p>Describe the happiest day of your life. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it was • who was there • what happened exactly • and explain what made it such a happy day. 	<p>Describe a memorable sporting event that you participated in or watched. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the event was • when and where it took place • what makes it memorable • and explain how you felt about the event.
TOPIC CARD 83	TOPIC CARD 84
<p>Describe a restaurant you enjoy eating in. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the name of the restaurant is, and how often you go there • what kind of food is served • what you usually order • and explain why you choose to eat there. 	<p>Describe the best workplace that you have ever had. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it was • what you were doing there • what you particularly like about this place • and say how you would improve it.
TOPIC CARD 85	TOPIC CARD 86
<p>Describe a personal possession that is important to you. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is • how long you have had it • how you use it • and explain why it is so important for you. 	<p>Describe your earliest memory of sport. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it was • what you did • whether you still do that kind of sport or not • and explain how you feel about it now.
TOPIC CARD 87	TOPIC CARD 88
<p>Describe the most significant failure you have had in the last five years. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • if it has affected your life • how you feel about it now • and explain why you consider it as failure. 	<p>Describe an important book you have read. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the title of the book is, and who it was written/compiled by • when and where you read it • what it was about, and why you decided to read it • and say why you consider it as important.

TOPIC CARD 89	TOPIC CARD 90
<p>Describe a museum that you have visited. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it is located and what kind of museum it is • what specific things you can see there • how you would compare it with other museums you have visited. • and explain what you particularly remember about it. 	<p>Describe a newspaper /magazine article that you found interesting or useful. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where and when you read it • what it was about • how it made you feel, or influenced you. • and explain why you found it interesting or useful.
TOPIC CARD 91	TOPIC CARD 92
<p>Talk about your earliest memory of learning English. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when it was • who your teacher was • whether you found it easy or difficult when learning • and explain how you feel about it now. 	<p>Talk about an important news item that you have heard recently. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was about • how you learned about it • how it made you feel • and explain why you consider it as important.
TOPIC CARD 93	TOPIC CARD 94
<p>Talk about shopping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how much time you spend shopping every week • what time of the day you prefer to go shopping and why • where you usually do your shopping • and say whether you enjoy window-shopping or not. 	<p>Describe the job you have, or hope to have. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it is and involves • what qualifications /experience it requires • what led you to choose it • and explain what features make it different from other jobs.
TOPIC CARD 95	TOPIC CARD 96
<p>Describe a situation when you had to gain cooperation from a team. (Work, university, etc) You should say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it was • where and when it was • who you worked with • and say if you enjoyed working as the part of the team. 	<p>Describe an important conversation that you have had. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whom you had the conversation with • where and when the conversation took place • what it was about, and why it was important to you • and explain how you feel about it now.

TOPIC CARD 97	TOPIC CARD 98
<p>Describe a recent family gathering. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• where and when it was• who the host was• what it was like, and what you did• and explain what you liked about it.	<p>Describe the best holiday you have had. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• where you went• if you were alone, if not, who with• what you did on holiday• and explain why you call it as your best holiday.
TOPIC CARD 99	TOPIC CARD 100
<p>Describe a film that you found really boring. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• when you saw it• what type of film it was• what happens in the film• and explain why you found it so boring.	<p>Describe a building which you find interesting. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• where it is located• how old it is• how you would describe it (In terms of, structure, architecture...)• and explain why you find this building particularly interesting.

NOTES :

TOPIC CARD 1

Describe how to use a piece of equipment.

You should say:

- how often you use it
- what you use it for
- what you can do to be able to use it for a long time
- and explain how to use it (its software/programmes /etc).

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Laptop, everyday

Dictionary, audio, video

Recharge, anti-virus

Connect, instructions

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I'm going to talk about something you may well be familiar with; a laptop. I use my own laptop everyday. In fact, using my laptop has become part of my everyday life. I have lots of educational software in my computer system; dictionaries, audio and video programmes. Well, to make the best use of a laptop, there are quite a few things to take care of. First of all, you should always remember to recharge the batteries before they die or have a good anti-virus to protect your computer from virus and bugs. As you know, there are numerous tasks that a computer can perform, but what I've chosen to talk about is how to download a programme. Of course, the time spent to download a software or file depends on a number of things, such as your computer power, connection speed, programme size and other factors. The first step is quite obvious; to get connected. The second stage is to go to the website you want to download from. Follow the site's particular download instructions. This usually varies from site to site, but most sites have some type of 'Download Now' button that you can click on. Instructions are different, but in general you are asked where you want the programme saved or installed. Select a location on your computer, then click 'Next' or 'OK'. An installation pop-up box appears; showing files are being installed. You may be asked to restart your computer.

TOPIC CARD 2

Describe a member of your family who are very close to.

You should say:

- who he/she is
- in what ways you are like him/her
- how you differ from him/her
- and explain why you are so close to him/her.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATES NOTES

My sister, [...]

Personality, films, major

Looks: height, hair, skin

Personality

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

To be honest, it's difficult for me to choose just one member of my family as I do feel close to all of them. But if I had to name one...er...I would say my elder sister. Her name is [...]. Although she is 5 years older than me, we get along so well; we are very similar in personality. We spend most of our time together...er... share the same interests and have lots of fun. For example, we follow the latest movies, especially, action movies. Sometimes, we talk about films for hourser... Another common point is our university majors; she has completed her education in business and I'm studying business too. So we have lots of things to talk about, you know, having the same major has given us the same outlook on life...er...by contrast, we're totally different in looks; so unlike that no one would ever think we are sisters! For instance, I have dark skin whereas she has fair skin. Or her hair is kind of curly, but my hair is straight. The reason why we are so close to each other is that we simply have the same personality traits. We understand each other because we grew up doing things together.

TOPIC CARD 3

Describe someone that you admire.

You should say:

- who he/she is
- why you admire him/her
- when you first saw him/her
- and explain how he/she has influenced the way you think.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

My teacher, [...]

Talented, encouraged me

20 years old

Literature and new world view

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

Of course, I think very highly of all the teachers that I have had. But the person whom I particularly admire is one of my ex-teachers from university. Her name is [...]. She's such a wonderful and talented lady whose values influenced me a lot. Now, she's known as an authority on Persian language. I had the privilege to meet her when I was twenty years old. She really encouraged me to write. The reason why she is so special to me is that she helped me a lot broaden my horizons through literature and taught me how to analyse contexts and made me love literature- that's something really hard. Because I really didn't like literature, but she was the person that really encouraged me to be interested in Persian literature. And I think I had the chance to have her as a teacher because she really helped me see the world in a different way and expand my world view. And I think what she really brought me was the connection between literature and life, in the way that they are very similar, and in the way that they can be very different. So we interpreted life in a different way from that perspective.

TOPIC CARD 4

Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you.

You should say:

- who he/she was
- why he/she didn't like you
- how your behaviour was
- and say what his or her reaction was.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

A colleague

Too young, immature

Good impression, highly professional

Apology

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

When I first began working at [...], I was the youngest member of the staff; about 23 years old, and had just finished my education. On the first day of my work, I met an older woman who was really familiar with the ins and outs of the place. When I was introduced by the manager of the department, she barely acknowledged my presence, and through word of mouth I realised that she thought that I was too young and immature to take up the job and be able to do my duties successfully because I was so inexperienced. To prove my abilities, I did my best and took every opportunity to make a good impression. I worked so hard and behaved in a highly professional manner at all times; so motivated to get the things done successfully. After about two weeks of silent treatment from her, she came up to me and told me how well I had worked, and how impressed she had been with my performance. She apologised to me for ignoring me, shared what she knew with me and took me under her wing. In spite of the fact that she sometimes may seem unfriendly, she's so nice at heart.

TOPIC CARD 5

Describe a useful website that you have visited.
You should say:

- what it was
- how you found the address
- what it contains
- and explain why it was /is useful to you.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

[...]

Through my friend

Downloadable materials

Information, updated, user-friendly, links

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

The website that I'm really interested in is [...]; one of the most visited educational websites. I visit it almost everyday as it is the homepage of my computer. I found it through one of my friends. Once, I saw an offline message, containing a link. When I clicked on the link and saw the website, I really found it beneficial. To describe this English educational website, I should say, it contains lots of downloadable materials; classified vocabulary, grammar structures, quizzes, and that sort of thing. There are many features that make this website different from other websites. Firstly, it provides a learner with lots of useful information, and...er... is updated with new content at regular intervals; you can always find quality information in it. Besides, it is very user-friendly and easy to navigate. Another aspect is that, it has many useful links to other sites. Last but not least, it is visually attractive and well-designed. In my opinion, it's such a functional website that no English learner should miss.

TOPIC CARD 6

Describe a gift you have received that was important to you.

You should say:

- who gave it to you
- on what occasion it was given to you
- what it looks like and how you use it
- and say why it is important to you.

PREPARATION TIME 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE NOTES

My wife
Birthday
Silver, rectangular, English files
Gift from a family member, applied

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I received a valuable gift from my wife about three years ago; on the occasion of my birthday. It was a famous brand MP3 player; really of high quality. I was so surprised when I opened its wrapping paper and saw the gift because it was exactly what I needed...er... you know, to improve my English in my spare time. I really admire her for the choice of that gift. It is silver, rectangular and...er... so simple in design. Now, I usually use this MP3 player to listen to English audio files on the way to my work and it really helps me make the best use of my time. It is a very useful device and...er... in fact, one of the best gifts that I have ever received so far. It's such an important gift for me, for one thing, I received it from one of my dearest family members, for another, it's an applied device that can be used anywhere. Another point is...er... by receiving that gift I noticed that my wife knows what I need to be able to take full advantage of my time to learn more and more.

TOPIC CARD 7

Describe a room that you like.

You should say:

- which room it is
- what makes this room special
- what it looks like
- and explain how you feel when you are in that room.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Kitchen

Meeting place

Fairly large, table, oven, fridge, board

Delighted

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

Well, I'd like to talk about the kitchen of our home. It's particularly important in my family. Let me explain why. What makes this room special is that it's not only where we cook but also the main meeting place for family and friends. When we have family gatherings, we all gravitate to the kitchen. It always ends up the fullest and the noisiest room in the house. Er... it is connected to our living room. It is quite large; roughly twenty square metres ...er... its floor is ceramic-tiled, and...er... has many cupboards and lots of counter space; there are many kitchen utensils...er...a chopping board, peeler, sieve, grater and other things. We have a fridge, electric oven and washing machine in it. There is a large dining table in the centre which serves a dual purpose, you know, a cupboard and a table. We usually eat at this table. There is a large bulletin board on the wall used for our daily shopping lists and new recipes. There are also some pictures and paintings on this board that we have many good memories of telling the story of our lives; past, present and even future! I love the kitchen of our home and feel delighted when I'm there. Its ambience is bright and so inviting. Without a doubt, some of the happiest times of my life have been spent in our kitchen.

TOPIC CARD 8

Describe an exam experience you had.

You should say:

- what the exam was
- how hard you studied
- how you felt the day of the exam
- and say whether you passed the exam or not.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Math

So hard,

Confident, relaxed

Pass

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I'd like to talk about the math exam that I took when I was a university freshman.

Er... to be honest, I was kind of weak in math subjects, and...er... what made the matter worse was my job. You know, during my university years, I had a part time job and it was always a challenge to leave my work and be present in the classes. I was awfully behind my lessons.

But for the final exam, I promised myself to do my best and get through the exam at any price. I spent lots of time going over every detail; studying and working out many activities to get ready for the exam. You know, building yourself up to a peak performance on the exam day is so important in any tests, and luck hardly comes into it. By the way, on the day of the exam, I was so confident, relaxed and motivated; needless to say I had decided to ace the exam. To make a long story short, I just sat down on the chair and turned the exam paper... Gosh!...I couldn't believe my eyes! it was all about chemistry not mathematics. I had gotten the date of the exam mixed up. Anyway, I did pass the math test with ease, but failed the chemistry test!

TOPIC CARD 9

Describe someone you know who is popular in your neighbourhood.

You should say:

- who he/she is
- when you first met him/her
- how you would describe his/her character
- and say what the reason of his/her popularity is.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Doctor

Six years ago

Committed, witty

Good doctor, kind, caring

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

Well, the person I am going to tell you about is our local doctor; the heart and soul of our neighbourhood. In fact, he's...um... a friend of mine; quite a good friend. I met him in the first week we moved to the area that we are living in, because we'd been living in the north before and had to move because of my job, and that was about six years ago. Er... once I had a bad headache and went to the clinic of our neighbourhood and he happened to be there, so he introduced himself as the doctor and we started chatting and became good friends straight away. What really impressed me was his sense of commitment. Er... whenever people are in trouble, he's ready to help. Er... He strikes me as the happiest person I know. He is so witty and has a good sense of humour...er.... he can always make people laugh even when they are not feeling well... so they start to feel better right away. The reason why I think he is so likable is that he is really a good doctor and appreciated for it in the whole neighborhood. I think everybody knows he's very kind and a caring person, so we all trust him and feel lucky to have him as our physician. He's truly a great person to know.

TOPIC CARD 10

Talk about your favourite free time activity.
You should say:

- when you first started it
- how often you do it
- whether you would like to do it on your own or with others
- and explain what you like about it.

PREPARATION TIME 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Tennis, 10
Twice, 3 times a month
With friends
Energetic, strategy, pace

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

Personally, I'm very sporty, but my most favourite sport has to be tennis which I've been playing for the last fifteen years. I first started it when I was at the age of ten. I can vividly remember the first time that I went to a tennis club and saw the tennis players. Yes, that was that! Now, I'm a good tennis player myself. But of course, it's a bit rusty these days. Unfortunately, I'm very busy with university lessons so I can hardly spare time for it. But believe me, if I could, I would play everyday...er...I usually play twice or three times a month. I have some friends who are so good at tennis. We usually go to a club called [...]...er...near our home. It has a great tennis court. Why do I like it so much? Because it's such an energetic sport which allows us to release tension and take our mind off things when we are busy-minded. Another point is that I don't consider it only as a sport. To me, it's a game of strategy and pace. When something isn't working in the first set, you have to change your strategy for the second set. You also have to save your energy in case you go to the third set, and constantly watch and read your opponent's reaction...er... and what keeps me going and playing? That's simply feeling fresher, fitter and healthier.

TOPIC CARD 11

Describe a dish that you know how to make.

You should say:

- if it is difficult to prepare
- how much time it takes to be prepared
- what the ingredients are
- and explain how it is prepared.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Joojejeh Kabab, needs skill

A few minutes

Chicken, sauce

Cut up, marinate, skewer, barbecue

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

Well, I'd like to talk about how to make my favourite food. It's called 'Joojejeh Kabab'. In English, 'Barbecued Chicken Kebab'; served both on formal and casual occasions. Although it's seems to be easy to prepare, it really needs skill. You know, cooking from a recipe is always easy, but the food is hardly ever enjoyable! If everything is prepared, it doesn't take too much; only a few minutes. As we all know, a good meal shouldn't be hurried. Anyway, in order to prepare the food, you need some chicken; it depends on the number of your guests or family members ...er... your favourite sauce, salt and any spice you like. First, put charcoal in the barbecue and light it. Then cut up some chicken. Marinate the pieces for a couple of hours in your favourite barbecue sauce. Next, put the pieces and chops on the skewers. After that put them on the barbecue and turn them over from time to time until it's gold and crispy. Finally, take the chicken kebabs off the barbecue. It's usually served with barbecued tomatoes and eaten either with rice or with bread. It's so delicious. You'll love it!

TOPIC CARD 12

Talk about the best city/country that you have been to.

You should say:

- where you were
- how long you were there
- what you like or dislike about it
- and say if you would like to travel again.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

[...]

3 months

Beauty, culture, people

Definitely

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

By far the most memorable thing was traveling to [...]. I had never been to [...] before and always wanted to. Even now, when I think of that, I feel nostalgic. I was there for about three months. What makes this country different from other countries is its natural beauty; the scenery of this country is astonishingly beautiful. Much of the land in [...] is still unspoiled; so pristine, and is not transformed like most big cities which are usually polluted. The cities of this country are best explored on foot, if you ask me. Another aspect which was so interesting to me was their lifestyles. I realised how really happy people are there, even though they have hardly anything in comparison to our lifestyle. You can see the amazing social culture and wonderful people who live there. They are so welcoming. I have a really strong passion for [...], and I'm definitely going to be returning for numerous visits throughout my life.

TOPIC CARD 13

Describe your favourite piece of clothing.

You should say:

- what it is and when you bought it
- where you bought it from
- why you decided to buy it
- and explain why it is your favourite.

PREPARATION TIME 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

Leather jacket, last year,

[...]

Cold weather, my friend's recommendation

Quality, stylish, feel confident

LENGTH OF TIME 1-2 MINUTES

My favourite piece of clothing is my leather jacket...er...made by a famous design company. I bought it last year. I wanted to buy a leather jacket because I wanted something to wear when the weather got colder. I bought it from a shop called [...]. It sells shoes, clothes and fashion accessories. The store is in the main shopping area of the city where my workplace was. My friend worked at the shop so I visited him almost everyday there and looked at the shoes and clothes. He helped me choose the jacket and told me what style looked best on me. He also said that the company that had made the jacket was very famous and...er... always makes quality clothes. My leather jacket is my favourite piece of clothing because it is very stylish and goes with almost everything in my wardrobe. It's very comfortable and I know it looks good so I feel confident when I wear it.

TOPIC CARD 14

Talk about one of your friends.

You should say:

- how long you have known each other
- how you met each other
- how you spend time together
- and explain why you like this person.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATES NOTES

8 years ago

School

Mountain climbing, chess

Good and bad times

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I'd like to talk about one of my friends, actually my best friend; [...]. We've been friends since high school- for about 8 years, I guess. Er... We were together in school for four years. After that we chose different majors and so we were separated in college. Yet, we've kept up our friendship. I think it is good today as it was then. In fact, we share lots of common interests, we both like outdoor activities, you know, mountain climbing, hiking, picnicking and that sort of thing. Also, we both have passion for chess. Wow! We spend hours playing chess. He's a very special person to me; a truly great friend to have...er... and is not just another fair-weather friend, you know; to leave you alone when you are in trouble. We all know that in times of prosperity friends are plentiful! He's been with me in both good and bad times, a devoted friend and ...er...so trusty. Um... both of us are committed to this friendship and value it.

TOPIC CARD 15

Describe the process of getting a job in your country.

You should say:

- what options are available to a job seeker
- what documents are usually required
- what stages are involved
- and explain how this process could be improved.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATES NOTES

Ads, employment agency, networking

Resume, cover letter, copies

Exam, interview

Database

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

In order to find a job, there are some options, for example, looking in the classified ads, going to an employment agency or networking, you know, meeting and talking to people who can help you. About what documents should be submitted...er...it depends on the job, but generally speaking, the required documents for applying a job are usually a resume, a cover letter, one or two photos, copies of the university degree, ID card and other things. You know, in some jobs, the applicant is required to take a written exam to make sure whether he or she is qualified enough to meet the initial requirements of the job or not. If the candidate is able to pass the exam...er... is invited for an interview, meanwhile his or her completed application is reconsidered. Sometimes, the candidate is offered the job on probation for a certain period of time; six months, for example. If the candidate is recommended, and the feedback which is given by the section or department manager is positive, the applicant is invited to sign the employment form. About the last question...er... I should say I'm no expert, but I think a good way to improve the current situation is to provide people with information; a database in which all job opportunities have been recorded, and can be found.

TOPIC CARD 16

Describe a serious problem in your hometown/city.
You should say:

- what it is
- what has caused this problem
- what can be done about the problem.
- and explain why you think it is serious.

PREPARATION TIME 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATES NOTES

Traffic

Cars, not enough roads, break the rules

Public transportation, carpooling, smart computer

Time, pollution

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I think the most critical problem of my city is heavy traffic jams. Er...most main streets are clogged, and cars move at a snail's pace especially in the rush hour, traffic is at a complete standstill; bumper to bumper. There are several reasons for this high volume of traffic. First of all, the number of private cars has increased considerably in the last few years and is not at all comparable with the number of roads built. I think the second reason is lack of attention to rules; many drivers and pedestrians don't obey the traffic rules, particularly at busy intersections. Of course, there are many ways to address this issue. To the best of my knowledge, the most important initiative is to improve public transportation; now, it's really in poor condition. Another effective solution to relieve traffic congestion is to encourage carpooling which contributes to the reduction of car users. It's time and money-saving . The last measure to ease traffic is to apply automated traffic management systems; designing a system which is controlled by a smart central computer. Traffic is such a serious problem and needs urgent attention, for one thing, lots of time is wasted in traffic jams, for another, as we all know, there is a direct link between traffic and air pollution. Such high level of pollution shouldn't be tolerated because it leads to many physical, mental and environmental problems.

TOPIC CARD 17

Talk about your favourite actor/actress.

You should say:

- who he/she is
- what his/her best film is
- what he/she looks like
- and explain why he/she is your favourite.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

[...]

[...], businessman

Athletic figure

Likeable character, born actor, all roles

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I'm a big fan of [...], a star of stage and screen; a superb actor. He's acted in a number of award-winning films. Also he has starred in many TV serials produced in Iran. To my mind, he gave his finest performance in [...] ;a thrilling film in which he plays the role of a successful businessman- his best-known role. It was both a critical success and a huge box office hit, and made an enormous profit. To describe him, I should say, he has an athletic figure with rugged face; really manly. He is not only famous, but also popular. As we all know, fame and popularity are different. He has a likeable character...er...really selfless. I love his acting. I believe he is a born actor; extremely versatile. He is at ease with all the roles given to him, and is efficiently able to immerse himself in characters. The interesting point is that he has done well both in serious and comic roles, and has played a variety of parts. In spite of the fact he is getting sort of stereotyped in some of his roles, he is still highly popular because I think he has a professional approach to his job. I'm sure that you'll have the same opinion if you see his movies.

TOPIC CARD 18

Talk about an important festival or national holiday in your country.

You should say:

- when it is celebrated
- how it is celebrated
- if it symbolises a message
- and explain why it is so special to you.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATES NOTES

New year, spring

Cleaning houses, visiting the elders, Haftseen, sizdahbedar

Freshness

History, beliefs

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

To my mind, 'Norooz' is the most important national festival in my country.

In Iranian culture, the coming of new year-the first day of spring is called Norooz and celebrated by many rituals and traditions; cleaning houses,...er... giving gifts, making resolutions and good wishes, visiting the elders, relatives and...er... a great chance to renew acquaintance with old friends. It is customary to sit around 'Haft Seen' tablecloth, you know, Haft Seen is a traditional tablecloth, set and decorated with seven symbolic items beginning with the Persian letter 'S'. In fact, each symbolic item represents a message. The celebration lasts for 13 days, and the last day of the ceremony is called 'sizdahbedar' in which people go for picnics and enjoy the natural outdoors. Norooz is the celebration of life and symbolises renewal and freshness. It is highly respected by Iranians because it represents the history, beliefs and traditions of my country, now, it is celebrated in other countries too. I believe its everybody's responsibility to make every effort to promote it and celebrate it as magnificently as possible.

TOPIC CARD 19

Describe a special occasion when you had a really enjoyable meal.

You should say:

- what the occasion was
- who was at the meal
- what was served, and you ate
- and explain why the meal was so enjoyable.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATE'S NOTES

New Year's Eve, new job

Family, friends

Chicken, salad, dessert, cake

Made by a chef

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

I can remember having a really enjoyable meal one New Year's Eve when I just started my new job at a company. I had always wanted to work for [...]; about two years after I had graduated from university. It was on New Year's Eve and my whole family was there including my parents, my elder brother and a couple of friends. We met up with some old school friends, it was like a reunion. Also my mother's best friend and her son joined us. It was a highly enjoyable occasion as most people knew each other. Also the food was great. Everybody came to our house and brought different dishes. We ate barbecued chicken, green salad, fried and baked potatoes. For dessert, we had plum pudding. We also had a delicious chocolate cake that was made by the son of my mother's friend who is a chef. Wow! The party was a blast! There were lots of excited whoops and cheers until late at night. We had a wild time; everyone talked and there was so much laughter that sometimes we had tears coming out of our eyes. It was a really great day with terrific food. Everybody had a wonderful time.

TOPIC CARD 20

Describe a place where you go shopping for clothes.

You should say:

- where you usually go
- how often you shop for clothes
- how you choose your clothes
- and explain why you go there.

PREPARATION TIME: 1 MINUTE

CANDIDATES NOTES

[...]

Beginning of seasons

Magazines, feel comfortable, looks good

variety of clothes, time-saving

LENGTH OF TIME: 1-2 MINUTES

When I go shopping for clothes I usually go to [...]. You know, It is famous for its high fashion shops as well as reasonably-priced outlets. I usually go there because I can buy high quality clothes that I know will look good for a long time as well as cheaper items that I may only wear for a season. I usually buy clothes at the beginning of each season because I buy clothes that are appropriate for the weather. Mostly, I buy clothes that I have seen in magazines and have liked. I won't buy something that I don't like just because it is in fashion. I also buy clothes that I feel comfortable in and make me look good. What I most like about shopping in [...] is that I can do all my shopping in one place. It has all the shops that I like as well as having a large variety of clothes to choose from; a wide selection of leading brands. I like it because I don't have to spend lots of time shopping around the city to get the things I want. I'd recommend anyone who wants to experience great shopping to go to there.

LINKING WORDS
Functions

Discourse markers link one idea to another in speech or writing. They clarify relationships between sentences and ideas for listeners or readers. The following words may have more than one function.

COMPARISON			
Similarly	Similar to	similar manner	Like
Just as	Just like	To be alike	Likewise
Almost the same as	The same as	In the same way	To have in common
As if	As though	Correspondingly	as (adj /adv) as
Identical(ly)	In relation to	Equal / Equivalent to	To resemble

CONTRAST			
However	Nevertheless	Still	Although
(Even) though	Despite/ In spite of	Despite the fact that	Whereas
In contrast	But	While	On the other hand
On the contrary	By (In) contrast	To compare to/ with	In comparison to
Conversely	Otherwise	Alternatively	Unlike
To differ from	Yet	Nonetheless	After all
Apart from	On (the) one hand	In practice	In theory

COMMENT & ATTITUDE			
Fortunately	Unfortunately	Incidentally	Normally
Typically	Interestingly	Surprisingly	Astonishingly
Ideally	Obviously	Honestly	Frankly
Personally	Clearly	Theoretically	Seriously
Predictably	Strongly	Miraculously	Understandably
Confidentially	Simply	Economically	Officially
Bitterly	Exactly	Precisely	Reasonably

PURPOSE			
For	In order (not) to do...	So as (not) to do...	So that

DEGREE & EXTENT & INTENSITY & EMPHASIS			
Moderately	Pretty	Quite	Relatively
Rather	Increasingly	Somewhat	Up to a point
Too	Almost	Practically	Completely
To some extent	To a great extent	To a limited extent	Thoroughly
Extremely	Exceedingly	Grossly	Notably
Significantly	Dramatically	Considerably	Immeasurably
Sufficiently	Adequately	Enough	Partly
Partially	Excessively	Mainly	Mostly
Fully	Approximately	Roughly	Just about
Greatly	Enormously	Highly	Noticeably
Really	Terribly	Truly	Unusually
Immensely	Tremendously	Entirely	Markedly
Barely	Profoundly	Virtually	Hugely
Pretty much	Fantastically	Amazingly	Outstandingly
Astoundingly	Absolutely	Undeniably	Unquestionably
Admittedly	Indeed	In fact	Particularly
Primarily	Incredibly	Naturally	More or less
Always	Increasingly	Entirely	Strongly
Evidently	Specifically	In particular	So
Such	Definitely	Certainly	Utterly
Remarkably	Undoubtedly	Awfully	Terribly
Eminently	Severely	Intensely	Acutely

ADDITION & SEQUENCE			
In addition	Furthermore	Moreover	Also
And	As well as	And now	Besides
For one thing...	Additionally	By this I mean	More importantly
One more point	First(ly)	To begin with	To start with
The first point	First of all	Initially	In the first place
The first feature	Secondly	Third(ly)	Subsequently
Next earlier	After that	Then	Afterwards
The former	The latter	What is more	Not only...but also
Later	Lastly	Ultimately	Finally

CAUSE			
For	Because	Since	As
Because of	Due to	That's why	The result of
The reason for	In the view of	For the sake of	By virtue of
Hence	now that	so (adj /adv) that	On account of

RESULT			
So	As a result	In consequence of	Consequently
Therefore	Thus	Accordingly	For this reason

RESTATEMENT & CONCLUSION			
In brief	In short	In a word	Generally
On the whole	Overall	In conclusion	In summary
In other words	all in all	That implies	As a general rule
In some senses	To be more precise	To be exact	To put it simply
That is (to say)	To sum up	To conclude	To summarise

ALTERNATIVE			
Or	either ...or	whether ...or...	Instead
Instead of	Rather than	Alternatively	Interchangeably

EXAMPLE			
For example	For instance	A prime example	Including
Namely	In this case	In another case	Take the case of
To illustrate	To clarify this point	To take another example	In particular
Such as	Like	A case in point is	particularly
Particularly	A good example of this is	In case of	As a model/sample

CONDITION			
If	Even if	If so	If not
Provided that	Providing	On condition that	Depending on
It (all) depends on	Unless	Otherwise	As long as

TIME & FREQUENCY			
As soon as	Just as	Meanwhile	While
When	Immediately	Lately	Recently
Now	During	Since	For
Shortly before	Long before	Shortly after	Soon after
Long after	In the (near) future	As long as	These days
Nowadays	At present	At the same time	At the moment
Until very recently	Until	After	before
By the time	Ever since	Since then	Later
Whenever	So far	Simultaneously	Eventually
At last	Gradually	Little by little	Bit by bit
Hardly ever	Regularly	Normally	Soon
In no time	Later	Constantly	Over and over
Currently	All the time	Most of the time	Now and then
Now and again	Just now	In the course of time	Sooner or later
In due course	Prior to	Always	Occasionally
From time to time	At times	Sometimes	Once in a while
Pretty often	Pretty frequently	Seldom	Almost never
Scarcely	Almost always	Every now and then	Periodically
At (regular) Intervals	Commonly	All the time	On and off
(Every) now and then	Continuously	Intermittently	Rarely
Predominately	On a regular basis	On a daily basis	On occasion (s)
Once in a while	As usual	Every day/week	Every other day/week

CERTAINTY & PROBABILITY			
Definitely	Certainly	Most probably	Probably
Maybe	Perhaps	Possibly	Supposedly
Un/likely	Highly unlikely	Presumably	seemingly

EXPRESIONS
Functions

LIKES		
I like/love/adore/enjoy...	I've always liked/loved	I'm quite fascinated by...
I'm (very/deeply) interested in..	My main interest is...	...interests/fascinates me a lot.
I'm (really) fond of...	I have a particular fondness for...	I'm really keen on...
I am a real fan of...	... really appeals to mea great/ marvellous way to ...
I'm intrigued by...	...has always intrigued me	It would make sense to me
I find it (quite/ absolutely) fascinating/interesting/enjoyable	It's fine/ excellent/ great/ superb fantastic/ fabulous/ marvellous	It's amazing/ smashing/ perfect/ wonderful/ incredible/ terrific

DISLIKES		
I don't like/enjoy/...very much.	I dislike/hate...	I don't (particularly) care for...
I am not (very) interested in...	It's (terribly/ awfully) boring.	I find...sort of boring
...rather bores me.	It's too...	I don't like...at all.
I don't go for...(Infml)	I'm not into...(Infml)	It doesn't appeal to me
It's tedious	I am not fond of...	I am not keen on...
I find...(particularly/ really/ very) unattractive/ unpleasant	I really expect it to be better/ nicer/...	I don't find it very interesting.
I don't think it's very interesting/ exciting.	Um... I don't have much/any interest in...	I find...(rather/ very/ totally) boring/ dull

NEUTRALITY		
It makes no difference to me	It's all the same to me	I don't mind
I don't care.	It doesn't matter to me whether ...or not.	I don't hold any particular position on that issue/matter

PREFERENCE		
I'd (much) prefer ... to ...	I'd prefer not to...	I'd (much) rather (not)...
I'd like ...	I tend to prefer...	I enjoy...(much) more than...
I like... more/ better than...	I'm much more interested in...	I'm (much) more attracted to...
My choice/ preference would be...	On the whole, I find... more attractive/interesting/enjoyable	On balance, ... appeals to me more than...

ABILITY		
I'm able to...	I can...	I'm (pretty) good at...
I have the experience/ ability/ qualifications necessary to	I'm capable of ...	I feel capable of ...

CLARIFICATION		
I mean	What I mean is...	What I'm trying to say is...
That means...	In short	Well, as a matter of fact
Here, I'm referring to...	In fact	To be more precise,
To be exact...	In other words	Let's put it this way

ACCOMPLISHMENTS		
I've managed...	I have managed to...	I'd like to have...
I've been able to...	I was able to...	I hope I'll have...

CAUSES		
... is the main contributing factor.	... is the cause of...	... is caused by...
There is a direct/close link between ... and ...	One of the main causes of this problem is ... Another cause is...	The most important reason why... Another reason is ...

FUTURE (PLANS & HOPES & PREDICTION & CERTAINTY & PROBABILITY)		
Next week/ month/ year	I'm planning to...	I'd like/ want to...
In the next few days/ weeks/ months/ years...	In the next couple of days/ weeks/ months/ years...	By the end of the days/ week/ month/ year...
My dream is to.../ My ambition is to...	I'm (really) determined to...	I have a real desire to...
I am very optimistic...	I hope.../ Hopefully	I'm confident...
I feel (quite) sure about...	I think/I don't think/ I believe/ I assume/ guess/ suppose...	There is a good/ a 50-50/ reasonable chance that...
There is a little/ not much chance that...	It is probable/ likely/ unlikely that...	I predict/ anticipate...will lead to/ result in...
I foresee/ I can't foresee any problems...	I strongly suspect this will...	From what I've heard/read, it seems...
This will undoubtedly/ certainly/ definitely lead to...	This will probably/ possibly lead to...	This would/might lead to...

OPINIONS		
I think	I tend to think	Personally I think
To my mind	From my point of view	I (firmly) believe
In my view	In my experience	I would say...
To the best of my knowledge	In my opinion	It seems to me/ the way I see it...
As far as I'm concerned	As far as I can see	For my money (Infml)
What I think is this...	I'd like to point out...	It is a good idea to...

OPINIONS (PASSIVE STRUCTURE)		
It is said that	It is believed that...	It is thought that...
It is expected that...	It is considered...	It is understood...
It is known that...	It is reported that...	It is alleged that...

TOTAL AGREEMENT		
Exactly	Absolutely	I agree entirely
I (totally/completely/quite) agree	I couldn't agree more (I completely agree)	So do/did/can...I
Neither do/did/can... I	I feel the same way	That's just what I was thinking
I'm in favour of...	I think it's a good idea because...	I go along with the idea that.../ with your view that...
I couldn't agree more	I think it's justifiable in some ways.	I share your opinion that/ on the issue of...

PARTIAL AGREEMENT		
I agree on the whole	I agree up to a point...	That's quite right, but...
I agree to some extent.	Well, you have a point there, but...	Hmm, Possibly, but...

DISAGREEMENT		
Um...I actually think	I don't agree/disagree	I don't think so
I tend to disagree	I'm completely against it because...	I'm not at all in favour of it.
I'm completely opposed to that idea	I'm inclined to disagree with that	I'm afraid. I don't go along with this idea
I'm afraid I don't share the opinion	Not necessarily	That doesn't necessarily follow/happen...
You may have a point. Nevertheless, I think...	I'm not sure that it works like that	That's highly unlikely
There is no justification for...	I'm afraid. I don't think there is a link between...and...	I would not say that
I don't altogether agree with you	I'm bound to say I disagree with you on this point	That's not possible

SOLUTIONS		
...to/ in order to address, deal with, tackle, handle this issue	...to/ in order to improve, develop, expand, increase ...	There are three things to consider First of all...Next...Finally...
The best alternative/ solution/ initiative (would be/ is to ...)	The best measure/ policy/ way/ strategy (would be/ is to...)	One thing to do about it is to...

PART 3

DISCUSSION

TIPS of PART 3

Speaking test

Part 3:

Discussion (4-5 minutes)

The examiner will invite you to discuss a number of issues, broadly related in theme to the Part 2. The questions will increase in difficulty slightly as this part of the test progresses.

DOS AND DONT'S

- Remember **there is no right or wrong answer**.
- Try to give **informed, interesting and appropriate responses** to the examiner's prompts.
- Try to have a **clear understanding of the questions**.
- Don't worry if you can't think of a word. You can **paraphrase** and get around it.
- Be willing to **give extended responses**.
- Show your ability by expressing abstract ideas, **support your opinions, point out both positive and negative aspects and speculate about the future**.
- Listen carefully which word to address and build your answer around.
 - *What are the benefits of vegetarianism?*

Obviously, you need to speak about the benefits. **Use a paraphrase or synonym when answering.**

- Use **appropriate introductory phrases**. You can give an opinion without using an opening clause, but it will sound very direct. To soften your responses, it is better to start with an expression such as:
 - *Personally I think*
 - *In my opinion*
 - *To my mind*
 -
- If you are asked to talk a subject you have never thought about, the most important thing is not to panic. **Avoid responding with 'I don't know' or 'I have no idea'**. To think of an idea or speak more naturally, you can use the following phrases.

- *What I'm trying to say is...*
- *I'm not sure. You could say..., but...*
- *I'm fairly certain that...*
- *Well, there's a fifty-fifty chance of...*
- *Generally speaking*
- *Broadly speaking*
- *Personally speaking*
- *Metaphorically speaking*
- *Practically speaking*
- *Relatively speaking*
- *Simply speaking*
- *Technically speaking*
- *Roughly speaking*
- *To put it more simply*
- *To be more exact*
- *To put it more accurate*
- *To be honest/ realistic, I have different views about/ on [...]*
- *I don't foresee any problems in the future.*
- *It's almost impossible to predict what will happen*
- *The (economic) consequences of [...] are enormous*
- *Well, it's difficult to say, but in my experience*
- *It's a difficult issue*
- *I think it's a complicated issue*
- *Well, it's hard to say*
- *That's an interesting point I think I would have to say...*
- *Beyond any doubt...*
- *It's hard to say. One way of looking at it is..., but...*
- *To be honest, that's not something I've ever really thought about, but I suppose...*
- *Perhaps I should make that clearer by saying...*
- *Let me illustrate my point by...*
- *I'm no expert but I think*
- *If you ask me,*
- *Er... maybe this question requires some expertise, but to the best of my knowledge...*
- *There is no simple solution to the problem of [...]*
- *It's reasonable to say...*
- *The truth (of the matter) is...*
- *As a matter of fact...*
- *In fact, this is an issue of much importance to everyone*
- *It's a matter of the greatest importance to me*
- *In fact, many factors should be taken into account/considered*
- *There are many different opinions about this issue, but I think*
- *Well, people have got mixed feelings about that*
- *Another justification is...*
- *Another reason why....*

- *Another point to keep in mind is...*
- *To my mind, it's quite justifiable/defensible/reasonable/acceptable*
- *I think it's justifiable in some ways*
- *Um...I think it depends on...*
- *I think it would be pointless*
- *I think it's worth...*
- *There are lots of advantages/disadvantages associated with...*
- *... has both advantages and disadvantages*
- *Actually, there is a lot of controversy about...*
- *I think this issue continues to be a subject of controversy*
- *It's such a controversial issue*
- *It's an issue with lots of pros and cons*
- *The effects can be both positive and negative, but overall I think the advantages of [...] outweigh the disadvantages.*
- *I think the benefits of [...] far outweigh its risks*
- *You can look at this issue from different angles*
- *Basically, there are two ways to look at this issue*
- *I can see both sides*
- *It's hard to predict*
- *It's impossible to foresee*
- *I think [...] should be banned/outlawed/prohibited/forbidden/prevented/ limited/restricted*
- *I think [...] should be supported/ promoted/ encouraged/ legalized/ organised*
- *In a word,...*
- *To recap, I should say...*
- *To sum up, I should mention...*

- When you are asked a 'How question' (How+ adjective/adverb), you can use **an adverb of degree to express your opinion.**

Examiner: How important is it to have a regular fitness programme?

Candidate: *I think it is highly/incredibly important.*

- When you are asked for your opinion on a subject, you can **avoid sounding too dogmatic by using suitable linking words.** e.g. *Although, Admittedly, Despite the fact...*

 - *Although computers are very useful in everyday life, I think we rely too heavily on them.*
 - *Admittedly, it's hard to learn but it's worth trying.*

- If you don't know much about a topic, talk about something related to that topic then explain the connection. This is not ideal, but better than saying nothing at all !

100 Absolutely Essential Topics (A-Z)			
1. Accidents	26. Crime	51. GM food	76. Obesity
2. Acid rain	27. Cultural heritage	52. Happiness	77. Over population
3. Addiction	28. Culture	53. High rise buildings	78. Parenting
4. Adoption	29. Culture shock	54. History	79. Personality
5. Advertising	30. Diet	55. Hobbies	80. Pets
6. Aging	31. Disability	56. Holiday	81. Poverty
7. Agriculture	32. Distance learning	57. Home schooling	82. Public transport
8. Aids	33. Divorce	58. Homelessness	83. Recycling
9. Air pollution	34. Doping	59. Housing	84. Satellites
10. Animal testing	35. Education	60. Illiteracy	85. School discipline
11. Art	36. Energy	61. Industrial relations	86. Smoking
12. Astrology	37. Environment	62. (The) internet	87. Space exploration
13. Automation	38. Fame	63. Jobs	88. Sport
14. Brain drain	39. Family	64. Juvenile delinquency	89. Sporting events
15. Bribery	40. Family ties	65. Language	90. Sportsmanship
16. Charity	41. Famine	66. Law	91. Stress
17. Child care	42. Fashion, clothing	67. Life expectancy	92. Success
18. Child labour	43. Fear	68. Marriage	93. Tourism
19. Childhood	44. Festivals	69. Mass media	94. Traffic
20. Children's education	45. Field trips	70. Memory	95. TV
21. City life	46. Film	71. Migration	96. Unemployment
22. Climate	47. Friendship	72. Modern life	97. Urban sprawl
23. Computer games	48. Generation gap	73. Music	98. Violence
24. Computerisation	49. Global warming	74. Natural disasters	99. Water pollution
25. Country life	50. Globalisation	75. Noise pollution	100. Zoos

Main functions:

- FOR & AGAINST
- PROS & CONS
- CAUSE & EFFECT

Accidents:

TOPIC 1

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

There are many contributors to traffic accidents including bad driving habits, drunk driving, over confidence of the drivers, violation of essential rules, (e.g. speeding and driving recklessly), distraction, carelessness, tiredness, navigational errors, poor road conditions, defective equipment and deficiencies in the vehicle, poor visibility, poor weather conditions, relaxation of driving and safety laws, lack of law enforcement and inadequate public education on this issue

Suggestions to reduce car accidents:

The most effective way to reduce the number of accidents is to promote public education, (e.g. workshops and free booklets). A measure to reduce the number of accidents is to redesign and reshape poor roads. Equipping roads and streets with necessary facilities, (e.g. putting up more road signs, installing speed control devices and providing more speed bumps and humps) .

Some preventive programmes include reducing car insurance, toughening driving laws and treating law-breakers more harshly, e.g. revoking the delinquents' driving license.

Discussion Questions:

1. Additional police enforcement is the most effective alternative to reduce the number of car accidents.' How far do you agree?
2. Do you think car accidents can be avoided by technological devices?
3. 'The best way to reduce the number of traffic accidents is to make all young drivers a complete safe driving education course before being licensed to drive.' How effective is this?
4. 'Hit and run drivers should be treated the same way as anyone who attacks a person with any other deadly weapon.' Do you agree or disagree?

Acid rain:

TOPIC 2

KEY IDEAS

Effects:

Acid rain causes extensive damage to vegetation, water resources, natural ecosystem and living organisms, e.g. aquatic ecosystems are seriously threatened by acidic water. Acid rain can cause many health problems, e.g. skin disorders. Acid rain endangers the wildlife, it can even make animal species extinct. Acid rain damages agricultural products and often makes heavy losses.

Acid rain is highly corrosive, it can damage the stonework of buildings and statues.

Some measures to prevent acid rain:

Since sulphur dioxide which is released to the atmosphere known as a pollutant and a major contributor to acid rain made by burning fossil fuels and wood, therefore, the most effective alternative to prevent acid rain is to use environmentally-friendly and renewable source of energy. Other suggestions to address air pollution are as follows; imposing vehicle emission standards to control pollutants, introducing more efficient laws to deal with this environmental issue, encouraging industries to move to suburbs by providing enough incentives and other financial assistance.

Discussion Questions:

1. What course of action should be taken to prevent acid rain?
2. 'The best way to deal with air pollution is enacting stricter laws.' Do you agree?
3. Who is more to blame for the environmental crisis called 'Acid rain'; people or governments?

Addiction:

TOPIC 3

KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

Weak willpower, personality deficiencies, family breakdown, poor family environments, regular use of tobacco products, recreational drug use, peer pressure, joblessness, and relaxation of laws.

Suggestions to help the addicts:

Addiction rehabilitation programmes include occupational therapy; vocational training, job placement, life skills training, community education, family support, behaviour therapy, medical treatment, counselling sessions to build up the addict's character, providing ongoing training for educators and treatment providers, and preventive programmes. (Prevention is better than cure.)

Measures to address drug addiction:

To promote public education, to take action against drug trafficking by applying punishment oriented approaches, to limit the availability of addictive drugs by tightening up the laws on drug possession.

Effects:

Drug addiction causes a number of psychological problems, such as anxiety, loneliness, self-pity, self-blame, hopelessness, concentration disorders and learning disabilities. Addiction can cause many physiological and physical problems, such as lung cancer and respiratory diseases. Drug dependence destroys human spirit and mental capabilities. Drug addiction destroys family relationships and is known as a major cause of family breakdown. Drug abuse is the root of many crimes.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, how can drug addiction be addressed or treated?
2. Do you think addiction should be considered as an illness?

Adoption:

TOPIC 4

KEY IDEAS

Role:

The primary aim of adoption is to promote the welfare of disadvantaged children.

One of the major benefits for the child is that he or she is provided with adoptive parents who are emotionally and financially ready to be parents.

Adoption gives adoptive parents the ability to fulfill their dreams of having a child.

Adopted children receive a two-parent home and sometimes even a brother or sister.

Statistics show that adopted children are provided with a greater chance of a good education.

The goal of adoption is to provide a permanent, secure and nurturing environment for the child.

Adoption promotes the well-being of children, birthparents and adoptive families.

Discussion Questions:

1. 'Adoption is a lifelong commitment.' How do you understand this?
2. Can you mention some reasons why people choose to adopt?
3. Should adoption be encouraged?
4. Who should be considered as the real parent, foster parents, or biological parents?
5. What qualities do you think adoptive parents need to be allowed to adopt children?
6. In your opinion, what are the social effects of adoption?
7. In what ways do you think adoption promotes the spiritual values in a society?
8. Do you think that adoptive parents should maintain the adopted child's cultural identity?
9. Where possible, should the adoptive parents maintain contact with the natural parents?
10. Should biological parents be allowed to reclaim their adopted children?
11. Do you think adopting children from other countries is good?
12. Should parents tell the adopted children that they were adopted? Why/not? If so, at what age?

Advertising:

TOPIC 5 KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Advertising plays a key role in heightening competition, lowering prices, introducing new products and services, helping people to find their latent needs, raising people's awareness. Advertising provides people with a lot of useful information. It enables consumers to make intelligent choices

Cons:

Most advertisers use tricks and catchy slogans to persuade people to buy things that they don't need. In other words, most advertisements are intended to create unreal needs. Most products which are advertised are flashy and poor in quality, but they are heavily hyped. Most advertisements are tempting and misleading; they work through suggestion, and give people unrealistic expectations, and usually affect people's shopping habits. Advertisers only think about sales promotion to capture more market share. Information is often misinformation. Some methods used in advertising are unethical and unacceptable, e.g. using gimmicks to target people to buy new products.

Role of consumers' association:

Most consumers associations are formed to protect consumers from unsafe products, help consumers to file formal complaints and deal with profiteering and overcharging.

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent and how does advertising affect people's purchasing decisions?
2. What factors influence your choice of products to buy? Think of advertising, quality and durability, peer pressure, competitive price, special offers, style, brand, loyalty, etc.
3. Do you think 'consumerism' should be considered as an opportunity or a threat?
4. Why modern society is often called 'materialistic'?

Aging & The elderly care:

TOPIC 6 KEY IDEAS

Causes of early aging:

Early aging is due to genetic and environmental factors. Non-genetic factors which contribute to early aging include poor lifestyles, inferior nutrition, low activity levels, excessive weight gain, harmful environmental elements, e.g. excessive UV light exposure and air pollution.

Suggestions to delay aging:

Aging can be slowed to some extent by having a healthy lifestyle; a balanced diet and healthy eating habits, sensible weight control, regular physical activities, proper exercise and relaxation, plenty of rest, adequate sleep, proper medical care, e.g. regular check-ups and screening, regular use of quality supplements, having a skin care programme and protection from ultraviolet light, and adequate attention to spiritual needs.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are many people dread growing old? What are the sorrows and joys of old age?
2. Do you think people have fewer goals as they get older?
3. Do you think people take fewer risks as they grow older?
4. Why might a person's needs change as a result of age?
5. Discuss how life can be made easier for the elderly.
6. Should people accept it as their duty to take care of their aging parents? Discuss.
7. Do you think that it is the responsibility of the young to provide financial security for the aged?
8. In what ways do you think nursing homes help the elders?
9. In your opinion does the rise in the number of old people affect the economy? Explain.
10. What after-retirement programmes can be devised to maintain the mental health of the retired?
11. In your opinion, should the elderly care services be provided by the tax payers? Why /not?

Agriculture:

TOPIC 7 KEY IDEAS

Role:

Agriculture plays an important role in the national economy of a country: it contributes to the GDP and GNP (Gross Domestic/National Product) of countries. Agriculture forms the backbone of the rural economy. One of the benefits of developing agriculture is reducing rural poverty.

Agriculture provides food security.

Agriculture provides a variety of job opportunities.

Agriculture contributes to natural beauty and scenic landscapes.

Suggestions to develop agriculture:

In order to develop agriculture the following ideas are suggested :stabilising markets, guaranteeing a minimum price for agricultural products, supporting farmers with educational and technical assistance, reducing production costs and increasing productivity by offering equipment leasing services, constructing efficient irrigation networks, setting fair standards of living for the farmers population, and offering financial supports and loans in order to promote agricultural activities

Discussion Questions:

1. What suggestions do you put forward to encourage agriculture?
2. What role might agriculture have in developing the rural sections of a country?
3. Do you think agriculture should be treated differently from other industries? Why/ not?
4. In your opinion, in what ways does agriculture contribute to economic growth?
5. How does agriculture contribute to ecologically sustainable development?
6. What do you think are the pros and cons of 'mechanisation of agriculture'?
7. How can 'modern farming methods' cause unemployment?

AIDS:

TOPIC 8 KEY IDEAS

Causes:

The main causes are as follows: AIDS can be transmitted through using contaminated and shared blood products, and sexual contact with an infected partner.

Suggestions to prevent AIDS:

Preventive measures include educating people on how the disease is spread, promoting moral values, making testing services and anti-HIV drugs available.

Governments should take steps to address AIDS, e.g. setting up HIV prevention workshops and counseling sessions designed to increase people's awareness.

Discussion Questions:

1. 'It's said that there is no vaccine against HIV infection'. Do you think AIDS will ever be eradicated?
2. What would be the best course of action to combat AIDS?
3. How could media contribute to the reduction of AIDS?
4. What do you think rich countries should do to help poorer countries with many AIDS sufferers?
5. Why do you think prevention measures are the best ways to address AIDS?
6. Do you think there is a link between AIDS and poverty? If so, explain how it can contribute to the spread of AIDS and the number of AIDS victims.

Air Pollution:

TOPIC 9

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Air pollution is due to various causes, such as burning fossil fuels and emission of hazardous pollutants caused by factories and automobiles, e.g. carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.

Effects:

Air pollution causes many health problems, such as respiratory diseases, eye irritation and premature newborn babies. Air pollution can destroy the ozone layer that protects us from the harmful rays of the sun and consequently, air pollution contributes to global warming. Air pollution damages natural resources and leads to ecosystem degradation and poor air quality.

How to minimise air pollution:

Air pollution can be reduced by implementing energy efficiency programmes, introducing vehicle emission standards, expanding car replacement programmes; new cars with old cars, extending environmentally-friendly means of transport; expanding public transport facilities, e.g. park-and-ride terminals, providing carpool facilities, regular check-ups for cars should be obligatory; use of more efficient engines and modern exhaust-filtering devices, using cleaner fuels (unleaded petrol is less harmful), and developing tree planting programmes.

Discussion questions:

1. Why is air pollution a global health concern?
2. Do you think anti-pollution measures should be a high priority?
3. What can large cities do to improve their air quality?
4. In your opinion, how can poor air quality impact the natural environment?
5. Who do you think is more responsible for air pollution; people or governments?

Animal testing:

TOPIC 10

KEY IDEAS

For:

The supporters of animal testing argue that many medical treatments and procedures have been developed from experiments on animals, a total ban on the use of animals will prevent a great deal of basic medical research and the possible production of certain vaccines. Experiments on animals assist in discovering ways to help people and other animals for the future. Animal testing provides scientists with important data to treat human diseases. Legislation in most countries set standards for animal testing and laboratories have guidelines to prevent cruelty.

Against:

Animals rights campaigners argue that animals have the right to live their own lives peacefully and we aren't allowed to meddle with them just because we can. Many experiments cause discomfort, suffering, harm, pain and death. There are other alternatives available; computer simulation can be used to observe the results of drugs on the animals. The opponents to animal research say that the results are not applicable to humans. They believe animal testing is cruel, inhumane and unethical.

Discussion Questions :

1. Do you think animal testing should be considered on a case by case basis? If so, under what circumstance and to what extent should it be allowed?
2. Do you think animal testing for cosmetics and household products should be banned?
3. Do you favour or oppose the use of animal organs (such as hearts or kidneys) as transplants in humans when human organs are not available? Explain.
4. Why do you think animal cloning is such a controversial issue? Should it be allowed or not?

Art:**TOPIC 11**

KEY IDEAS

Effects of art:

The role of art is to express feelings, convey opinions, transmit values, connect people with a common vision, enhance the sensitivity of humans, encourage self-expression, creativity and innovation, sharpen and enlighten the mind, encourage analytical thinking, stimulate imagination, enhance critical thinking by presenting new ideas, raise questions, promote dialogue, bridge the gap among cultures, bring joy through harmony, colour and form. Art is the combination of techniques and creativity. Art is a way of self-expression and self-fulfillment. Art is a universal language and can be enjoyed by different people. Art is inspiring. Life without art would be dull and incomplete.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, in what ways does art enrich life?
2. Do you think art needs to be described? Do you think art always has to be beautiful?
3. Does something have to be original to be art? Can a forgery or copy be art?
4. What criteria should be considered to call something a work of art?
5. In what ways does art influence events in society. In reverse, how is art influenced by society?
6. Do you think art is an effective way to express an opinion or idea?
7. In what ways is art bringing the world together?
8. What do you think art will be like 50 years from now?
9. 'The arts should be rejected in favor of more practical studies.' Do you agree or disagree?
10. What issues do you think an artist should consider when creating work for a public place?
11. How do you think an artist can make a difference in peoples' lives?
12. Should governments spend money on art, when they have so many other important issues and concerns?

Astrology:**TOPIC 12**

KEY IDEAS

For:

Astrology can be used for describing the character of individuals and increasing self-awareness. Astrology helps us gain new perspectives about ourselves, understand our strengths and weaknesses. Astrology is a tool of empowerment; it promotes self-understanding and self-discovery. Astrology helps us predict impending events and other issues. Astrology is a harmless and amusing pastime. No one has been known to make a scientific study of astrology and then reject it.

Against:

Astrology promotes fatalism, superstition and illusion. The principles of astrology are irrational and unscientific. Astrology promotes the worst thing in the world; uncritical thinking. Astrology has no acceptable mechanism; its principles are invalid and it has failed hundreds of tests.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think astrology really works, or is it just a silly myth?
2. Astrology columns are among the most widely-read features in newspapers. Why?
3. Do you think astrology will ever be proven by science?
4. Should astrology be taught in science classes alongside astronomy? Can it be made a formal course of study?
5. 'Astrological signs are tied to personality traits.' Do you agree or disagree?
6. Should astrology programmes on television be banned?
7. What is your opinion about fortune telling?
8. In spite of advances in scientific knowledge some people are still superstitious. In your opinion, what are the main reasons?

Automation

TOPIC 13

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Some advantages of automation include higher product quality, greater production capacity and higher output, efficient use of materials, reduced factory lead times and fewer worker health problems. Automation has helped to reduce the workload and operational costs.

Robots are used to perform a wide range of tasks that require speed, flexibility and high level of precision that result in greater control and consistency of product quality. Labour saving machines can be programmed to perform the same tasks over and over; most production lines are repeatable and self-checking. Robots aren't impressed by human behaviour.

Automation gives humans an opportunity to relieve from repetitive, hazardous, and unpleasant tasks.

Cons:

The main disadvantages often associated with automation are unemployment, redundancies and layoffs; many workers have been displaced by modern technologies.

High capital expenditure and ongoing maintenance costs required to invest in automated machines.

Purchased equipment become outdated and are not usually compatible with new devices.

Discussion Questions:

1. Would you agree that intelligent machines take the place of human beings in no time? What are the consequences of this? What do you think robots should be used for?
2. How far should robots be allowed to influence people's lives?
3. Should robots be programmed to think? What are some positive and negative aspects?
4. 'Automation destroys human creativity and innovation.' How far do you agree or disagree?
5. Will technology ever reach a stage where considered perfect, or will it always be evolving?

Brain drain:

TOPIC 14

KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

Some 'Push' factors are economic instability, shortage of educational and research facilities, desire for higher qualifications, poor working conditions, limited career prospects, low salaries, unemployment, desire for a better urban life, political unrest and conflicts. Some 'Pull' factors are better economic prospects, modern educational systems, better research facilities, better opportunities for higher qualifications, prestige of foreign training, higher salaries and incomes, better employment opportunities, higher standards of living, and attraction of overseas life.

Effects:

Brain drain hinders sustainable development and economic growth. Brain drain is a burden to the economy; the national budget spent on the education of students who ultimately contribute to economies of other countries.

Suggestions to address brain drain:

Ensuring economic stability, providing adequate educational facilities, supporting think-tanks and researchers financially, and providing elites with necessary facilities.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the social and cultural effects of brain drain?
2. Do you think that brain drain is the natural effect of globalisation?
3. Do you think brain drain is a form of modern slavery?
4. Can brain drain ever be beneficial?
5. 'Immigration is naturally associated with brain drain.' How far do you agree?
6. When do you think 'brain gain' occurs?

Bribery:

TOPIC 15

KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

Bribery is rooted in lack of accountability, inefficient administrative systems and mismanagement. Financial corruption is committed due to lack of well-defined or rigid laws, incomplete regulations and laxity of administrative laws. Poor law enforcement can contribute to bribery. Financial problems and low salaries can lead to bribery.

Effects:

Bribery is against organisational code of ethics. Bribery is the abuse of power and authority. Corruption and bribery hinder sustainable development and economic growth. Corruption causes a growing gap between the rich and the poor.

Suggestions to prevent bribery:

An effective way to deal with bribery is promoting moral values. A good way to avoid bribery is defining efficient administrative systems. Bribery can be prevented by introducing stricter laws, imposing heavy penalties on bribery can be an effective course of action, bribe takers and bribe givers should be treated more severely.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can corruption be identified and eradicated?
2. Do you think bribery is due to greed or need? Explain.
3. Who is more to blame – the person who offers a bribe or person who takes it? Explain.
4. In your opinion, how can transparency in administrative systems be achieved?
5. In what ways do you think bribery encourage transgression?

Charity:

TOPIC 16

KEY IDEAS

Missions of charities:

Most non-profit foundations are intended to relieve human suffering, improve living conditions of the needy, help disadvantaged people who live in poverty, provide necessary facilities for depressed areas, provide accommodation assistance, provide medical care for low-income families and individuals, improve educational standards, raise donation for victims of natural disasters, promote public awareness about different social issues, support and strengthen families, provide low-interests loans for low-income earners, provide employment opportunities, support people who suffer from physical and mental diseases, assist the disabled by providing free training courses. Some charities programmes include adoption services, aid to immigrants, public education, supply of expensive medical equipment and services.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the objectives of most charities?
2. In your opinion, how can charities be supported?
3. In what ways do you think non-profit foundations differ from commercial organisations?
4. Do you think that charities should be involved in business activities?
5. Do you think charities should be exempted from tax?
6. Choose a charity and discuss why do you think people should donate to it.
7. In your opinion, how can people be encouraged to do voluntary work?

Childcare:

TOPIC 17 KEY IDEAS

Role of childcare:

Childcare is to promote the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development of children. Childcare is mainly intended to provide a variety of health-promoting and disease-preventing services, such as providing a warm, safe, homelike and nurturing environment for children.

Types of childcare:

In general, childcare refers to family daycare, childcare providers, nursery schools, caregivers, trained teachers, pre-school centres, after-school care programmes, and in-home care programmes.

Discussion Questions:

1. It is said that children are protected too much now, Do you think it is true?
2. 'Childcare is a public investment.' To what extent do you agree?
3. Should childcare institutions be free?
4. 'It is believed the day care centre is the third parent.' Why?
5. Do you think childcare should be seen as women's issue?
6. Do you think childcare responsibilities should be equally divided at home?
7. 'The nanny or the day-care centre is the third parent.' How far do you agree?
8. Do you think it is harmful for children to be in day-care centres all day?
9. What type of professional development do you think childcare providers and teachers should have for working with pre-school children?
10. Do you think childcare centres should be exempted from tax?

Child labour:

TOPIC 18 KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Inefficient labour laws and lack of law enforcement can lead to child labour. The rise in child labour is usually the result of the decline in education opportunities. Child labour can be due to many socio-economic problems, such as family poverty, family breakdown, and child abuse.

Effects:

Child labour affects the intellectual development of the child.
Child labour endangers the child's learning ability.
Child labour prevents many children from attending school.
Child labour is associated with health issues; child labour damages children's mental health and causes irreversible physical harm. Child labour contributes to adult unemployment as children are hired at lower wages. Child labour is exploitative and is against moral principles.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does child labour occur?
2. Why is child labour a concern for governments?
3. Is child labour a matter of concern to your country?
4. How can child labour be effectively addressed?
5. Do you think family types are related to the child poverty issues?
6. 'Child labour will be abolished only when poverty is eradicated.' Do you agree?
7. 'The most effective way to prevent child labour is compulsory education.' How far do you agree?
8. 'Compulsory school education is the best way to deal with child labour.' Do you share the opinion?

Childhood:

TOPIC 19
KEY IDEAS

Childhood:

Childhood is a time filled with happy memories of carefree play and excitement.

Childhood plays an important role in building character, developing personality, and enhancing intellectual abilities. Childhood is the best time to promote social and emotional development, modify or correct unfavourable traits, teach or learn good habits, such as proper exercise and good eating habits. Childhood is the best time to learn lifelong skills.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think childhood should be like?
2. Why is childhood often regarded as the happiest period of life?
3. Do you think childhood experiences affect a person's life after he or she becomes an adult?
4. What qualities or characteristics of childhood should we strive to preserve throughout our lives?
5. Is childhood different today from when you were a child?
6. Do you share the opinion that childhood is shorter these days than it was in the past?
7. 'Children should enjoy their childhood. Therefore they should not be under constant pressure to achieve better results at school.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
8. 'Children shouldn't be assigned to do household chores'. How far do you agree or disagree?
9. Do you think the objects we treasure most, are given to us in our childhood?
10. What time are children considered to be adults in your country?

Children's education:

TOPIC 20
KEY IDEAS

Role:

The primary goal of children's education is to provide a safe learning atmosphere; teaching basic knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic. The main objectives of children's education are to develop physical and intellectual growth of children, teach social skills; interpersonal interaction and how to be a part of a peer group.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think pre-school education should be compulsory?
2. Do you think children's education has changed much since you were a child?
3. What changes do you see in children's education in the future?
4. When do you think formal education for children should begin?
5. Do you agree with the opinion that children are happier at home with their mothers than at kindergarten or nursery schools with other children?
6. What would be the best way to prepare children for life?
7. How can playing games teach children about life?
8. At what age can children be wanted to help with household tasks to build skills?
9. Should primary school students have compulsory homework? Why/not?
10. Do you think primary school students should be taught a foreign language?
11. 'Classmates are a more important influence than parents on a child's success.' Discuss.
12. 'Children shouldn't waste time trying to develop a skill if they lack natural ability.' How would you comment on this opinion?
13. How important is it for children to have proper educational toys?

City life:

TOPIC 21

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

City life gives us an opportunity to become familiar with different cultures, customs and traditions. Recreational facilities, cultural places and shopping opportunities are some of the advantages of city life. Higher standards of living in urban areas, e.g. better health care systems, better sanitation services, more educational facilities and more job opportunities compared with living in the country make city life more attractive and vibrant.

Cons:

Air pollution is major a problem in most mega cities: poor air quality has a large number of victims in big cities. Most large cities suffer from overcrowding and are heavily populated. Overcrowding can lead to many problems, e.g. increased traffic jams and higher rate of crime. Depression, tension and mental disorders are the problems of most large cities. Living in large cities requires quickness; city life is usually fast-paced, hectic, stressful and mechanical. There is so much hurry and flurry which can make life confusing. It is said that there is not much community spirit in most large cities, most city dwellers don't feel connected and hardly look out for each other compared with those who live in rural areas.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you imagine city life in the future?
2. Do you think that in the future more people will move to big cities?
3. How would you describe an 'ideal city'?
4. In what ways can living in a cosmopolitan city be good?

Climate:

TOPIC 22

KEY IDEAS

Effects:

Climate plays a key role in people's daily routines, work patterns, leisure activities, sleeping habits, lifestyles, life expectancy, health conditions. Climate affects the type of agricultural products and consequently, our eating and drinking habits. Climate can affect our character types and moods. Climate affects the natural environment, vegetation types, soil formation, animal life, livestock, natural resources, and migration patterns. Climatic conditions affect building styles and materials due to the specific needs of people. Climate affects the economic development of an area. There is a link between climate and population distribution.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of ways that climate affects our lifestyle?
2. Can you think of ways that our lifestyle affects climate?
3. Can our mood be affected by climate?
4. In your view, how can climate affect the economy of a country?
5. In your opinion, how do climatic conditions affect the choice of transport mode?
6. Do you think climate can affect cultural development? If so, how?
7. To what extent is climate change being caused by human activity?
8. Discuss how climate can affect population distribution.
9. To what extent does climate determine the kind of houses we build?
10. Do you think climate affects our appearance or looks? If so, how? Use specific examples.

C Computer games:

TOPIC 23

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Computer games have many educational benefits, for example, they help children develop problem-solving and analytical skills, such as drawing conclusions, seeking alternatives and making predictions. Computer games increase cognitive skills and encourage practical experience. They are designed to encourage creativity, initiatives and mental power. Many computer games are used to teach and reinforce academic subjects, e. g. some computer games enhance mathematical skills. Computer games are designed to be entertaining; most computer games offer a multiplayer function; inviting people to share their entertainment.

Cons:

Most computer games encourage violent tendencies such as aggression, antisocial behaviour and recklessness. There are many games which show graphic fight scenes where the most brutal is most applauded. The language tends to be violent. Computer games decreases interaction and social skills. Computer games can cause psychological and mental problems, e. g. tension. Computer games take up much of children's leisure time; children spend a lot of time idly playing with computer games.

Discussion Questions:

1. Computer games have become the primary source of entertainment for most young people. As a result, children are not forming traditional social skills. What should be done?
2. Can computer games be considered as a means of education? If so, how?
3. Do you think violence in computer games can lead to violence in society?
4. Should video game industries be blamed for the increased violent behaviour in children?

C Computerisation:

TOPIC 24

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

The advantages of computerisation include speed, accuracy, adaptability, compatibility, high memory capabilities, ability to perform complex tasks, e.g. performing mathematical, logical and statistical operations. Computers play an important role in storing, presenting and processing data, designing and modeling simulated operations and controlling machinery. Computers contribute to higher output. Computers have brought about numerous changes in different sciences. The internet and e-mail are just two examples of many features that computers can offer.

Cons:

We are becoming increasingly dependent on computers; some of the consequences are as follows: Computerisation can result in downsizing of industries, as a result, it can lead to the dismissal of workers, and higher unemployment rates. Computerisation can damage office community and makes jobs more mechanical and soulless. Diminished rapport with people is one of the consequences of computerisation. The privacy of humans can be invaded by the vast computer data networks. Computers have made life more complicated and stressful.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have computers changed societies for the better or for the worse?
2. 'The more people rely on computers, the more they become alienated from one another.' Discuss.
3. In what ways may people who don't have computer literacy be disadvantaged?
4. 'The benefits of computers to modern society far outweigh the problems.' Do you agree?
5. Do you think developments in IT will lead to greater human happiness?

Country life:

TOPIC 25

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Life in the country gives us an opportunity to enjoy views of areas, get peace and quiet far from urban stress, get away from the hustle and bustle of city life. There are many natural areas in the countryside; the greenness of nature is spectacular. Life in the countryside provides many outdoor leisure activities, such as swimming, fishing and hiking. Low cost of living is one of the positive points of living in the country. It is said that people who live in rural areas tend to be friendlier than city dwellers, and there is usually a stronger sense of unity among them.

Crime rate is usually lower in rural areas than in large cities.

Cons:

Living in the country means a certain amount of isolation. Shortage or lack of educational facilities, (e.g. fewer universities), shortage or lack of medical facilities, (e.g. fewer hospitals), shortage or lack of recreational and cultural facilities. There isn't much privacy; everyone knows one another. Low level of income is one the negative aspects of living in the country. Generally speaking, life in rural areas is too slow-paced and uneventful.

Discussion Questions :

1. How do you think the countryside may be influenced by urban growth?
2. Would you agree that it is better for children to grow up in the countryside than in a big city?
3. Speculate on what measures could be taken to solve the problems of living in the countryside.
4. What can be done to close the gap between urban and rural areas?
5. In what ways do you think the relationships between people in urban areas differ from the relationships between people in large cities?

Crime:

TOPIC 26

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Crime is mainly attributed to personality disorders and deficiencies, poor parenting, family breakdowns, lack of a proper family life, lack of decent housing, poor education, educational problems, drug and alcohol abuse, prolonged unemployment, financial problems, social injustice and inequality, relaxation of criminal laws, and lack of law enforcement.

Suggestions to reduce crime:

Cultural measures: e.g. programmes intended to strengthen family values and re-educate offenders.

Economic measures: e.g. providing job opportunities, raising public welfare, increasing income levels.

Crime deterrent measures: adopting stricter laws and punishment-oriented approaches. In general,

prisons should serve four functions: isolation, punishment, rehabilitation and deterrence.

Social factors: To eliminate any kind of discrimination, and provide equal opportunities for all people which requires a long-term plan and social participation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What steps do you think need to be taken to address increasing crime rate?
2. Can severe punishment conditions deter criminals from committing crimes?
3. Should the main purpose of prisons and punitive centres be punishment or rehabilitation?
4. In what cases would community service instead of imprisonment be more beneficial?
5. Do you think that death penalty serves as a deterrent for certain crimes?
6. Should laws on gun ownership be tightened up?
7. In your opinion, why is graffiti considered vandalism?

Cultural heritage:

TOPIC 27

KEY IDEAS

Role of cultural/ historic/ architectural heritage:

Historical heritage contributes to greater cultural cohesion of communities.

Cultural heritage plays a major role in providing a legacy for future generations.

Architectural heritage promotes a sense of national and regional identity.

Architecture plays a key role in shaping our environment. It contributes to the attractiveness of our environment. Historical heritage contributes to the transmission of culture. Ancient monuments reflect the history, customs and social values of our past generations. Monumental buildings have a key role in attracting tourists.

Discussion Questions:

1. How important are historic buildings and public artworks in defining a nation?
2. To what extent can historic heritage conservation generate benefits for communities? How do people in your country feel about protecting historic buildings?
3. What do you think will happen to historic places or buildings in the future?
4. Do you think architecture must address the problems of the natural environment?
5. How closely do you think architects should work with town planning departments?
6. Some people believe that there is no point in preserving old buildings when land is so valuable, by contrast some people are of the opinion that historic buildings are an important part of our heritage and should be preserved. Discuss both views. Which one do you agree with?
7. Do you think museums should be free?
8. How does archaeology teach us about ancient cultures? Use specific examples.
9. How can cultural heritage be a contributor to social and cultural cohesion?

Culture:

TOPIC 28

KEY IDEAS

Components:

Generally speaking, the concept culture is the combination of various components including thoughts, feelings, attitudes, unwritten rules, history, folklore, literature, art, music, learned beliefs, customs, shared values, traditions and norms of people who are unified by race, language, nationality, religion and common beliefs.

Role of culture:

The function of culture is to enrich national identity, promote national integration, strengthen understanding among ethnic groups, ensure social stability, and transmit accepted values.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, how can culture enrich a society?
2. Can culture be created by mixing other cultures?
3. How can culture promote cross-community dialogue and build new relationships?
4. In what sense is culture connected with art? What benefits are gained from studying literature?
5. Can you read and understand your language of 1000 years ago? Do you think it is important to be able to do so? Why/not?
6. 'Due to the influence of world media, the gap between cultures is narrowing, the introduction of this global culture is of great benefit to the world.' Do you agree or disagree?
7. In your opinion, how does global culture effect local cultures?
8. In your view, how can subcultures affect the cultural principles of a society?
9. How would you define the term 'Cultural Poverty'?

Culture shock:

TOPIC 29

KEY IDEAS

Symptoms:

Culture shock is usually characterised by the feelings of uncertainty, homesickness, extreme sadness, acute nostalgia, loneliness, depression, withdrawal, a sense of disorientation, moodiness, frustration, emotional and physical discomfort, and a variety of other symptoms.

Suggestions to overcome culture shock:

Learn as much as you can about your host country before you arrive, learn the rules of social conduct, history and the language of the host country, immerse yourself in the new culture, get accustomed with your immediate surroundings, establish a routine as soon as possible, include physical activity into your routine, stay busy and get involved in activities that you enjoy, develop a hobby, join a club; this is a good way to meet people who share similar interests and find a friend to be a 'cultural informant' in order to gain a proper perspective on people's culture.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does culture shock occur?
2. What challenges do people experience when they move to new cities or countries?
3. In your opinion, what is the best way to cope with culture shock?
4. Sometimes it is so hard to learn the way people do things in a new culture. Many immigrants suffer from a sense of alienation. What can we do to make life easier for newcomers?
5. Do you think culture shock affects people of different ages in the same ways?
6. Which one would be a better choice for an immigrant; following the customs of the new country that he or she is living in, or keeping the customs of the original country? Explain

Diet:

TOPIC 30

KEY IDEAS

Effects:

A sensible eating plan helps you enhance your overall health, increase your energy level, improve your immune system, reduce the risk of health problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Suggestions to achieve a healthy diet:

To have a good eating habit, to eat the right kinds of food 'wholesome meals', to avoid overeating; poor diet makes body sluggish, to eat the right amount of food at each meal, to eat several meals to prevent hunger, to cut down on salt and sugar, to choose healthier cooking methods; the healthiest methods are steaming, poaching, baking and stir-frying, to measure everything that you eat then analyse your food records because this helps to maintain normal body weight. A good diet includes a variety of foods from the basic food groups. It should provide enough calories to ensure desirable weight and also it should contain all the necessary daily nutrients.

Food pyramid:

This is a basic guide which gives information about food and nutrition. It helps us follow a healthy balanced diet, each group is equally important and plays a unique role in health, if any piece is removed, like a puzzle, the pyramid will be incomplete.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of vegetarianism? Do you think that quality of food is better now, or not so good as in the past? How can nutrition education be publicly promoted?
2. In what ways has the availability of fast-food restaurants affected people's eating habits?

Disability:

TOPIC 31

KEY IDEAS

Suggestions to help people with disabilities:

Civic and community access facilities: to support the disabled through greater access to public places, e.g. wide exit doors, reserved car parks and telephone ramps.

Medical services: purchasing medical equipment, nursing and day care, health seminars and counseling.

Employment opportunities: to empower the disabled to gain access to appropriate work opportunities by providing vocational programmes and supporting them to enter and maintain in the labour market.

Educational assistance: to empower the disabled to acquire knowledge and build capabilities that enable them to choose a quality life that they desire by providing educational opportunities.

Supportive services: accommodation support, retirement pension, and disability insurance benefits, financial incentives, such as tax rebates could be offered to smaller companies who hire disabled workers.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss how society can reduce the problems of people with disabilities.
2. How can employment be provided for the disabled?
3. Do you think schools should become integrated, where physically and mentally handicapped children learn with other kids?
4. Do you agree with the idea that the top priority to help the physically challenged people is providing income opportunities? Why?
5. In your opinion, what governments can do to increase educational opportunities for people suffer from disability?

Distance learning:

TOPIC 32

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Learning can be personalised and customised to meet the learner's needs.

Online learning is a great way to study at a personal speed and intensity without waiting for the slower pace of the average classroom; you do not have to keep up with the pace of the group. Educational materials are available and can be easily downloaded. There are usually more flexible deadlines, flexibility to study in any locations; no time spent commuting to classes, flexibility for those with irregular work schedules; you set your own time, accessibility for those with restricted mobility, (e.g. the disabled and the elderly), flexibility for those with family responsibilities, e. g. parents with young children at home. Lower tuition fees is another advantage of online learning.

Cons:

Online learning usually provides a lower quality of education compared with 'on-campus education'.

Virtual universities don't provide many aspects of a true campus or traditional classrooms.

e.g. no research or lab facilities. Some other weaknesses of online learning include as follows:

Time involved to learn how to use the system, lag time between students' input and teachers' feedback, occasional technology problems, lack of socialisation, lack of teamwork and contacts between peers, academic honesty of online students, and assessment difficulties.

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent do virtual universities promote equality of opportunity in education?
2. Do you think distance learning activities affect the quality of on-campus education?
3. To what extent does distance learning meet students' educational needs in your country?
4. Would you say that virtual universities will eventually take the place of traditional academic environments?

Divorce:**TOPIC 33**

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Lack of understanding and tolerance, personality differences, selfishness, weak commitment to lifelong marriage, inter parental conflicts ; the interference of parents, financial reasons, prolonged marital conflicts, lack of communication, grown-up problems, failed expectations, unmet needs, inadequate preparation for marriage, and drug addiction.

Effects:

Divorce can cause many psychological traumas, such as anxiety, tension, depression and feelings of guilt for both parties involved. Divorce destroys family unit and weakens society. Divorce is often associated with judicial complications and financial difficulties. Children of divorced parents face emotional problems and are more likely to have marital problems and choose unstable partners. Divorce can cause psychological difficulties and damage the emotional development of children.

Suggestions to reduce divorce:

Premarital counseling sessions, marriage education should be readily available. Divorce laws should be strengthened to preserve the integrity of marriage and safeguard family relationship.

Discussion Questions:

1. 'An increasing number of marriages are ending in divorce. Consequently, many people are choosing not to get married.' What should be done?
1. What can be done to help prevent a marriage from ending in divorce? Explain.
2. Should couples who have problems stay together only for the sake of children?
3. What difficulties do you think single parents usually face? Any solutions to offer?

Doping:**TOPIC 34**

KEY IDEAS

Effects:

Doping is against the athletic spirit, ethical principles, sport values and fair play. Doping gives an unfair advantage over the rivals. It is hazardous to the physical and mental health of athletes. It hurts the public faith and destroys the spirit of a healthy competition which is 'sportsmanship'. Doping damages the credibility and reputation of sporting achievements. Tarnished reputation is one the consequences of consuming doping.

Suggestions to address doping:

The most effective way to address doping consumption is through promoting cultural measures; more educational programmes should be devised to enlighten the athletes about the consequences associated with consuming doping. Doping test should be carried out at all official competitions. Heavier penalties and long-term suspensions can be effective deterrents; stricter laws should be introduced to fight this phenomenon, and related laws should be enforced to eliminate doping.

Discussion Questions:

1. What motives might make sportspeople use steroid to improve their performance?
2. A significant amount of money and time is spent on testing for the use of drugs in sport, how important is this? Why should doping be defined to be against the rules?
3. Do you think dopers should be treated like criminals?
4. Which measure do you think is more effective to eliminate doping; introducing cultural initiative or adopting preventive measures like designing stiffer laws?
5. Is it ever acceptable to use performance-enhancing drugs to gain competitive advantage?

Education:

TOPIC 35

KEY IDEAS

Role:

Basically, education is intended to provide people with sufficient knowledge of skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, prepare us for life by providing relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and ideas which will enable us to lead more fulfilling, productive and satisfying lives, direct children's growth emotionally, nurture children to become good citizens, develop personalities and intellectual skills, enhance interpersonal relationships, expand knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, sharpen, broaden and deepen the mind, provide us with real-life experiences, familiarize individuals with the norms and values of society. Higher education increases social mobility.

Curriculum:

School curricula should be more concerned with the needs of the society. School curriculums should enhance employment prospects by proving life skills. Curriculums should offer essential knowledge that makes connections to real life; more practical courses should be included, lessons should be learner-friendly. A well-planned curriculum balances the theoretical and practical aspects of the course and the content designed to help students achieve their future goals.

Features of a good university:

Being recognised by professional bodies, providing students with high quality education, having qualified teaching staff, creating a supportive and stimulating atmosphere; offering modern and accessible facilities and services, e. g. athletic facilities and career counseling services.

TOPIC 35

Discussion Questions:

1. 'It is better to know a little about many subjects than to know a lot about one subject.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
2. What issues in education are of greatest concern to you? Why?
3. What role does education play in improving personal life?
4. What is the role of education in shaping and enriching society?
5. To what extent does education promote and preserve cultural values?
6. What role does education play in the development of countries?
7. To what extent can education contribute to reducing poverty in countries?
8. To what extent does education protect workers from prolonged unemployment?
9. What are the reasons behind the worldwide trend in most countries for students to continue into higher education after finishing school?
10. 'A child's education is mainly the school's responsibility.' How far do you agree or disagree?
11. In your opinion, why do people choose to become teachers?
12. What kind of person makes a good teacher?
13. What is the most important qualification for being a teacher?
14. 'Some teachers show favouritism among students.' How can this issue be addressed?
15. Do you think students should be required to evaluate their teachers? Why/not?
16. What are the reasons for the poor relationships between students and their teachers?
17. How does a bad teacher disadvantage students?
18. What could be done to make students more interested in learning about science?
19. What are the characteristics of a good student?
20. What advice would you offer to a prospective student?

TOPIC 35

21. What makes a good university?
22. Do you think young university students should postpone marrying until they graduate?
23. In your view, how can educational quality be measured?
24. What are some differences between methods of education used in the past and those used now?
25. In what areas should all university graduates be required to have some competence?
26. Do you think university education should be available for all students or only good students entitled to go to university?
27. Do you think equal numbers of male and female university students should be accepted in every subject? Give reasons to support your opinion.
28. 'Children from low-income families are not often able to pursue further education, and are educationally disadvantaged whereas children from richer families often stay in education to university level or beyond.' What should be done to promote equality of opportunity in education?
29. Do you think sharp increase in the number of university graduates is a negative development?
30. In your view, how does education promote success?
31. What factors are related to academic success of university students?
32. What do you think are the chief reasons for students' academic failure in college?
33. What effect will educational standards have on students' achievements?
34. Should a graduating college senior be required to pass a comprehensive examination in his or her major before receiving a degree? Why/not?
35. In your opinion, are school examinations accurate criteria to evaluate the knowledge of students?

36. Which system do you think is a more accurate criterion for assessing students' knowledge; final examinations or continuous assessment?
37. 'Formal exams can't assess students' ability because they usually test what they remember not what they can actually use.' Would you agree?
38. Should final examinations in university courses be comprehensive? Discuss.
39. Is too much emphasis placed on grades in educational systems? Explain.
40. Can cheating in exams be ever justifiable in some cases?
41. Cheating in exams – a crime or just a clever way of getting through exams. Explain.
42. Do you agree physical education develops the cognitive abilities of students?
43. Do you think sports lessons should be compulsory throughout formal schooling?
44. Do you think sports classes should be sacrificed in high school so students can concentrate on academic subjects?
45. Should physical education courses be compulsory?
46. Should an introduction to art and music be a part of every college students' education? Why/not?
47. Should a course in ethics be mandatory part of all university curricula?
48. Do you think that community service should be a mandatory requirement for graduation?
49. Are computers really essential in education nowadays?
50. In what ways do you think new technologies could be used in education?
51. 'Some people argue that in the future, teachers will be displaced by the growth of computers.' How far do you agree or disagree? Is it a positive or negative development?
52. 'Is learning via the internet the future of education?

TOPIC 35

53. Should computer literacy be required for all university students? Why/not?
54. Should it be compulsory for all children to study a second language as soon as they start school?
55. All languages can be translated by computers, in your opinion, should children be encouraged to learn foreign languages?
56. Do you think attending university classes should be compulsory or it should be considered as optional?
57. Do you think family income influences school outcomes?
58. Do you think rich children have an unfair advantage in education?
59. How should schools help prepare young people for adulthood?
60. What subjects do you think schools should teach to prepare students for life?
61. What can parents do to maximise the mental power of children?
62. What role do you think schools and universities can play in helping develop community cohesion?
63. What steps do you think can be taken to improve the quality of education in public schools?
64. Do you think private schools are more efficient than public schools in your country?
65. Do you think private schools help promote the quality of public schools?
66. Are day-schools always better alternatives to night schools?
67. Should higher education be free? Should it be paid for?
68. Why do you think primary education should be compulsory?
69. When do you think children should start formal schooling?
70. What type of assistance do you think schools can provide for overseas students?

TOPIC 35

71. Do you think schools should impose dress codes on their students?
72. Is it an advantage or a disadvantage to have a job while attending college? Discuss
73. Do you think that children should be engaged in some kind of paid work to gain experience?
74. Should all university courses be specifically related to a future occupation? Why/not?
75. Should education be based on professional skills or on social needs? To what extent should university courses be geared to the economic needs of society?
76. To what extent do you think school education should focus on non-academic areas? Discuss.
77. Do you think the subjects that you are studying today are relevant to present-day society? Why?
78. What makes one university course more enjoyable than other courses? Explain.
79. Should university students have complete freedom to choose their own courses?
80. Do you think students should be given one long holiday each year or should they have several holidays throughout the year? Why?
81. How beneficial do you think it is to group students according to their level of ability?
82. Do you think people can study at any age, or is there a best age for studying?
83. Many college freshmen complain that they have never learned how to study. What pointers could you give to help people with poor study habits. Explain.

TOPIC 35

84. Do you think school students should be assigned to do daily homework? If so, how does it benefit students?
85. 'School years are the best years of life'. Do you agree with this?
86. Explain the chief reasons why students dropout of high school. How can the number of school leavers be reduced?
87. How should public high schools deal with students considered to be constant troublemakers?
88. Is an academically competitive atmosphere helpful or harmful to school students?
89. What courses of action do you suggest to raise the standards of education in rural areas?
90. Do you think the benefits of studying abroad justify the difficulties? Explain.
91. 'Visa regulations should be relaxed for overseas students.' Do you agree or disagree?
92. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in university dormitories.
93. 'Children should never be home schooled' Do you agree or disagree?
94. In your opinion, how can the education system in your country be improved?
95. What changes do you predict in the education system of your country within the next 20 years?
96. Has the standard of education changed for the better or worse in the past decade in your country?
97. What is your opinion of the way in which students qualify for university in your country?
98. 100.

Energy:**TOPIC 36**

KEY IDEAS

Energy efficiency:

Energy saving programmes contribute to the economic growth, sustainable development, higher productivity, revenue creation, expense reduction, and the improvement of the environment.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is energy consumption an issue of concern?
2. Why should energy efficiency be a national priority?
3. How does energy consumption affect the environmental protection issues?
4. How do environmentally-friendly sources of energy contribute to the environment?
5. Discuss how people can be persuaded to use environmentally-friendly sources of energy.
6. Should renewable energy be subsidised? (Of energy and natural resources that is replaced naturally or controlled carefully and can therefore be used without the risk of finishing it all, such as wind power.)
7. How does energy conservation promote economic prosperity?
8. Should energy efficiency programmes be publicly funded?
9. In the future, natural resources, such as coal and oil will be used up. In your opinion, how can we save on these resources?
10. Name some of the ways that energy is wasted.
11. What environmental problems can be caused by using fossil fuels?
12. How is fuel consumption connected to global warming?

Environment:

TOPIC 37

KEY IDEAS

Alarming facts:

The main environmental problems include air pollution, water pollution from industrial emissions, illegal dumping, waste disposal, overfishing, radioactive contamination, noise pollution, deforestation

Effects: Health problems, food crisis, poor water quality, loss of biological diversity, endangered marine life, erosion and soil degradation, desertification, and depletion of the ozone layer.

How to protect the environment:

Anti-pollution programmes include imposing stricter environmental standards, enforcing related laws, establishing protective zones of natural scenery; forests are valuable sources, this is to say phasing out indiscriminate logging, increasing public awareness, applying renewable materials and energy, using environmentally-friendly alternatives to control fossil fuel emissions and other sources of greenhouse gases, applying efficient waste disposal systems that include waste treatment, recycling, disposal facilities, waste collection, and designing sanitary landfills.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the degradation of the environment dangerous?
2. What do you see as the greatest threat to the environment at the moment and what can be done about it? What is your opinion about 'ecotourism'?
3. What kind of environmental issues are of particular concern in your country?
4. Do you think environmental problems are mostly the effect of developing technology?
5. What changes should be made to people's lifestyles to safeguard the environment?
6. 'Environmental concerns should always take priority over economic concerns.' Do you agree?
7. What are the possible risks associated with excessive tree logging?

Fame:

TOPIC 38

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Being famous allows your opinions to be heard. You would be probably the role model or even the superhero of many people; having admirers, supporters and fans can be enticing and satisfying.

It can bring you respect, status and popularity. You would have power, influence and probably wealth;

Cons:

Fame brings nothing but misery. It can ruin your personal life and privacy. Famous people are usually bothered by photographers and the press, it can cause insecurity. All the time, you have to act in a certain way. Fame cause confusion of identity and disorientation. It causes relationship problems. Fame can ruin real friendships; you have friends and fans, but you can never be sure if they like you for who you are or your position! Fame doesn't necessarily bring popularity.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, is being famous easy to live with? How are fame and popularity different?
2. 'Fame is often simply a matter of being in the right place at the right time.' Do you agree?
3. 'It is widely believed that famous people have a great life with no worries or problems.' Discuss.
4. 'Celebrities or people in the public eye should set a good example.' Do you agree?
5. Do you think famous people are treated unfairly by the media? Should they be given more privacy, or the invasion of private life is the price of being famous?
6. Can the press positively or negatively influence readers towards famous people?
7. Do you think famous entertainers, such as singers, sports stars and actors are over paid?

Family:

TOPIC 39

KEY IDEAS

The role of family:

Family is the most basic unit of any society, family is the source of identity, inspiration, love, affection, strength, comfort, security, support and encouragement. Family provides guidance and protection for its members. Family plays a key role in the emotional and behavioural development of children. Family plays a significant role in the development of adult achievements.

The role of family is to nurture relationships, transfer the values and initiate the young into culture.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the importance of family life as the basic unit of society.
2. How has the family model changed in the last 50 years?
3. What changes do you foresee in the family structure in the next 50 years?
4. Have families in your country changed in recent years?
5. It is generally accepted that the family unit is not as important as in the past. Do you agree?
6. Why do many families disintegrate today?
7. Why has family size declined in the last 50 years?
8. How does family size affect children? Use specific examples.
9. 'A large family with a lot of children is happier than a family with an only child.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
10. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being an only child?
11. How important is it to know your family history?
12. What can we do to keep family history alive?
13. Have the roles of men and women in the family changed in recent years?
14. In what ways do husbands and wives usually have different roles within the family?

Family ties:

TOPIC 40

KEY IDEAS

Role:

Family gatherings play an important role in nurturing family relationships. Family togetherness helps family members solve their problems more easily. Family ties build common interests and strengthen family relationships. Family togetherness develops interpersonal skills.

Suggestions for family ties:

Eating meals together whenever possible, helping family members with housework, attending their sports event or activity and giving positive feedback; no matter what the outcome is, watching a TV programme that family members like, having a family night out, exercising together, doing chores together, driving them whenever possible, sharing a hobby together, and going on family holiday.

Discussion Questions:

1. It is generally true that families aren't as close-knit as they used to be? Why do you think this change has happened? Do you think family ties are being loosened these days?
2. How does family bonding make us feel healthier?
3. How can family ties be maintained or encouraged?
4. How do family outings encourage closer family relationships? Use specific examples.
5. How important is it for families to have regular get-togethers?
6. Do you think children are a bond between their parents? Support your opinion with specific examples.
7. Can family attachments ever cause problems?
8. How has modern life affected family bonds?

Famine:

TOPIC 41

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Famine is usually associated with natural causes, such as droughts, earthquakes, poor weather and lack of rainfall. Famine can be due to civil war, overpopulation, unfair distribution of resources, inadequate food production, low agricultural productivity, failure of harvest due to climatic conditions. Lack of water resources leads to deforestation and ultimately results in famine.

Effects:

Famine can be the cause of poverty, starvation, malnutrition and mass death.

Famine causes extinction of animal species and starvation of livestock.

Famine leads to outbreaks of diseases, e.g. pestilence.

Famine can lead to mass migration; illegal immigration is one of the consequences of famine.

Famine causes economic failure and increases the requests for overseas food.

Suggestions to prevent famine:

Allocating financial assistance intended to support farmers, e.g. subsidies, grants and loans.

Famine can be eliminated through developing agriculture-related technologies, e.g. mechanization of agriculture and irrigation systems. Population control is a long-term initiative to combat famine.

Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, what would be the best course of action to prevent famine?
2. In your view, what are the long-term effects of famine?
3. In your opinion, what should be done to prevent poor people in the world going hungry?
4. Do you think famine in one country affects food resources in another country?

Fashion & Clothing:

TOPIC 42

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Fashion contributes to a better appearance that may help people make a stronger impression on their social contacts. Many industries benefit from fashion industry like clothing, textile, cosmetic, etc. Mass production makes prices lower. Fashion industry provides employment. Fashion adds colour and beauty to life. Fashion provides us with more choices. Most fashionable clothes are well-designed and stylish. Fashion shows us the lifestyle features of communities.

Fashion is a means of self-expression that allows people to try different roles in life.

Cons:

Fashion can be against the values and norms of a community. Most clothes that come to fashion are just eye-catching, flashy, inferior and poor in quality. The purchased clothes simply become discarded. Most designers are not interested in warmth, comfort and durability. Fashion is only intended to make profits therefore fashion slaves are simply exploited. New fashions impose unwanted costs and considered a burden to the budget of family. A lot of time is spent to keep up with fashion. Fashion industry terribly influences people's purchasing decisions and shopping habits, fashion exists mainly to persuade people to spend money on things they don't really need.

Discussion Questions:

1. Would you agree that different clothes influence the way people behave?
2. Do you think fashion is important to all age groups?
3. 'Teenagers tend to be more fashion-conscious.' Why?
4. Clothing companies introduce new fashion and styles each season. Why?
5. 'People dress to project an image or to follow trends or to be comfortable.' Explain.
6. In what ways does your grand parents generation dress differently than yours?

Fear:

TOPIC 43

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Fear is the result of a number of different reasons including ignorance, misinformation, uncertainty of the future, a series of events in childhood, unsolved issues from the past, having a traumatic experience, lack of confidence, illusion, psychological disorders, and an unknown situation.

Effects:

Fear keeps you from making positive changes in your life. It persuades you to set easier goals and do less than you are capable of. Fear keeps you from asserting yourself. Fear affects creativity and productivity. Fear and insecurity negatively impact on our abilities and success. Fear keeps you from taking risks. Fear causes a number of behavioural problems; indecisiveness, hesitation, and confusion. Fear can affect physical conditions, e.g. increased heart rate, high blood pressure. Fear affects our daily lives, relationships and personal growth.

Suggestions to overcome fear:

Since fear is such a personal issue, most approaches which are applied to cope with fear focus on individual cases. There are various ways to deal with your fear: become aware of it, identify the ways you express fear, recognise the situations which trigger fear, use behavioural techniques to reduce fear and stress, analyse your fear and see how irrational they are, and try not to obsess with fearful thoughts.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can fear ever be a good motivator?
2. In what ways can fear be destructive?
3. On what occasion in your life have you been the most terrified?

Festivals:

TOPIC 44

KEY IDEAS

The role of social events:

Festivals play an important role in instilling a sense of patriotism, promoting a sense of national and cultural identity, encouraging a feeling of community pride and unity, bringing diverse groups of people together, preserving history, traditions, shared values and mores of a country, and commemorating past events. Festivals revive local traditions. Festivals contribute to community participation. Most events and festival are to be entertaining and educational.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you think festivals contribute to the cultural and social well-being of communities?
2. Do you think that new festivals will be introduced in the future?
3. How do people celebrate special occasions in your country?
4. Have holiday celebrations changed over the years in your country?
5. Do you think the importance of holiday celebrations changes over the years?
6. What are the differences between the social events that older and younger people enjoy?
7. How may globalisation affect different festivals around the world?
8. What can be done to make festivals alive?
9. Is it important to make our national celebrations known for other countries?
10. Why some countries have more number of festivals and celebrations?
11. What effect do you think family celebrations have on family relationships?

Field trips and extracurricular activities:

TOPIC 45

KEY IDEAS

Role:

Field trips are designed to provide students with numerous opportunities to interact with peers. Field trips complement the curriculum and provide outdoor learning opportunities. Extracurricular activities encourage teamwork, creativity, responsibility, life skills, interpersonal skills, and self-improvement. Field trips are educational and entertaining. After-school programmes play an important role in strengthening the interest areas of students, and their academic achievements. After-school activities can help working parents.

Discussion Questions:

1. What role do you think extracurricular activities play in education?
2. Should field trips be eliminated and the time used for lesson-related activities?
3. How do school trips or enrichment activities contribute to the learning process?
4. In what ways do extracurricular activities develop social skills of school students?
5. Do you think extracurricular activities protect against early school dropouts?
6. Do you think after-school programmes should be structured as a compulsory extension of learning progress in schools?
7. How would you compare and contrast knowledge gained from personal experience with knowledge gained from classroom instruction. In your opinion, which can be more important or effective? Why?
8. How can extracurricular activities promote personality development?

Film:

TOPIC 46

KEY IDEAS

Features of a good film:

A good film benefits effectively from the following factors: a good scenario and plot, action sequences, special effects, graphics, sound effects, and a professional crew; directors, producers, light and sound technicians, actors, etc. A good film has well-defined characters and clever dialogues. A good film is the one which is well-written and well-directed. A good film is usually enlightening, illuminating, educational, constructive, entertaining, interesting and visually stunning. A good film keeps viewers eager to see what happens next and may provoke discussion.

A good film makes audiences be inspired by its message. A good film usually involves the viewer in the story with both empathy and sympathy. A good film can change viewer's mood.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the top three features of a good film?
2. Do you think films are getting worse, or are they better than ever before?
3. What are the factors determine the success or failure of a movie?
4. What changes can you imagine in films over the next few years?
5. How influential do you think films are on young people's behaviour?
6. 'Some critics believe that filmmakers are emphasising special effects at the expense of the story.' Do you think cinematic tricks hurt films?
7. What are the stereotyped heroes and villains in most action films?
8. Do you think the cinema has increased or decreased in popularity in recent years?
9. Why do people still go to the cinema despite the availability of television films and videos?
10. How popular do you expect going to the cinema will be in the future?
11. Do you think that cinema films should have an educational value?

Friendship:

TOPIC 47

KEY IDEAS

Qualities of a good friend and friendship:

A good friend is honest, trustworthy, loyal, reliable, dependable, kind, affectionate, sympathetic, devoted, considerate, helpful, supportive, caring, selfless, consistent, encouraging, inspiring, tolerant, confidant, positive, open-minded, forward-looking, thoughtful, level-headed, and well-humored. A good friend is someone who respects your privacy and provides companionship and emotional support and stands by you when you are in trouble. A good friend is someone who is always open to new ideas. A good friend respects your opinion and never breaks confidence. A true friend is the one who accepts you totally with all your limitations and weaknesses.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some characteristics of people you try to avoid when choosing friends? Explain.
2. How important do you think friendship is in a person's life?
3. In your opinion, how can we maintain a friendship?
4. What factors may result in the breakdown of a friendship?
5. What makes friends different from family?
6. The best mirror is an old friend.' How do you understand this?
7. 'There is an end to any friendships.' Would you agree or disagree?
8. What do you think about friendship across generations?
9. Do different personalities and different beliefs make friendships impossible?
10. Would you agree that the nature of friendship changes throughout a person's life?
11. 'A friend of everyone is a friend of no one.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
12. Do you think borrowing money from a friend can harm the friendship?
13. Some people choose friends who are different from themselves. Others choose friends who are similar to themselves. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of them.

Generation gap (The elderly and the youth):

TOPIC 48

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Generation gap is the result of difference in age, cultural norms, experiences, opinions, values and attitudes. New electronic technologies can cause a gap between the younger generation and their parents; youth are usually more familiar with new technologies whereas their parents are not.

Effects:

Generation gap causes mistrust, communication breakdown and family problems.

Generation gap can cause difference not only inside the family but also throughout society.

Suggestions to bridge generation gap:

Generation gap can be filled to a great extent through public education.

A way to narrow this gap is to strengthen common points. e. g, counseling sessions.

Reviving shared values can be an effective way to address this problem.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the main reasons for conflicts between adolescents and their parents?
2. In what ways is your generation different from your parents' generation?
3. Do you think it is possible to overcome generation gap?
4. Can traditions help to bridge the generation gap or do they make the gap wider?
5. At what point in life do you think generation gap seems to be the largest?
6. It is said that over the past 50 years, young people have gained more status and power while older people have lost. What are the main causes? Is it a positive or negative development?

TOPIC 48**KEY IDEAS**

7. Explain what attitudes to recreation your generation have compared to those of your grandparents, what forms of entertainment young people and adults prefer in your country?
8. Is it better for elderly people to be part of a family or to live independently?
9. What role do old people play in families?
10. In what ways can the old people help a society?
11. 'Old people are the biggest treasure of each community.' How do you understand this?
12. In your opinion, how will the role of older people in your culture change in the future?
13. Should governments provide completely free care for the elderly?
14. How can the elderly be appreciated for all they have done?
15. Should the elderly be expected to pay for residential care out of their own savings or should appropriate accommodation and nursing be provided by tax payers?
16. How does younger generation behave differently from other people?
17. It is believed that most elderly people can become socially isolated. What should be done to solve this problem?
18. Today, the media often portrays young people as lazy and irresponsible. Why is it so? Is it just a point of criticism on the youth, or is it true?
19. What can parents do to make their young children self-made?
20. How can the new generation be encouraged to respect the elderly?
21. Should people accept it as their duty to take care of their aging parents? Discuss.
22. In what sense is youth the most turbulent period of life? Give examples.
23. Do you think it is important for young people to know and possibly visit the places where their parents, grandparents and other ancestors lived? Why/not?

Global warming:**TOPIC 49****KEY IDEAS****Causes:**

Global warming is due to increase of gases which trap the heat of the sun. e. g CO_2 , natural changes in climatic patterns, excessive use of fossil fuels, emission of industrial pollutants and deforestation

Effects:

The effects of global warming, while not immediate, are potentially catastrophic. Global warming is the cause of a number of natural disasters, such as floods, draughts, blizzards, heat waves, wild fires, hurricanes and earthquakes. Some effects of global warming are rising sea levels, reshaping shorelines, melting ice in the poles, retreating glaciers, and increasing the spread of diseases.

Suggestions to reduce global warming:

Global warming can be reduced through imposing and enforcing tougher laws to reduce air pollution, developing energy efficiency programmes to limit carbon emission, developing environmentally-friendly alternatives, e.g. solar-powered cars, and encouraging green space development programmes, e. g. tree planting programmes, promoting initiatives intended to heighten people's awareness about this issue.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss how global warming can be prevented or slowed.
2. In what ways is global warming damaging the ecosystem?
3. 'The most effective way to address global warming is enlightening people on this issue.' Do you share this opinion? If so, how?

Happiness:

TOPIC 52

KEY IDEAS

Definitions:

Happiness is hard to measure, as it is subjective and depends on the person's mentality.

Ability to keep positive perspectives in life is an essential factor in achieving happiness, therefore, ability to have a clear sense of purpose can lead to satisfaction.

Factors, such as being in good health, loving relationships and peaceful environments all contribute to our happiness, but this doesn't mean that people without these conditions cannot be happy.

Elements that can affect happiness include philosophical view of life; world view, and type of personality. Some states of mind associated with happiness are the feelings of success, delight and safety. To lead a happy life, 'Do what you like and like what you do.'

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think happiness is more caused by nature or nurture?
2. Do you think happiness is a skill that can be taught?
3. How do you define 'true happiness'?
4. In your view, how can happiness lead to success?
5. 'Happiness lies in the joy of achievement.' How do you understand this?
6. Can money be the source of happiness?
7. How does happiness affect our confidence, relationships and health?
8. 'Knowledge and happiness are incompatible, the more you know, the more you worry.' How far do you agree or disagree?
9. Are super-intelligent children necessarily any happier than their 'normal' friends?
10. Do you think there is a link between life satisfaction and personality type?

High-rise buildings:

TOPIC 53

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

In large cities, land is scarce and valuable, the construction of tall buildings occupy only a small area of land while providing lots of floor space where people can live or work. Many high-rise buildings contribute to the area's vibrancy. Since high-rise buildings are designed and tested by computer simulations they can withstand powerful earthquakes. New buildings provide higher standards of accommodation and convenience. A high-rise building can contribute to the image of an area and considered as a national or regional symbol of that city and reflect the culture of society.

Cons:

It is regrettable that modern cities look the same; modern buildings ruin the distinguishing features of cities. Many buildings have no real character. High rise buildings ruin the view of natural features and cause a negative impact on the rural landscapes. Spoiling the overall appearance of skylines is the result of developing skyscrapers. Developing high-rise buildings make cities and lifestyles more heterogeneous; it can also intensify social problems, e.g. noticeable class distinction. Hastily erected buildings endanger the lives of people, safety standards may be sacrificed to profits.

Discussion Questions:

1. Exemplify some of the positive and negative aspects of modern buildings.
2. Why do you think cities should maintain their own historical background?
3. Ever day more and more buildings are pulled down and replaced with tall buildings, what are the main reasons? Is it a positive or negative development? What might future houses look like?
4. Do you think skyscrapers are a good way to deal with space constraints in urban areas?

Globalisation:

TOPIC 50 KEY IDEAS

For:

Speed of transport for goods and people, increased liquidity of capital allows investors in developed countries to invest in developing countries; Globalisation promotes economic growth. Increased flow of communications allows information to be shared between individuals and corporations around the world. Globalisation makes the nations more homogenous which promotes equality of opportunity. The process of globalisation ties the world together and brings welfare and peace. Globalisation promotes cultural cohesion.

Against:

Globalisation destroys local economies and small businesses. Globalisation spreads a materialistic attitude that considers consumption as a path to prosperity. An issue that opponents put forward is the greater risk of diseases which are transferred unintentionally between nations.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think globalisation is a threat or an opportunity to the nations?
2. In what ways do you think globalisation will benefit the world in the future?
3. Globalisation is a phenomenon of the 21st century and is merely the result of development in modern communications and information technologies. How far do you agree?
4. 'Globalisation plays a key role in reducing poverty across the world.' Do you agree or disagree?
5. In what ways does globalisation contribute to an international language?
6. Do you think globalisation can weaken the cultural cohesion of communities? Can globalisation erode traditional cultures?
7. 'Globalisation makes the world more unequal.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?

GM food: (Genetically modified)

TOPIC 51 KEY IDEAS

For:

Supporters of Genetically Modified foods believe that GM crops offer many advantages, such as better texture, increased nutritional value, better flavour and colour, more efficient use of land, longer shelf life, greater yield, reduced weeds, elimination of allergy-causing properties in some foods, easier shipment, and greater resistance to environmental changes.

Against:

Opponents argue that we aren't aware of the steps involved before GM foods are made available for sale. GM crops haven't been tested adequately for their safety as food, we don't know enough about this science; altering genes could lead to unforeseen problems. GM products are potentially dangerous and may cause different diseases; pests can be developed as DNA changes.

Domination of the world food production by a few companies is one the consequences of developing GM foods. 'Tampering with nature' by mixing genes among species isn't right.

Regulation and control standards vary from country to country with no international regulatory system; we can never be sure whether GM foods have been tested appropriately or not.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is producing and consuming bio-engineered food so controversial?
2. What are the reasons for the increasing interest in organic food in some parts of the world?
3. Do you think science is improving the quality of the food we eat, or making some foods a danger to our health?
4. Do you think GM food should be labelled? Why/not?
5. How has technology changed methods of food production in your country in the last fifty years?

H

History:

TOPIC 54

KEY IDEAS

Role:

History is to enrich our understanding of ourselves. History helps us learn about our origins, backgrounds, ideas, traditions and institutions that have shaped the development of our country. Our history and traditions give us a sense of connection with the past; it can bring people together and remind us of the memories that we share. Studying history enables us to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. History is illuminating and allows us to understand and conclude how past human actions impact on the present and the future, it teaches us many lessons of life, therefore it helps us be able to think more logically and make informed judgments about current and future events. History enlightens future generations.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, how does studying history help inform the present and improve the future?
2. 'Studying history can help countries to avoid repeating past mistakes.' How?
3. Do you agree that studying history help us develop a number of life skills?
4. Is it important to study the history of other countries?
5. Do you think we should encourage school students to become interested in history? If so, why and how?
6. Why do you think studying history has become less popular these days?
7. If you could go back in time and re-experience an event in your life, what would it be? Why?
8. If you could be any character in history, who would it be, and why?
9. If you could go back in time, which historic era would you like to visit? Why?
10. 'People should read only those books that are about real events, real people and established facts.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?

H

Hobbies:

TOPIC 55

KEY IDEAS

Benefits of hobbies:

Hobbies are intended to provide many hours of relief from stress, provide entertainment and relaxation, contribute to productive leisure time, provide educational opportunities to enhance life experience, increase problem-solving capabilities, build character, encourage social interaction, teach self-expression, boost creativity, confidence, accomplishment and discipline.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think people need to have an interest or hobby?
2. In your opinion, what are the healthiest leisure activities?
3. Should a leisure activity be incorporated in the working day?
4. How can we balance the amount of time we spend on work and leisure?
5. Do you share the opinion that outdoor pursuits encourage social skills?
6. In what ways are hobbies beneficial to social life? Give examples.
7. In what ways do leisure activities help us cope with modern life?
8. What educational benefit do you think collecting objects like coins or stamps might have?
9. How has the way people spend their free time changed over the years?
10. What do you think pastime and hobbies will be like in 100 years time?
11. Do you think people's hobbies and interests can be influenced by fashions and trends?
12. In your opinion, what kinds of entertainment can a family enjoy as a whole?
13. How do recreational activities vary according to region and climate?
14. Do you agree that hobbies contribute to self-development?
15. What negative effects, if any, do you think spending too much time on a hobby might have?
16. 'Shopping has become a favourite pastime among young people.' Discuss why?

Holiday:

TOPIC 56

KEY IDEAS

Out door recreation: camping , climbing, hiking and picnicking:

Camping is a way to renew and strengthen our relationships, encourage family bonding, build lifelong friendships, get close to nature, and get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Outdoor activities provide a chance to get peace and quiet. Outdoor recreation contributes to people's overall well-being by providing opportunities for physical fitness and stress reduction activities. Outdoor leisure activities give us a great opportunity to relax and have fun; enthusiasm for work is renewed after a break. Camping can be educational; 'learn by doing- approach'. Out door recreation activities teach us how to adjust to new environments and various social situations. Camping helps us increase self-reliance, maturity, independence, and leadership skills. Camping helps us develop team work skills. It also teaches us how to take responsibility for others. Outdoor recreation encourages social connectedness. Outdoor recreation activities help us widen our horizons.

Traveling and Sightseeing:

Traveling is a good example to show the importance of non-school education; as simple procedures like buying a train ticket or changing currency are mastered.

Sightseeing helps us familiarise ourselves with the highlights of different cities.

Sightseeing tours are designed to give us opportunities to get familiar with places of interest, tourist attractions, landmarks, lifestyles and traditions of other cities.

Sightseeing tours allow us to explore the diversity of different cultures.

Adventure:

Some people travel for the sake of adventure because they like excitement, danger, novelty, exploring, and being exposed to an unknown outcome. Adventurers often seek sort of thrills that they cannot get in ordinary life. Adventure camps intended to be character and confidence building.

TOPIC 56

Educational tours and excursions:

Most Educational tours are intended to broaden the mind, promote the cross-cultural understanding among nations; learn about other people, history, lifestyles, cultures, customs and languages.

Discussion Questions:

1. What can we do to improve the quality of a travel experience?
2. What benefits do you think people get from holiday activities?
3. Discuss how family outings strengthen family relationships. Use specific examples.
4. In what ways can traveling broaden the mind?
5. Would you say that people go on holiday only for the purpose of recreation?
6. Why is holiday so important to modern people?
7. What is your idea of a perfect holiday?
8. How does travel help to promote understanding and communication between countries?
9. How does foreign travel benefit us?
10. Do you think holidays will be different in the future? Explain
11. How has traveling changed since 100 years ago?
12. In your opinion, what is the best way to plan a vacation?
13. What are advantages/disadvantages of traveling by air compared with travel by car/bus/train?
14. What are some advantages and disadvantages of traveling alone and traveling with a companion? In your opinion, what are some advantages of going on package holiday?
15. What are some advantages and disadvantages of wandering around a city on your own?
16. How can going on safari benefit us?
17. Why are some people interested in mysterious places?

TOPIC 57

KEY IDEAS

Home schooling:

Pros:

Home schooling promotes family involvement and parental contribution. Home schooling encourages transmission of parental values to children. Home schooling allows parents to tailor the curriculum to their personal talents of their children; lessons can be efficiently customised to each child's needs, teaching is based on personal needs, studying habits and learning styles. Home schooling allows a flexible schedule; it allows parents to speed up or slow down the material in order to match their child's developmental readiness in various subjects, children can spend more time in areas which interest them. These students are often more self-directed and have a greater depth of knowledge.

Cons:

Some disadvantages associated with home schooling are as follows:

Home schooling prevents peer interaction and hinders social development of children. They have fewer chances to interact with the children of their own age, consequently, they sometimes lack the usual social skills; students who are home schooled are more likely to become unsociable. Home schooling prevents children from being exposed to the ideas and beliefs of others.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think home schooling prevents children from socialising with others?
2. Why school students tend to be more well-adjusted than children who are home schooled?
3. What do you think you would miss most if you were schooled at home?
4. Why do you think governments do not usually allow parents to educate their children at home?

Homelessness:

TOPIC 58

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

There are a number of factors that can cause homelessness, including personal irresponsibility, family conflicts, family breakdown, health problems, psychological and mental diseases, drug abuse, poverty, lack of adequate job skills, substandard wages, joblessness, lack of affordable housing, forced evictions, and natural disasters.

Effects:

Homelessness is one of the most extreme forms of social exclusion, it causes deprivation of basic human needs; it causes social isolation, health problems, psychological disorders, poor mental health, loss of confidence, and unemployment.

Suggestions to address homelessness:

Homelessness can be addressed to some extent through supportive services, such as empowering the homeless to be financially independent by providing decent jobs and emergency assistance, e.g. housing subsidy policies, and emergency shelters.

Discussion Questions:

1. What measures do you think must be taken in the short-term to deal with homelessness?
2. How can 'rough sleeping' be effectively tackled?
3. Many people believe that homelessness is the most pressing issue that we face today. To what extent do you agree?

Housing:

TOPIC 59

KEY IDEAS

Causes of housing shortage:

Housing shortage is the result of overpopulation, internal and external migration, lack of balance between supply and demand in housing market, and shortage of existing houses.

Suggestions to protect low-income families:

Supportive housing schemes include affordable rental houses and home ownership initiatives; schemes designed to provide grants and subsidised loans to assist people in meeting their housing needs. Introducing 'mass construction programmes' in order to provide low income families with affordable housing.

Effects of poor housing:

Vulnerable groups, including the elderly, children and those suffering from long-term health problems are at particular risk. Poor housing can be associated with health-related problems, e.g. respiratory problems and rheumatic diseases.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can home ownership be increased? Why housing affordability continues to be a serious issue for many families? How important is it for people to have a permanent home?
2. How can economically depressed areas be provided with adequate standard of housing?
3. Slum areas are the most acute signs of urban poverty. In your opinion, how can poor housing be improved?

Illiteracy:

TOPIC 60

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Illiteracy is related to many social issues, such as family poverty, overpopulation, inadequate educational facilities, low parental education, and social exclusion.

Effects:

Illiteracy leads to low self-esteem and drastically restricts social participation opportunities. Illiteracy results in irrational fear of new technologies. Low education affects employment opportunities and consequently, high unemployment leads to the sharp increase in poverty.

Suggestions to eliminate illiteracy:

The most effective way to deal with illiteracy is to eliminate poverty.
Providing free education for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.
Devising programmes in order to fight illiteracy, e.g. compulsory primary education.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what is the most effective initiative to eradicate illiteracy?
2. What can governments do to tackle illiteracy?
3. Who should be blamed for the increased rate of illiteracy in the depressed areas?
4. In what ways does illiteracy lead to poor living standards?
5. Why do you think illiteracy shouldn't be tolerated?
6. What barriers can illiteracy cause for individuals?
7. In what ways is illiteracy a burden to society? Support your opinion with specific examples.

Industrial relations:

TOPIC 61

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Industrial conflicts are usually due to collision of interests between workers and employers. Some major causes are as follows: poor pay and wage disputes, heavy physical work, lack of mutual respect, poor working conditions, long irregular working hours, inflexible hours, forced overtime, lack of insurance coverage, lack of job security, limited career promotion, discrimination and inequalities, unfair dismissals and layoffs, redundancy payment problems, retirement issues, hazardous duties, lack of labour productivity; poor performance of workers, irresponsibility of workers who don't follow the regulations, disruptive strikes, miscommunication, lack of holiday entitlements, lack of well-defined job descriptions, unclear roles, and unreasonable expectations.

Suggestions to settle work disputes:

Encourage any creativity and self-development, e.g. providing reasonable financial assistance as a motivator; providing and facilitating a situation in which employees can upgrade their professional skills, provide a friendly work atmosphere with team-focused activities, consider workers' welfare, respect workers' rights, ensure the safety of workers, provide opportunities for growth, and ensure greater protection against unfair dismissals.

Discussion Questions:

1. What catalysts and policies do you suggest to resolve industrial disputes?
2. Why sometimes conflicts arise between workers and employers?
3. 'Negotiation and compromise are the most effective way to settle problems between employers and workers.' Do you agree?

(The) Internet:

TOPIC 62

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

The Internet facilitates the flow and dissemination of information; the Internet has changed the quality and quantity of information; the convenience and speed of the Internet helps people gain access to all sort of information. The Internet is a great tool for interacting around the world at a relatively low cost. The Internet enables people to form communities in new and unique relationships, e.g. discussion forums, people can easily communicate and share their ideas. The Internet provides many learning opportunities and research activities. The most important features of the Internet include e-mail, online conversation, information retrieval, e-commerce, online shopping, online learning and browsing the internet for downloading different material.

Cons:

Some of the drawbacks of the Internet are as follows:

Unsupervised children on the Internet; children are being inundated with dangerous information.

There are a lot of websites which promote immorality in society.

'Copy and paste academic assignments' associated with the availability of the Internet.

Loss of privacy is one of the major problems associated with the growth of the Internet.

(The) Internet addiction causes irregular sleeping patterns. The internet can cause isolation.

Hacking, spam, viruses, cookies and credit card fraud are other problems of the Internet.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what is the most important feature of the Internet?
2. In what sense has the internet revolutionised the life of modern man?
3. How would you account for the popularity of the Internet?
4. In what ways does the Internet influence the availability of information?

TOPIC 62

5. How do you think the Internet might affect the way people work?
6. The Internet has enabled people to work from home, do you think this is good or bad?
7. How has the Internet affected shopping patterns?
8. Would you think the Internet will ultimately pull everyone away from TV entirely?
9. Would you say the Internet will one day replace print media?
10. How do you think the Internet will change entertainment in the future?
11. In your opinion, is the Internet a valuable educational tool?
12. In what ways has the Internet changed education?
13. 'E-mail and text messaging have transformed communication, but they are seriously threatening the status of written language.' What can be done to deal with this issue?
14. How does the Internet promote plagiarism?
15. In what ways does the Internet affect attitudes about methods of research?
16. Does the Internet open up opportunities for disabled people?
17. How can the Internet best be used to facilitate and improve new product development?
18. To what extent does the Internet promote globalisation?
19. Do you think the Internet encourage more unity or diversity?
20. Does the Internet help or hinder cultural understanding?
21. In what ways do you think e-communication can invade people's privacy?
22. Should the Internet be regulated by laws?
23. 'It is important for students to develop an awareness of how to use the Internet.' Why?
24. What impact has the Internet had on the way people generally communicate with each other?

TOPIC 63

KEY IDEAS

Job:**Features of a good job:**

A good job is financially rewarding (high-paid/high-earned); a reasonable level of salary is ensured. An ideal job provides you with a sense of accomplishment and it is emotionally fulfilling (Job satisfaction). A good job provides meaningful and challenging learning experiences to improve job skills. There is always a good prospect for promotion. You benefit from job security.

Qualities of a good employee:

A good employee is creative, well-educated, well-trained, well-informed, well-adjusted, energetic, self-directed, highly responsible, efficient, well-organised, businesslike, personable, punctual, dependable, a self-starter, a good goal setter, and flexible enough to carry out tasks outside of job description. A good employee respects the chain of commands, and has a sense of loyalty. Motivation is one the most important attributes in an employee.

Qualities of a good Employer:

A good employer is understanding, reliable, open-minded, tolerant, responsive, approachable, considerate, positive, encouraging and supportive. A good boss treats all his or her subordinates fairly and has high regards for his or her employees. A good manager always tries to promote good morale among his or her employees. A good employer always considers his or her employees' welfare and rights, e. g. providing decent benefits package and insurance coverage.

A good employer protects the health and safety of his or her employees.

A good employer tries to provide a friendly working atmosphere.

Qualities of a good colleague:

A good colleague is the one who is helpful, supportive, understanding and co-operative.

A good colleague has a pleasant personality and is easy to get along with.

A good co-worker covers you willingly when you can't come or fall behind in your work.

Promotion criteria:

Career promotion of employees should be based on their education, competency, productivity, technical skills, innovation, analytical ability, seniority, experience, enthusiasm, energy level, flexibility, loyalty, integrity, expertise, creativity, initiative, determination, decisiveness, willpower, perseverance, diligence, leadership skills, interpersonal abilities, and communication skills.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of these factors do you consider to be the most important when choosing a job?
Salary, working hours, job security, level of interest, team spirit, competent boss, social status, working environment, degree of responsibility, pension and holiday entitlement.
2. How can your job affect your home life?
3. How does a job influence social status? Support your opinion with examples.
4. To what extent do you think a job can be an expression of social status?
5. How does career development today is different from the past?
6. What kind of jobs are usually most respected in your country?
7. What factors do you think should be considered to determine the salary of a person?
8. In your opinion, how would life be different if everyone in the world received the same salary?
9. 'Job satisfaction depends on our attitudes, not on the job itself.' Do you agree?

TOPIC 63

10. Which would you choose, and why; a high-paying job with long hours or a lower-paying job with shorter hours?
11. Why is job satisfaction important and how can it be maintained and developed?
12. In your opinion, how can job satisfaction be measured? Use examples to support your opinion.
13. How does job satisfaction influence the quality of life and well being of individuals?
14. Do you think job satisfaction can affect the person's behaviour in the workplace?
15. In your opinion, to what extent does job satisfaction improve workers' motivation and their productivity?
16. How does job security increase job satisfaction?
17. Make a list of things you think it is important to consider before setting up your own business.
18. 'People should not be employed for their entire lives; they should be periodically evaluated.' Do you agree or disagree?
19. In your opinion, what sort of person makes a successful manager?
20. What qualities do you think a good manager should possess?
21. Should employers have the right to ask their employees to take drug tests? Why/not?
22. Some people prefer to work for a large company. Others prefer to work for a small company. Which would you prefer? Support your opinion with specific examples.
23. Do you prefer to have a job in which you have well-laid out tasks and responsibilities, or one in which your work changes on a frequent basis?
24. Would you prefer to work for a company or go into business for yourself?
25. Many people in the modern life are so obsessed with their jobs and become 'workaholics.' What are the main reasons? What are the effects of being job-minded?

TOPIC 63

26. In your opinion, what can people do to avoid the problems of overworking?
27. In your view, how could the problems of overworking be avoided?
28. What can we do to achieve a balance between our responsibilities at home and at work?
29. What changes in the way people work, do you think we will see in the future?
30. Is working from home really the future of employment?
31. How do you think society will be affected by the growth of telecommuting? The motto is that 'work is something you do, not somewhere you travel to, i.e. your workplace.'
32. In what ways is being self-employed good?
33. 'Nowadays getting to work is easier than it used to be.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
34. How can we enhance our chances on the work market?
35. Do you think a person's look and appearance can affect his or her success in the job market?
36. How can the youth be organised or motivated to become entrepreneurs; to become job creators instead of job seekers?
37. What role does entrepreneurship play in the growth and development of nations?
38. Do you think children should be totally free to choose their future jobs?
39. In your opinion, what can schools do to provide enough advice and support about future career of students?
40. Some people are out of work that's only because they are overqualified. How can this problem be solved?

TOPIC 63

41. Should grades be used as an indicator of future career potential when new college graduates are employed?
42. In your opinion, what are the best methods of finding a job?
43. Why do you think it is important for people to know the value of teamwork?
44. Unfortunately, some workplaces do not ensure the safety of workers who use dangerous equipment. What should be done to address this problem?
45. Does work mean the same thing in different cultures and countries? Support your opinion with specific examples.
46. Would you agree that having a personal and family life are more important than a successful career?
47. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of a husband and wife working in the same profession?
48. At what age do you think people should be retired? Do you think this should be the same for all jobs? Discuss.
49. Should retirement age for men and women be the same? Why/not?
50. Should people who have reached a certain age be forced to retire in spite of their physical health to provide more job opportunities for the youth?
51. Should promotion be based on merit or seniority?

Juvenile delinquency:

TOPIC 64

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Psychological problems: Inferiority complexes, suppressed desires, and personality disorders.

Family-related factors: Family dominance, inadequate family care; parental permissiveness, family neglect, lack of parental control, lack of a proper upbringing, and family poverty.

Educational factors: Educational failure, truancy, and school dropouts.

Peer-related factors: Peer pressure and, poor relationships with peers.

Suggestions to address:

Some measures to address juvenile delinquency are as follows:

Supportive programmes : Youth employment opportunities, after-school programmes, public recreation programmes, family support services, parent education, initiatives introduced to provide the youth with social skills, and family involvement as a key component of school improvement. **Deterrent and prevention efforts:** Compulsory primary education, prevention of child abuse, (e.g. child labour), prevention measures; enacting legislation to deter young people from committing crime.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think juvenile delinquents should be treated the same as adult criminals?
2. What are the best ways to deal with young people who break the law?
3. How can juvenile delinquency be prevented?
4. What social factors do you think contribute to the increase of juvenile delinquency?
5. Do you share the opinion that community service programmes are more effective than lengthy jail terms?

Language:

TOPIC 65

KEY IDEAS

For: (an invented language)

Esperanto is a very logical language, it has been designed to be easy; most roots are internationally understood, it has a productive system of word formation, the grammar is very regular. Constructed languages are neutral therefore they prevent language discrimination; no languages are advantaged, this is the only way to 'equality for everyone'. A common and neutral international language will help nations be closer. It would considerably contribute to removing conflicts and wars.

An invented language could serve as a common, neutral and easy to learn option for those who engage in international communications, such as tourists, businessmen and scientists.

Against: (an invented language)

Esperanto isn't much of use; the number of Esperanto speakers is very limited. A language without history, culture and roots can't exist. You can't express all the necessary things and concepts in Esperanto. You can't translate great literature into Esperanto. Esperanto doesn't evolve; Esperanto lacks the technical vocabulary to make a suitable and a modern language. Esperanto isn't easy to learn as Esperantist claim. Planned languages are so artificial, unattractive and soulless.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think the world needs an international language?
2. 'It is better to study major international languages rather than to spend time on minor languages for the sake of regional identity'? How far do you agree or disagree?
3. In what ways do culture and language bind people together?
4. When you learn a foreign language, apart from language what else do you learn about?

Law:

TOPIC 66

KEY IDEAS

Role:

In general, laws are made to provide correction, promote equality, justice and fairness, ensure privacy, tranquility, well-being and happiness, protect people from discrimination, ensure orderly public life, protect individuals' rights, ensure the stability of society, maintain peace and discipline in the country, protect the safety and welfare of people, and preserve community standards and morality.

Generally, laws are introduced to deter, prevent, punish and encourage.

Civil laws are introduced to settle private arguments and disputes among individuals and businesses, protect the rights of the citizens in various walks of life.

Criminal laws are created to protect citizens; punish those who violate the laws; provide punishment for those who do not follow the established rules of conduct, safeguard the public from crimes and criminals, and make the society a safer place to live in.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think laws are necessary?
2. What are some of the overall features of a good law?
3. How can people be encouraged to respect laws?
4. In what ways do laws help a community?
5. Is it ever right to break the rules?

Life expectancy:

TOPIC 67

KEY IDEAS

Contributing factors:

Some contributing factors which expand life spans include genetic characteristics, personality type, regular exercise, sufficient physical activities, weight control, food quality, healthy diet, medical care; good use of nutritional supplements, adequate sleep, climatic conditions, family support, income levels, and avoiding tobacco use.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think life expectancy will increase or decrease in the future?
2. What are the main causes of increased life expectancy?
3. Do you think increased life expectancy is a blessing or a curse? Discuss.
4. What are the best aspects of living to be old?
5. What are the worst aspects of living to be old?
6. What effect do you think long life expectancy has on people's way of life?
7. Do you think aging affects behaviour? If so, how?
8. Many countries are facing the problem of 'aging population', what problems can cause this?
9. 'In general, women tend to live longer than men.' In your opinion, what are the main reasons?
10. What stages can a man's life be divided into?

Marriage:

TOPIC 68 KEY IDEAS

The role of marriage:

The role of marriage is to provide a solid foundation for society and enrich family values. Marriage is the safest relationship for both men and women. Marriage prevents many social problems, e.g., sexual immorality. Health benefits of marriage include fewer symptoms of depression and better physical and emotional health; marriage has a positive effect on physiological functions of adults. Individual effects of marriage can be higher saving rates and greater life satisfaction. Marriage protects against the feeling of loneliness. Marriage allows us to grow in character.

Marriage criteria:

Marriage should be based on mutual understanding, sympathy, affection, love, warmth, mutual tolerance, sacrifice, and commitment. An ideal partner is honest, open-minded, outgoing, fun-loving, helpful, supportive, goal-oriented, assertive, reliable, dedicated, devoted, encouraging, understanding, patient, dignified, thoughtful, and sympathetic.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is marriage so important as a social institution? How does it benefit society?
2. How can governments pave the way for the young people's marriage?
3. Nowadays fewer young people are interested in starting a family. Why? Any solutions?
4. Do you think romantic love is a good basis for marriage? What about age?
5. In your opinion, in what ways do men and women think differently about marriage?
6. Do you think it is easier or harder for people to find a life partner these days?
7. In what order of importance would you rate the following factors in choosing a partner? Personal charm, intelligence, sense of humour, wealth, sincerity, character strength, social skills, university education, and family background.

Mass media:

TOPIC 69 KEY IDEAS

Role:

The role of the media is primarily to educate, inform and entertain people. The media is to portray social problems, communicate and share information, serve to build a healthy and progressive society, help create community, shape people's opinions, bring about a greater awareness, form and reflect public opinions, and instill social values.

Discussion Questions:

1. How has global communication changed in the last 50 years?
2. 'The most important role of the media is heightening people's awareness.' Do you share this opinion?
3. What do you think has been the greatest advance in the world media in the past ten years?
4. In your opinion, what is the most effective way of getting news?
5. Why do you think radio is becoming a less popular medium than it used to be?
6. In your opinion, how does print media influence the public?
7. What do you think makes a newspaper or magazine interesting?
8. Do you think mass media presentation of information affects the information itself?
9. What factors contribute to the amount of media attention that an event receives?
10. Why might events that make top headlines in one country are not reflected at all in another country's press?
11. What role does censorship play in today's world?
12. Do you think the media influences how we prioritise events that happen elsewhere?
13. Do you think the personality and appearance of TV presenters are important? Why/not?

Modern life:

TOPIC 72

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Modern life has made our lives easier and more comfortable. New time-saving machines are being made to meet the specific needs of people. Modern life has brought about convenience; it has reduced household chores. People enjoy a higher standard of living.

Cons:

New technologies have made people of all ages less active which can lead to many health problems. Modern life is associated with many psychological problems, such as depression, stress, anxiety, tension, psychological pressure and mental disorders. One of the features of modern life is speed; modern life is too fast-paced, life is usually mechanical and stressful.

Materialistic outlook is one of the consequences of modern life.

New technologies can result in environmental problems, e.g. air pollution.

Modern life is too competitive; People are constantly competing to have more and more.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the opportunities and threats of rapid technological progress?
2. Constant competition is one of the consequences of modern life. Can you identify the main reasons? In what ways have people become more competitive? Is it a good or bad attitude?
3. Is technology breaking up the family unit or bringing it together?
4. 'People in the modern world feel more insecure than they used to be.' Do you agree/disagree?
5. Speed of life today is faster than ever before, is that a good thing?
6. In your opinion, what invention or discovery has brought about the most far-reaching changes in the world? Explain.
7. Do you agree that modern life aims at material values more than spiritual values?

Music:

TOPIC 73

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

To increase cognitive abilities and activate your brain, to clear your mind, to release physical tension, to fill you with positive energy, to give a sense of peace, to alter your mood, and to give you a positive outlook on life. Music can be used as a treatment to cure various diseases (music therapy). Music can increase our productivity. Music can be relaxing, soothing, calming, restful and inspiring.

Cons:

Numerous studies indicate that certain types of music can stimulate negative emotions, such as violence, aggression, rebellion, criminal behaviour, and even suicidal tendencies.

Some music can attract isolated and depressed youth and feed their feelings with despair and hostility. Certain types of music can damage the hearing mechanism and nervous system.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think the world would be like without music?
2. How can music promote emotional growth?
3. How can music promote international understanding?
4. Should music be taught within the educational systems?
5. How important is it for a culture to have musical traditions?
6. What are the main differences between music today and that of previous decades?
7. 'Music can't be judged whether it is of high or low quality as it is a personal choice and completely subjective.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
8. Nowadays, music is mostly made with electronic musical instruments, do you think it is a change for the better or for the worse?
9. What are the benefits of learning to play a musical instrument?

Memory:

TOPIC 70 KEY IDEAS

Causes of forgetfulness:

Some everyday causes of forgetfulness may include tiredness, concentration problems, stress and general anxiety, emotional problems, and alcohol abuse.

Loss of memory can be caused by aging, Alzheimer's disease and certain brain conditions, e.g. stroke.

Memory improvement techniques:

Convince yourself that you have a good memory, avoid being negative if you keep telling yourself that your memory is bad, your mind will come to believe it. Relax and don't tire or put yourself under pressure to recall the information you want, a relaxed mind is able to recall the information in a better way.

Exercise daily; regular exercise improves circulation and efficiency throughout the body and makes you more alert and relaxed. Try meditation; research suggests that people who regularly practise 'mindfulness' meditation are able to focus better and may have better memories. Sleep well, the amount of sleep we get affects the brain's ability to recall recently learned information; regular sleep patterns serve to give brain rest. Keep your brain active by developing new mental skills- especially complex ones, such as learning a new language and challenging your brain with puzzles and games. Reduce stress, even temporary stresses can make it more difficult to focus on concepts and observe things effectively. Try to improve your observational skills. Have vivid and memorable images; you remember things more easily if you visualise. Repeat things you need to remember; the more times you hear, see or think about something, the more certainly you'll remember it.

Group things to make it easier to remember; try categorising the individual things. Organise your life, e.g. keep items that you frequently need in the same place every time.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, how can we sharpen our memories and have photographic memories?
2. 'Increased absent-mindedness is closely related to modern life.' Do you agree?

Migration:

TOPIC 71 KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Migration can be the result of a number of 'push factors', such as natural disasters, (e.g. earthquakes), periodic or chronic food crisis, high population density, poverty, and political unrest. Some 'pull factors' are higher living standards in other countries, better labour market conditions, and better income opportunities.

Pros:

Migration can make the culture of the host country richer. Migration creates a greater social diversity that can bring about increased understanding between people of different countries.

Cons:

Migration is usually associated with many problems, such as cultural disputes, economic problems, income inequality, overcrowding, spread of diseases, unplanned city development, and housing shortage. Migration causes a huge burden on the social welfare of the host country. It can damage the job market. Local culture and community cohesion can be threatened by immigrants.

Discussion Questions:

1. For what reasons do you think people choose to migrate to other countries?
2. In what ways do you think immigrants can enrich the culture of the host country?
3. Do you think immigration can damage the social integration of a nation?
4. How might immigration cause cultural conflicts?
5. In what ways do you think illegal immigration hurt the economy of the host country?
6. In your opinion, how can family ties influence the overseas immigration rate?
7. Should immigrants adopt customs that are respected and celebrated in their new country?

Natural disasters:

TOPIC 74

KEY IDEAS

Natural disasters:

Examples of natural disasters include droughts, earthquakes, floods, forest fires, tidal waves, hurricanes, cyclones, severe storms, landslides, volcanic eruptions, and overflowing of rivers or lakes.

Suggestions to minimise or deal with the effects of natural disasters:

Delivering relief supplies and vital first aid to victims, such as medical care, mass shelters, presence of trained emergency services and international rescue crews. Measures to enhance safety standards, increasing anti-earthquake construction standards, ensuring high standards of building and building codes; buildings should be solidly built, they should be well-structured and resistant enough to withstand earthquakes- building materials should be based on quality and durability. Public awareness-raising programmes, e.g. educate people how to face natural disasters.

Precautionary measures to enhance safety standards; prepare people for disasters.

Natural disasters can be predicted; advance warning should be given to the inhabitants of the high risk and threatened areas.

Discussion Questions:

1. What measures can governments take to protect their citizens from natural disasters?
2. In your opinion, can natural disasters promote long-run economic growth?
3. Do you think humanitarian aid can induce international cooperation amongst enemy countries?
4. Why do natural disasters cause such serious problems in some countries where those problems tend to be relatively minor in developed countries?
5. Safety standards are important when building people's homes, who should be responsible for enforcing strict building codes - the governments or the people who build the homes?

Noise pollution:

TOPIC 75

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Common environmental sources of noise pollution include industrial operations, urban development activities, (e.g. construction activities), transportation systems, (e.g. air, road, rail traffic; car horns), car alarms and air conditioners.

Long-term effects:

Noise pollution can lead to a range of physiological and psychological health problems including hearing loss, sleeplessness, mental disorders, emotional disturbances, long-term stress, aggression, distraction, tension, lost productivity and reduced efficiency.

Suggestions to reduce noise pollution:

Applying technical measures, e.g. planting trees along main roads, technical adjustments; changes in operation methods; reducing the noise at source to prevent its transmission.

A good solution to deal with this environmental problem is to raise public awareness through various programmes, e.g. seminars intended to inform people about the effects of noise pollution.

One of the measures to prevent noise pollution is to impose stricter laws.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the effects of noise pollution?
2. Noise pollution is becoming a serious threat to the health of city dwellers, what measures do you think can be taken to prevent or minimise it?
3. Who is more to blame for noise pollution; people or the governments?
4. How can 'public education' help to solve this problem?

O

Obesity:

Causes:

Obesity is the result of many complex factors, such as overeating, poor diet and bad eating habits, (e.g. regular consumption of high-calorie foods and compulsive eating disorders), unhealthy lifestyles, (e.g. excessive sleep, lack of exercise, inadequate physical activity, regular use of medications). Genetic factors; hormonal, metabolic and physiological factors.

Effects:

Obesity leads to shorter life spans. The health problems of obesity include posture problems, sleep disorders, breathing problems, increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, increased risk of heart attacks and heart failure. Other possible effects of obesity include limited choice of clothing, feeling of embarrassment, negative impacts on social contacts, and lower self-esteem. Even possible discrimination in job market can be another negative aspect of being obese.

How to prevent obesity/ lose weight:

Obesity can be prevented by following a balanced diet, choosing healthier cooking methods like steaming and boiling, counting the number of calories needed for a healthy diet, cutting down on carbohydrates and sugar, (e.g. to limit sugary drinks), limiting fat intake by avoiding deep fried foods, eating wholesome meals to prevent obesity, increasing physical activities, having a regular fitness programme, using medical weight loss therapies, and prescribed medications.

Discussion Questions:

1. Should obesity be considered a public health issue?
2. How does obesity affect social life?
3. Why do you think obesity is on the increase in many countries?

O

Overpopulation:

Causes:

Some causes and contributing factors include high birth rate, high immigration rate, decreased rate of mortality, availability of health services. An increase in life expectancy can be the result of improvement in public health.

Effects:

Decline in life quality, unhygienic living conditions, housing shortage, higher land prices, higher rents, increased illiteracy, decline in education quality, lower quality of public services, decline in public health, higher rate of unemployment, lower wages, depletion of natural resources, deforestation, growth of urban sprawl, increased level of pollution, food and water shortage.

Suggestions to control population growth:

Increasing people's awareness, applying family planning and counseling programmes, making contraception devices available to the public, initiatives to control birth rate, e.g. giving special tax deduction for the couples who have only one or two children.

Discussion Questions:

1. What size is the perfect family?
2. What effect does overpopulation have on natural resources or the environment?
3. In your view, to what extent laws can hinder overpopulation?
4. What is your opinion about the one-child policy?
5. Describe the factors affecting people to have more or fewer children in your country?
6. How do you predict the future trend of population growth in your country?
7. 'Many countries have unsustainable population growths.' How can this issue be addressed?

Parenting:

TOPIC 78

KEY IDEAS

Parental responsibilities:

To provide a supportive environment for raising children, to take care of the physical and emotional needs of children, to provide children with love, guidance, inspiration and direction, to give children adequate freedom to build their own character, to help children learn social skills, to nurture their talents. It is important for parents to be consistent and not to discriminate against children.

Family upbringing:

A good family upbringing contributes to the personality development and success of children.

Family upbringing is to instill the necessary values to make the lives of children more sustainable.

A proper family upbringing makes children well-adjusted, self-directed and self-made.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the essential characteristics of a good parent? Discuss
2. What are the main tasks of parenthood nowadays?
3. How are the responsibilities of men and women usually different towards children?
4. Do you think parenthood is more or less stressful than it was when you were growing up?
5. Do you agree that raising children is the most important thing an adult ever does?
6. 'To understand your parents' love you must raise children yourself.' Do you agree?
7. 'Parenting should be planned not impulsive.' Discuss.
8. In your opinion, how does parenting affect adults self-development?
9. What kind of changes does having a child introduce to a woman's and man's life?
10. How can parenthood affect the marital relationships?
11. How does parenthood change the social life?

TOPIC 78

12. Do you think parenthood have effects on physical or mental health?
13. Should 'parenting education' be mandatory? If yes, what skills should it be taught?
14. Should everyone be allowed to be a parent? Should parenthood require a license?
15. Do you think it is easy to be a parent nowadays?
16. What are the advantages of being a stay-at-home parent?
17. In your opinion, how can parents discover the talents of their children?
18. Do you think parents should pass their unfulfilled ambitions to their children? Why/ not?
19. Nowadays parents tend to overburden their children with a variety of after-school activities, such as foreign languages, computer classes, etc. What is your view on this?
20. Should both parents assume equal responsibilities in child rearing?
21. Some people believe that it is almost impossible for women to have a successful career as well as having the full responsibility of raising a child. Do you agree or disagree?
22. What should parents do to prepare their children for school?
23. 'Parents should always respect the wishes of their children.' How far do you agree?
24. In what ways do you think family closeness affects the lives of teenagers?
25. Do you think it is good for children to have parents from different countries? Why/not?
26. What are some expectations parents have for their children?
27. Do you think there should be different expectations from sons and daughters? Have these expectations changed or remained the same over time in your culture?
28. Would you say boys and girls should be brought up differently?
29. In your opinion, what kind of housework is not appropriate for children to do?

Personality:

TOPIC 79 KEY IDEAS

Personality components:

Some genetic factors which may influence personality type include inheritance, physical qualities, psychological features, appearance, natural features of temperament, natural talents, cognitive potentials, and intellectual abilities.

Some environmental factors and other elements which can affect personality type include personal interests and preferences, life goals, values, personal beliefs, expectations, desires, tendencies and general attitudes, self-perception, life experiences, family size, family living conditions, education, social environment, and social skills.

Suggestions to improve personality:

Be interested in people. Assume that people like you. Admit your weaknesses. Attend social gatherings. Learn new things. Associate with people who are successful and happy.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which do you think has a greater effect on a person's personality; heredity or environment?
2. Would you say that people's names can affect their character?
3. Do you agree personality traits affect mental health? If so, how?
4. How family upbringing is related to personality development?
5. Do you think personality changes over a life span? If so, how?
6. Do you agree that one's personality can be understood from the people they associate with?
7. 'Character develops itself in the stream of life.' How far do you agree or disagree?
8. 'One should never judge a person by external appearance.' Do you agree?
9. Do you think there is a link between personality type and body language?
10. Would you agree that climatic conditions can affect personality type?

Pets:

TOPIC 80 KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Pets benefit communities in many ways. Pets act as companions for people who live alone. Pets can provide a link between humans and nature, e.g. dogs are useful for protection and serve as guides for the disabled, they need a lot of exercise that can be beneficial for the health of their owners too. Keeping pets can promote a sense of caring and responsibility in children; taking care of animals helps children develop responsible attitudes.

Pets like to play and give hours of amusement to their owners.

Cons:

There are a number of negative aspects associated with pet ownership both for animals and communities. Pets can transmit contagious diseases and cause many health problems such as allergies, asthma and skin irritations. Keeping pets involves some expenses in terms of food and medical treatment. The community should pick up the costs of animals that they have been abandoned by irresponsible owners; pets can cause serious distress to neighbours and residents by barking, attacking, biting, straying, etc.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion what kind of animal makes a good pet?
2. Why are so many people willing to devote their time to take care of a household pet?
3. 'Keeping an animal as a pet is a violation of that animal's rights and is cruel.' Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
4. Should pets be considered property?
5. 'Too much attention is paid to, and too much money is spent on keeping pets, while people throughout the world are starving.' Do you agree?

Poverty:

TOPIC 81 KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

Personal laziness, death in family, joblessness, lack of work effort, lack of work skills, low income, death of wage-earner, slow income growth, illiteracy, inadequate education, poor health, high cost of housing, divorce, natural disasters, lack of equal opportunities in society, unfair distribution of wealth, overpopulation, ineffective economic systems, and limited employment opportunities.

Effects:

Poor health; early death even from preventable and treatable diseases, dangerous living conditions, hunger, poor nutrition, illiteracy, family separation, family conflicts, high rate of crime, mental and psychological problems; long-term stress, hopelessness, despair, diminished intellectual capabilities, school dropouts and child abuse.

Suggestions to address poverty:

To establish employment opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged families, to develop entrepreneurship schemes, to increase assistance programmes for the needy and poverty-stricken families, (e.g. welfare schemes and income support), to ensure minimum level of health care services, to support food distribution programmes to assist depressed areas, to eradicate inequalities, to improve economic growth by providing suitable opportunities for economic activities. Population control is a long-term solution.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who should be blamed for people suffering from hunger?
2. How can the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor be narrowed?
3. Should governments increase taxes to help improve the standard of living of poor people?

Public transport:

TOPIC 82 KEY IDEAS

Role:

Benefits of public transport include reduced pollution, personal safety, fewer number of accidents, less traffic congestion. Public transport systems are usually designed to be more environmentally-friendly and can be run with alternative forms of energy. Public transport is much more cost-efficient compared with private cars. Public transport makes communities more equal by providing different forms of transportation for the needy. Public transportation creates a sense of community and brings commuters closer.

Suggestions to develop or improve public transport:

Making public transport faster, more comfortable and more convenient, e.g. providing more bus lanes. Devising programmes intended to encourage people to use public transport, e.g. free rides, discount on (bus, train, etc) passes. Developing public transportation services and infrastructures in urban and rural areas by allocating enough budgets to modernise the transport systems.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your country, how have methods of transport been improved in recent years?
2. What kind of transport systems do you think might be developed in the future?
3. In your opinion, in what ways can governments encourage people to use public transport?
4. What measures, if any, can governments take to restrict the use of private cars?
5. Do you think public transport should be free? Why/not?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of commuting long distance to work?
7. How can carpooling be encouraged?
8. How can public transport contribute to a better quality of life?

Recycling:

TOPIC 83

KEY IDEAS

Role:

Some benefits of recycling include more efficient use of natural resources; as inorganic waste is separated from organic household refuse and used for future recycling, conservation of energy, reduced demand for new materials, prevention of pollution, safe disposal of hazardous materials and prevention of illegal dumping, less amount of garbage, reduced overhead and waste disposal costs, and saving landfill space.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your view, how does recycling benefit the environment?
2. In your opinion, what impact do recycling programmes have in urban areas?
3. Do you think recycling programmes are effective in reducing the amount of garbage we produce?
4. Do you agree that recycling is an important service for communities to provide?
5. Do you think recycling programmes can advance economic goals?
6. How can recycling programmes be expanded or encouraged?
7. How might your home and community be affected by your recycling efforts?
8. Do you think recycling programmes should be subsidised?
9. How can recycling procedures be more environmentally-friendly?
10. In your opinion, how can the unauthorised dumping of toxic wastes into the sea be prohibited?

Satellite:

TOPIC 84

KEY IDEAS

Role:

Satellites are used for a wide range of purposes, some of them are as follows:
Earth observation purposes; mapping the topography and shape of the ocean's surface.
Space exploration purposes; information obtained about other planets.
Traffic controlling, navigation, vehicle tracking and positioning.
Military purposes, e.g. military surveillance and detection.
Long distance communications and remote imaging, e.g. internet communications.
Distance and online learning; virtual universities
Data relay; radio and television broadcasts.
Environmental applications, e.g. weather forecasts and meteorological observation, climate monitoring, volcanic eruption predictions, earth-quake predictions, ocean temperatures, studying the ozone layer and the atmosphere, and space explorations.
Telemedicine; delivery of health services via remote telecommunications.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you think satellites have revolutionised our daily lives?
2. How do satellites benefit society?
3. How have satellites changed the world in the past 20 years?
4. Are there any problems associated with the development of satellites? Give examples to support your opinion?

School and parental discipline:

TOPIC 85
KEY IDEAS

Goals of school discipline:

The main goals of school discipline are to teach students to behave in a way that is acceptable and contributes to academic achievement and educational success, create a safe environment to learn, maintain effective learning conditions, reinforce appropriate school behaviour, instill self-discipline into each student, help students develop self-control, strengthen children's ability to cooperate with peers, promote positive behaviour of self-respect, mutual respect, care and consideration.

Effects of physical punishment:

Negative effects of corporal punishment include different types of antisocial behaviour, such as lying, stealing, cheating and bulling. Physical punishment often leads to aggression, feeling of hurt, resentment, violence, hate, humiliation, lower self-esteem, failure, and frustration.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss what system of discipline should be used in schools.
2. Why do you think corporal punishment (slapping, smacking, belting, caning) shouldn't have a place in education? How does physical punishment stimulate violence?
3. Do you think disruptive school students should be grouped together and taught separately?
4. In your opinion, how should parents discipline their children?
5. Some parents grow their children in strict discipline while others leave them free to learn lessons of lives on their own. In your opinion, which of these is a better approach and why?
6. 'Nowadays parents are too permissive with their children.' In your opinion, what are the effects of this attitude?
7. 'In order to bring up socially well-adjusted children, a strong sense of parental discipline is always suggested.' How far do you agree or disagree?

Smoking:

TOPIC 86
KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Personal tendencies, character flaw, peer pressure, poor family environment, family pressure, stress, lack of confidence, and poor education. Tobacco advertising increases the number of smokers.

Effects:

Some effects of smoking include bad breath, stained teeth, premature skin aging and many respiratory problems, e.g. coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and asthma.

Smoking leads to a number of health problems, such as higher risk of lung cancer and heart attacks. Smoking is an expensive habit. Smoking may lead to addiction. Passive smoking causes serious health problems; why non-smokers should be bothered by the unhealthy lifestyle choices of smokers.

Suggestions to quit smoking:

Physiological and physical treatments: nicotine replacement therapy, e.g. nicotine gum, patches, inhalers, and regular exercise. **Behaviour change therapies:** e.g. replacing one habit with another, and counseling sessions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think smoking should be banned in all public places?
2. Given all the evidence, smoking is harmful, and multiplies the risk of cancer, why do people continue smoking? How can smokers cope with withdrawal symptoms of quitting?
3. Do you think that smoking is an issue of individual or civil rights?
4. Do agree that advertisement for smoking should be banned?
5. What course of action do you suggest to deter young people from smoking?
6. 'It should illegal to sell cigarettes to people under the age of 18.' Do you agree?

Space exploration:

For:

Those who are for space exploration believe that discoveries made as a result of space exploration have an immediate effect on our day to day lives, e.g. more efficient worldwide communications.

Many countries suffer from overpopulation; in fact, space exploration is the only option in the future to deal with this crisis. With depleting natural resources, space exploration is the only alternative in the future and is quite justifiable. Generally speaking, migration is a key aspect of human behaviour. Any scientific advances in outer space can provide us with knowledge about the origin of the solar system; space exploration allows us to discover whether life exists anywhere else in the solar system or not.

Space exploration serves the essential interests of most nations that's why it should be supported.

Against:

Most opponents believe that space exploration imposes huge amount of cost. It is a burden on tax payers; the allocated budget could be better spent on basic needs. There are more important social issues which need urgent attention like poverty, youth unemployment, pollution, etc.

Putting human life in danger to explore space is another concern of those who are against space exploration.

Discussion Questions

1. Does space exploration benefit mankind? Do you think it's worth the risks and costs?
2. 'Trying to discover new and possibly hospitable planets is vital for our future survival.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
3. In your opinion, are there any chances of discovering intelligent life elsewhere in the universe?

Sport:

Physical effects of exercising, working out, walking, hiking, etc:

To have a healthy life, to promote physical fitness; stay fit and in shape, to restore energy and vitality; to strengthen bones and muscles, to boost blood circulation, to develop a greater awareness of body, to improve body posture and flexibility, to improve immune system, reduce the risk of heart attacks, to prevent diseases, such as obesity and high blood pressure.

Mental effects of exercising, working out, walking, hiking, etc:

To improve mental health, to build self-confidence, to enhance mental and emotional well-being, to lift your spirit, to clear your mind and keep your mind focused, to think more positively, to give you a sense of accomplishment, to relieve stress, to control anxiety, to overcome long-term strains, to sharpen your memory and to increase concentration and mental power.

Effects of mental sports e.g. chess

Playing chess contributes to memory development, logical thinking abilities, intellectual skills, creativity skills, analytical thinking skills, cognitive skills, problem solving skills, and critical thinking abilities.

Effects of individual sports:

Individual sports promote self-discipline and a sense of personal responsibility.

Individual sports allow lots of personal expression both physically and mentally.

TOPIC 88

KEY IDEAS

Effects of team sports:

Team sports promote teamwork, interpersonal skills, coordination skills, social interaction skills, leadership abilities, communication skills, loyalty, interdependence, group unity, and a sense of duty. Team sports develop friendship and social skills while enhancing self-esteem and health. Team sports promote self-control and self-discipline by abiding the rules of the game. Most sports that involve teamwork teach us how to achieve a common goal and accept responsibility. All team sports teach us about dealing with success and failure.

Discussion Questions:

1. 'Sport is a tool for self-improvement.' In what ways does sport help develop good character?
2. How can sport contribute to social cohesion?
3. Would you agree that professional sportsmen and women are paid too much money nowadays in relation to their usefulness to society?
4. 'Sportspeople should be considered as role models.' How far do you agree or disagree?
5. Do you think sport has become too commercialised? What can be done to address this problem issue?
6. Nowadays, more and more people are being attracted to dangerous sports or activities? In your opinion, what is the main reason?
7. 'People are turning to more extreme sports as a result of increasingly uneventful lives.' What are your views on this?
8. Do you think blood sports, such as bullfighting and hunting should be outlawed?
9. Some children spend a great amount of their time practising sports. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this. What are the benefits of becoming a member of a sports club?

Sporting events:**TOPIC 89**

KEY IDEAS

Role:

Big sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, the Football World Cup and other international sporting occasions can promote tourism which in turn can be streamlined into socio-economic development efforts of countries. Sporting occasions play an important role in providing fair and equal opportunities for all participants to compete, encouraging interaction among cultures, deepening understanding and friendship among nations through competitions, promoting a sense of cohesion and national identity, bringing people of diverse cultures together, promoting international cooperation, releasing people's patriotic emotions in a safe way, and providing many job opportunities. Sporting events are important because they serve the interests of a large number of people. Sporting success can promote national pride in countries.

Discussion Questions:

1. How are international sporting events popularising sports?
2. In what ways do you think sporting events can ease international tensions and spread goodwill? How do sporting events contribute to the world peace and international relations?
3. Can the huge amounts of money spent on international sporting events be justifiable where many people in the world live in poverty and are dying of starvation?
4. Do you think hugely popular sporting events promote coherent global mind?
5. Large companies now sponsor major sporting events, can this sponsorship hurt the spirit of sportsmanship?
6. Why do international sport competitions sometimes encourage strong nationalism?
7. 'Some countries are more successful than other countries in sporting events.' What are the main reasons?

Sportsmanship:

TOPIC 90 KEY IDEAS

Role:

Good sportsmanship is defined as playing fair, following the rules of the game, respecting the judgment of referees and officials, treating opponents with respect, congratulating winners promptly and willingly, accepting the game's outcome without complaints and excuses, talking courteously to everyone before, during and after games and events, including teammates, opponents, coaches, officials presiding over the game and even spectators, and accepting the result of one's actions gracefully. Avoid blaming teammates for mistakes or a poor team performance.

Avoid all acts of poor sportsmanship, such as trash talking, showboating, humiliating and taunting opponents. Good sportsmanship means not having a 'win at any price' attitude.

Sportsmanship promotes worldwide culture of peace and encourages, teamwork, cooperation, tolerance, self-esteem and character development of participants.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is it always important to win at any price?
2. In your opinion, how can sportsmanship be encouraged?
3. 'The best way to promote sportsmanship is through the enforcement of specific rules.' How far do you agree?
4. Do you think professional athletes have a duty to serve as role models, even if they don't want to be? Why/not?
5. Hooliganism is on the increase in many countries, in your opinion, what are the main causes?
6. How does hooliganism hurt the spirit of a healthy competition?
7. How can violence taking place at sports events be prevented?
8. 'Television cameras shouldn't record crowd disturbances during sporting events, such as football matches.' What do you think?

Stress:

TOPIC 91 KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

Acute stress can be the result of disorganization, hormonal imbalances, lack of confidence, physical surroundings, crammed schedules and poor time management, heavy workload, lack of understanding, and unfamiliar situations, e.g. new technologies. Chronic stress can be due to work pressure, unsolved problems, powerlessness, dysfunctional family relationships, long-term relationship problems, long-term unemployment, poverty, and financial problems.

Effects:

Mental symptoms are memory problems, difficulty in making decisions, inability to concentrate, poor judgments, confusion, repetitive thoughts, apathy, mental irritation, and weaker performance.

Emotional symptoms are restlessness, depression, anxiety, tension, anger and resentment.

Physical symptoms are sleep disturbances, fatigue, rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, weight gain or loss, eating disorders, isolation from others, and nervous habits, e.g. nail biting.

How to relieve or minimise/cope with stress:

A way to deal with stress is to meet our spiritual needs; apply relaxation techniques, e.g. meditation, Using medication, remove the stressor, give up unrealistic expectations, and take a quick mental break. Stress can be reduced with proper nutrition, regular exercise and sufficient rest.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think life will be more stressful or less stressful in the future?
2. In what ways does modern life cause stress? Use specific examples.
3. How can stress affect the quality of life?

S

Success:

TOPIC 92

KEY IDEAS

Contributing factors:

A number of factors contribute to a person's success; positive thinking, motivation, willpower, determination, stamina, self-improvement, interpersonal skills, social skills, confidence level, self-esteem, self-trust, diligence, seriousness, self-discipline, patience, experience, creativity, intelligence, calculated risks, careful planning and perseverance; it's important to keep trying.

Definitions:

The concept of 'success' is very relative and can be defined from various perspectives, some of them are as follows; success is setting and achieving one's personal goals, true peace of mind, having a good family life, a certain level of career advancement, academic achievement, and having financial ability to afford what ever needed. Lack of confidence is a psychological barrier to success.

Discussion Questions:

1. 'The real secrets of success are self-discovery and constancy to purpose.' Explain.
2. How is success usually measured in today's world?
3. In your opinion, what would be the price of success?
4. Does a person have to be wealthy and powerful in order to be considered successful?
5. For what qualities or achievements would you feel justified in calling a person 'super achiever'?
6. 'There is no relation between success and luck.' How far do you agree or disagree?
7. What factors may hinder success?
8. Do you think that failure ultimately results in success?
9. 'Do you think that there is a link between appearance and success? If so, how?
10. Are good school grades an accurate prediction of future success of students?

T

ourism:

TOPIC 93

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Tourism promotes international understanding and cooperation among nations.

Tourism industry is considered as a significant source of revenue. Tourism plays a key role in economic growth by providing job opportunities, encouraging regional development, increasing foreign exchange earnings, and enhancing higher standard of living for local communities.

Cons:

Tourism can cause environmental destruction; enormous damage to ecosystem and serious forms of pollution. One of the problems associated with tourism industry is cultural degradation; tourism can debase the host culture. The development of tourism can displace locals.

Relying heavily on tourism and using up natural resources to support tourism industry can deprive the local population from their natural rights to use these resources.

Discussion Questions:

1. 'Advantages of tourism industry far outweigh the potential disadvantages associated.' How far do you agree or disagree?
2. How do you see tourism changing in your country in the future?
3. In what ways do you think tourism can negatively affect the environment?
4. In your opinion, to what extent can tourism contribute to sustainable development?
5. How can tourism industry generate and maintain employment?
6. In what ways can tourism affect the host community and local culture?
7. To what extent do you think tourism help international understanding?

Traffic:

TOPIC 94

KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

Traffic congestion is caused by different factors; bad weather, poor signal timing, car accidents, inadequate roadway capacity, insufficient number of roads, substandard road conditions, and increased number of cars; roads and transport services suffer when they are overused.

Urban sprawl and unplanned urban growth contribute to the traffic congestion of large cities.

Suggestions to reduce traffic:

To apply automated traffic management systems, to improve public transport systems, to encourage people to use more public transport, to provide carpooling facilities, to establish car sharing schemes, to ease traffic jams through radio reports, to impose vehicle emission laws; a regulatory system planned to limit the number of cars on the roads could be introduced, to ban private cars from entering certain areas of the city, to increase the number of roads, to provide a safe network of walking and cycling routes.

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent does traffic congestion negatively impact your daily quality of life?
2. How much does traffic congestion currently concern the city that you live in?
3. Do you think more cycle lanes are needed in your city? What would be some of the problems in providing more facilities for cyclists?
4. How much can traffic congestion affect air quality?
5. 'Traffic congestion causes enormous costs in terms of the time we are stuck unproductively in our cars.' how can this problem be effectively addressed?
6. 'Banning single -driver cars is the most effective way to ease traffic.' How far do you agree

TV:

TOPIC 95

KEY IDEAS

Pros:

Television is a powerful tool to educate viewers around the world, provide people with inspiration, ideas and knowledge, hold families together, serve the particular interests of individuals and groups. Watching television is a fast way to find out about the latest news from all over the world and regarded as the main source of information for most people. Television is considered as a convenient source of entertainment. It is much more affordable compared with other means of entertainment. Television can be used as an important forum for discussing and putting forward various issues.

Cons:

Television always has been a subject of criticism. It can stop family members from communicating with each other. Children spend too many hours passively watching TV; excessive TV watching (TV addiction) can lead to poor academic performance; it can also result in physical complications, e.g. obesity. Watching too much television makes children lose important social skills. Passive TV watching damages sleep patterns. Sometimes TV is deliberately used to misinform people, for example, when it is used as a propaganda tool by some governments. Violence in TV programmes contributes to aggressive behaviour of the youth and consequently leads to social disorder.

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes a good TV programme? Describe a good programme for kids below school age?
2. Do you think television has helped to make the world a better place to live in?
3. Should children be controlled in their TV watching habits? Why/not?
4. Do TV programmes affect people's behaviour? Use specific examples.
5. How would you compare TV programmes with radio programmes?

Unemployment:

TOPIC 96

KEY IDEAS

Causes and contributing factors:

High expectations of job seekers, low level of education, lack of job experience, personal laziness, unavailability of suitable jobs, inadequate vocational training, excessive unemployment benefits, overpopulation and lack of a planned balance between educational output and economic expansion. Depressed and unstable economy can lead to high unemployment rate

Effects:

Individual effects: lower self-esteem, substantial loss of life satisfaction, financial problems, divorce and ruined families, increased participation in illegal activities, psychological disorders, such as hopelessness, apathy and depression. **Social effects:** poverty, higher crime rates, and internal and external migration of labour. **Economic effects:** slowdown in economic growth, and recession.

Suggestions to address unemployment:

To increase economic growth, to improve job skills through education, (e. g. offering training programmes for unskilled and low skilled workers), to open the market to national and private investments, to increase labour market flexibility, to encourage entrepreneurship programmes for increasing employment opportunities.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think 'unemployment benefits' raise unemployment durations?
2. 'The only effective way to deal with unemployment is to introduce rapid urbanisation.' To what extent do you agree or disagree?
3. 'The best measure to address unemployment is to make education purely employment-oriented.' How far do you agree or disagree?

Urban sprawl:

TOPIC 97

KEY IDEAS

Causes:

Urban sprawl is usually the result of unplanned city development, unlicensed construction, the growth of urban infrastructure, inefficient land use patterns, fragmented municipal governments, increased rural migrations, and population growth.

Effects:

Environmental impact: loss of agricultural lands which leads to lower food production, degradation of water resources; inadequate sewage disposal systems, loss of natural vegetation, poor air quality, ugly suburban landscapes, and destruction of wildlife habitats. **Social impact:** loss of community identity, loss of community spirit and values, marked disparities in wealth between cities and suburbs, traffic congestion, and longer commuting times. **Economic impact:** increased public costs, higher tax burdens, increased energy consumption, increased unemployment rate, urban infrastructure decline.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, who should be blamed for overbuilding crisis?
2. More and more agricultural lands are being used as building lands. What are the hazards of this development?
3. Huge amount of farmland have been eaten up due to the growth of the suburbs. In your opinion, how can this cancerous growth be controlled?
4. What can be done to close the gap between urban and rural areas?
5. 'Urban sprawl destroys the traditions and accepted principles of regions and cities' Do you agree?

Violence:

Causes and contributing factors:

Some causes and contributing factors are social inequalities, lack of a proper upbringing, poor home life, psychological problems, behavioural problems, personal frustration; superiority and inferiority complexes, financial pressure, relaxation of criminal laws, lack of law enforcement, and learned patterns of behaviour; teen parties and gangs.

Impulsive behaviour can be encouraged by the media, for instance, certain types of films can provoke violence.

Suggestions to address violence:

The surest way to deal with this issue is ensuring equal opportunities in different aspects of social life. An effective way to tackle this issue is to take preventive measures, e.g. imposing certain laws to prevent violence. A way to address this social problem is to through promoting public education, e.g. educating people how to overcome their angry feelings.

Discussion Questions:

1. Violence is one the major problems of the modern society. Can anything be done to tackle this problem?
2. Do you agree that violence in the media has an effect on the youth culture in general?
3. Do you think violence-promoting programmes on TV should be banned? How can such programmes contribute to violence in society?
4. Do you agree that there is a link between the youth violence and family breakdown?

Water pollution:

Causes:

The main causes of water pollution are domestic waste, polluted agricultural runoff, industrial emission, washout of poisonous chemicals from dumps; leakage from disposal sites, inadequate sewage treatment, sewage discharge, soil erosion, excessive use of synthetic and inorganic substances in industries.

Effects:

Water pollution causes many environmental concerns. It endangers human life and natural ecosystems, and destroys water quality and causes great loss in agriculture. It is a threat to the underwater life. Water pollution causes many life-threatening health problems, such as cholera and typhoid.

Suggestions to address water pollution:

Water pollution can be reduced through a range initiatives and anti-pollution programmes.

Preventive programmes :e.g. enacting tougher laws to deal with this issue.

Supervisory role of authorities: e.g. sea dumping should be strictly prohibited.

Technical measures: designing efficient waste disposal systems to prevent water pollution, e.g. providing recycling and disposal facilities.

Educational programmes: increasing public awareness, offering programmes intended to encourage public participation to deal with this problems.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the environmental effects of water pollution?
2. Are there any restrictions on water use in your country?

CRITICAL THINKING
Activity

In order to be able to organise your ideas well and speak coherently, you need to be familiar with various social issues. The following template is a suggestion to help you develop critical thinking skills. For each topic, fill in as many ideas as you can think of.

TOPICS	PROS	CONS
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introducing new products- More choices- Heightening competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Creating unreal needs- Misinformation- Encouraging consumerism
Automation		
City life		
Computerisation		
Fame		
Fashion		
Globalisation		
High-rise buildings		
Home schooling		
(The) Internet		
Life in the country		
Modern life		

Zoo:

TOPIC 100

KEY IDEAS

For:

Zoos are built to conserve and protect animals that are threatened in their natural environment. Wildlife sanctuaries provide quality care for animals and place a higher priority on animal welfare, (e.g. veterinary and medical care ensure good physical conditions for animals). Zoos are associated with careful breeding programmes. Zoos are educational and can create basic research opportunities. Zoos provide communities with an opportunity to observe rare and endangered species of animals in their natural behaviour. Zoos provide public entertainment. Zoos allow interaction between humans and animals. Zoos provide significant biological resources. Zoos can be used to create income then the obtained money can be spent on environmental issues.

Against:

Some people have argued that zoos are cruel and inhumane; humans have no right to interfere with the natural environment of animals; keeping animals captive causes suffering. There are many potential risks associated with keeping animals in zoos, (e.g. animal diseases which can be transferred and also in case of an incident animals cannot escape.) Zoos can cause environmental problems that's why they should be abolished.

Discussion Questions:

1. How important do you think zoos are in saving some animals from extinction?
2. Some people think that human needs for farmland, housing, and industry are more important than saving land for endangered animals. Do you agree or disagree with this point of view?
3. What are the main roles of animals in your country?
4. Do you think circuses promote animal abuse? Should they stop using animals as performers?
5. Why are many species of animals severely endangered today? What solutions do you suggest?

NOTES :

TOPICS	PROS	CONS
Music		
Online learning		
Pets		
Tourism		
Television		
TOPICS	FOR	AGAINST
Animal testing		
Astrology		
GM food		
Space exploration		
Unemployment benefits		
TOPICS	CAUSE	EFFECT
Accident		
Acid rain		
Addiction		
Air pollution		

TOPICS	CAUSE	EFFECT
Aging		
Brain drain		
Bribery		
Child labor		
Crime		
Culture shock		
Diseases		
Divorce		
Doping		
Famine		
Fear		
Generation gap		
Global warming		
Global village		
Globalisation		

TOPICS	CAUSE	EFFECT
Homelessness		
Illiteracy		
Juvenile delinquency		
Migration		
Noise pollution		
Obesity		
Overpopulation		
Poverty		
Stress		
Traffic		
Unemployment		
Violence		
Water pollution		

NOTES:

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GENERAL TIPS

Speaking Test

DOS

- **Have daily discussions with friends.** Take turns asking each other questions about current issues and improve your speaking ability by talking about various topics; using varied sentence structures and vocabulary.
- **Dress appropriately-look neat.**
- **Know the exact time and location of your interview**, you should know how long it takes you to get there.
- **Be aware of the exact procedure of the test.** Be clear on the order of each section; its length and specific question types.
- Remember to **have your passport with you** to show to the examiner for identification.
- **Arrive before the appointed time.** So you don't feel rushed.
- Before going into the room, **take three deep breaths!**
- **Remain standing** until you are asked to be seated.
- Use a natural greeting and shake hands confidently if you are invited to do so.
 - *May I come in?*
 - *Good morning / Good afternoon*
 - *Where shall I sit? Over there?*
 - *I'm very well, thank you and you?*
- The vocabulary you use in the interview should be appropriate. Bear in mind that the speaking test is an **interview, NOT an ordinary conversation**.
- Project **energy and enthusiasm**. Try to make a good first impression.
- **Be willing to talk.** Be positive and respectful throughout the interview.
- **Stay on topic.** Don't change the subject; the examiner will think you have misunderstood and may give you a lower mark.
- Look at the examiner and **maintain eye contact** when possible.
- **Take advantage of every question** to show that you are an **interesting and informed person**.

- Use **good body language**. Emphasise points with hand gestures appropriately, but in a small and limited way! Your posture, gestures and facial expression are important non-verbal signals.
- Use **descriptive words**. Don't use boring words like good, bad or okay. Use exciting words that convey emotion. Practice using higher level words for every simple word you know – such as *thrilling* instead of *exciting*.
 - *brilliant, superb, marvellous, admirable, fantastic, fabulous, amazing, smashing, absorbing, dazzling, incredible, unbelievable, superb, spectacular, impressive, magnificent, outstanding, perfect, excellent, breathtaking, sensational, exhilarating*.
- Use **collocations to sound more natural**.
 - *absolutely delicious/amazing/clear*
 - *totally different*
 - *amazingly beautiful/cheap*
 - *strikingly beautiful*
 - *highly successful/skilled /intelligent*
 - *immensely popular/ difficult*
 - *incredibly lucky/difficult/ beautiful*
 - *extremely important/useful/ complicated/beautiful/amusing*
 - *sparsely /densely populated*
- Keep in mind that **in part 1 and 2 of the test, the examiner cannot talk to you freely**. He or she must follow a set of questions that is determined in advance of your test. **In part 3, the examiner can talk with less restriction**.
- **Keep a steady pace**. Don't speak too fast or too slow. Speak at a reasonable pace. Remember speaking 'fluently' doesn't mean speaking quickly. **Talk clearly at normal speed**.
- **Don't speak too softly, Speak up!** Sometimes, candidates speak very softly that's only because they are nervous or unsure of their words. Speak loudly enough that the examiner does not have to strain to hear you. This indicates self-confidence and good command of the language. **Make your voice more interesting by lifting your voice a little higher**.
- **Explain names or words which are used in your own language**. For instance, if you are asked to talk about a festival which involves using words in your language, say the words clearly and give the meaning so the examiner can follow your talk.
- Remember spoken English isn't the same as written English. So it is acceptable to repeat some words or **rephrase** something if you can't find the right word.
- Keep in mind that the **range of tenses** as well as the appropriate use of them is important in all parts of the Speaking Test.

- **Speak smoothly and continuously.**
- **If you have pauses, try to 'fill' them.** Whenever possible, you should avoid silence in the Speaking Test.

Examples of introductory phrases which can be used to let you think are:

- *That's an interesting question...*
- *That's a complex question...*
- *Well, it depends how you look at it*
- *In fact, it depends on your point of view*
- *It's difficult to make a choice...*
- *On the whole, it seems that...*
- *To be honest, I haven't made up my mind yet*
- *It's such a controversial issue*
- *Actually, there's a lot of controversy over this issue*
- *That's a big problem today*
- *We should look at this issue from a broader perspective*
- *We should see this issue from a different perspective*
- Organise and link your ideas and sentences appropriately. **Use a wide range of structures and linking words.**
- **Speak clearly and don't worry about your accent.** It's always good to maintain a 'neutral accent'. The important point is that you should enunciate the words that you use so the examiner can understand you. Rehearse in advance to overcome any obvious pronunciation problems. **If you make a mistake, don't worry, possibly correct yourself and keep going.** 'Accuracy is as important as fluency'.
- If you don't understand a question, **speak and ask in a positive way.**
 - *You mean [...] by saying [...], OK? I'd like to say...*
 - *So what you mean is...., right?*
 - *Would you please repeat the question?*
 - **NOT** *Sorry, I don't understand the question!*
- At the end of the test, **thank your examiner for his/her time** and be glad you did your test, smile and leave the room.
 - *Thank you for your time.*
 - *Thank you very much. I enjoyed talking with you, Goodbye.*

DONTS

- **Don't speak with those candidates who are coming out**, you invite disqualification for yourself.
- **Don't simply reply YES or NO** and wait for the next question, try to answer the questions fully. Remember the examiner won't prompt you to speak, if you don't speak enough, he or she will go onto the next question. If you continue not to say enough, the interview could be very short! Remember to **give your answers in a variety of styles**. **You have 11-14 minutes to display your English speaking ability**.
- **Don't interrupt the examiner**.
- **Don't try to give a 'prepared talk'**. The examiner is trained to spot this.
- **Don't make negative comments** about your life, education, etc. Your comments should sound positive.
- Be assertive, but not dominating; try to maintain a balanced tone in your discussion.
- **Try not to impress the examiner with big words** that you might use incorrectly.
- **Don't digress**; don't speak off or away from the topic.
- **Avoid slang** or informal language. Choose to be formal rather than informal.
- **Don't give up**. Always attempt, if you get stuck, the examiner might be able to help you.
- Although pausing is commonly occurred and considered as one of the features of speaking naturally, **Don't use too many pause fillers** because it may convince the examiner that you are at loss for words and required structures.
- **Don't ask your examiner for your Band Score**. The examiner cannot tell you the result of the test; don't ask for comments.
- **Don't tell the examiner that you are nervous**, or don't move about too much.
- **Don't tell the examiner how relieved you are the test is over**, and there is no need to comment on your performance.
- **Don't slouch** or sit rigidly on the edge of your chair.
- Use an open posture; **don't sit with your hands crossed**.
- **Don't speak to the cassette recorder**. Speak directly to the examiner.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ✓
Strengths and Weaknesses

Look at the following statements and tick the box that is correct for you about your speaking skill. (Y=Yes; M=Moderate; N=No).

	SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE	Y	M	N
1	I use a wide range of vocabulary.			
2	I use a range of appropriate expressions to extend the topics.			
3	I can successfully clarify the meaning by paraphrasing when confronted with an unfamiliar term.			
4	I use a good range of grammatical forms with ease.			
5	I use tenses accurately.			
6	I speak fluently, without hesitation.			
7	I speak at a reasonable pace and in a smooth manner.			
8	I speak coherently.			
9	I pronounce individual words clearly with appropriate stress.			
10	I use sentence stress and intonation patterns appropriately.			
11	I present my points in a very clear and logical manner.			
12	I give appropriate, relevant and clever answers.			
13	I can develop an argument by pointing out both positive and negative aspects of the topic.			
14	I use connecting words to join my answers.			
15	I use various functions to develop my ideas, e.g. comparing and contrasting.			
16	I can use thinking –time techniques (fillers) well; to give myself time to organise my thoughts.			
17	I can move between formal and less formal expression without any problems.			
18	I use a range of sentence structures; mixing simple sentences.			
19	I manage my time efficiently.			
20	I don't over-generalise.			

TEACHER'S GUIDE

IELTS MAXIMISER Educational Book has been designed to be as flexible as possible so that the time required to work through the course can be expanded or contracted, depending on the level of the students and time available. Similarly, students can decide how to use the book depending on their individual needs.

Pair work:

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Explain the task.
- If necessary, model the activity with one student or call on a pair to do the task.
- Set an appropriate time limit.
- Have students practise in pairs.
- Go around the class to provide help and keep students on task.
- When pairs finish, write some of the errors on the board. Elicit corrections from the class.
- If needed, plan additional activities or reviews based on students' answers.

Group work:

- Divide the class into groups depending on the number of students.
- Go over the task and explain what the task requires.
- If needed, model the activity with one or more students.
- Set an appropriate time limit. It may be useful to write it on the board.
- Have groups carry out the task as circulate and provide help.
- Encourage students to give reasons to support their answers.
- Make notes of grammar or vocabulary problems and deal with them at the end of the activity or at a later stage.
- Lead a class discussion when appropriate.

100 MY Questions:

- Explain the task and the purpose of the activity. (The answers may be assigned for homework if necessary).
- Have students make personalised notes. As students thinking to complete the task, you may write some linking words on the board and ask students to include them in their answers.
- Have students work in pairs using their notes.
- Go around the class and give help as needed.
- Elicit students' responses around the class.

Topic Cards:

TOPIC CARD 1

Describe how to use a piece of equipment.
You should say:

- how often you use it
- what you use it for
- what you can do to be able to use it for a long time
- and explain how to use it (its software/programmes/etc).

Topic card 1:**Teaching objectives: (Content)**

How to use a piece of technology

Teaching points: (Grammar points)

How to use infinitives and gerunds for uses and purposes:

- *To be used to do something, To be used for doing something.*

How to use sequence adverbs to describe a process:

- *First, Then, Next, After that, Finally.*

- Explain the task.
- Write the required structures on the board (Teaching points).
- Write some introductory sentences on the board.
- *I'm going to talk about...*
- *I'm going to describe how...*
- *I've chosen to talk about...*
- Students take notes for each question and have one minute to prepare a talk on the topic.
- Ask some students to speak for 1-2 minutes on the topic using their notes and the grammar points.
- Elicit corrections orally to the common errors.

Discussion:

There is no single method that will work for everyone when considering a discussion, and much usually depends on your personal teaching style and your classroom community. Still, the following suggestions can help you think about ways to organise discussions in your class. Your role may vary depending on the type of discussion you have.

Some of the possible roles are:

Facilitator: Students may need new language to be fed in by the teacher.

Spectator: The teacher watches the activities, offers comments and advice at the end.

Participant: As a teacher, it is sometimes appropriate to take part and get involved in the discussion.

- Divide the class into groups as necessary.
- Write the discussion topic on the board. Warm-ups should be brief and serve to lead students into the topic.
- Introduce the topic by asking a few engaging questions; use this time to elicit key vocabulary and ideas that students are going to read in the paragraphs.
- If you wish, pre-teach any key vocabulary you feel students are unlikely to know and would be unable to infer from context.
- Write the teaching points on the board. e.g. how to give suggestions:
 - *Every effort should be made to...*
 - *We should make every effort...*
 - *We should take steps to...*
 - *This problem could probably addressed by...*
- Set an appropriate time limit.
- Ask students to read the paragraphs silently. (Pros & Cons, For & Against, Cause & Effect, etc.) Remind students to mark the words they can't guess from the context and continue reading.
- Ask students to recall as many key words as they can.
- Read the 'Discussion Questions'.
- Give students time to plan what they are going to say.
- Students discuss the questions in groups.
- Remind students to make suggestions for each issue.
- Tell the groups to ask one person to write down any solutions that they can think of.

- Go around and discreetly listen in, only interrupt if you are asked for help. On-the-spot correction is not advisable as it disrupts the activity. Note any major errors and deal with them at the end of the activity or at a later stage.
- Ask students to share some of their ideas with the class.

Discussion hints:

The following hints encourage a good discussion to happen:

- **Think about what you want to get across to your students.**
- Once you have decided what you want to teach, **think about how you want to present it**. Do you want to divide the class into small groups for discussion? Can you think of a role playing assignment that would get students to think about different perspectives of an issue?
- **Divide the lesson into five stages:** warm-up, introduction, controlled practice, freer practice, and production.
- **Make the class as comfortable as possible.** Check the ventilation and lighting.
- **Show students the purpose of the activity.** Write the objectives on the board.
- Divide the class into pairs or groups, as necessary. The preferred seating arrangement is a circle, semicircle, U or hollow square. All these formations allow everyone in the group to see one another.
- **Be clear about time-limits;** a time-limited task is easier to handle than an open-ended one. **Stick to the time limit.** If there isn't time to cover the subject sufficiently, note this in your lesson plan, and take action to correct this before the next class discussion.
- **Don't answer your own questions before students answer them.**
'I personally think the advantages of the internet far outweigh its disadvantages. first of all..., secondly...what do you think?'
- **Remember a discussion should be developed gradually**, this is to say, a discussion should move forward from point to point. If you explain your whole interpretation of the topic at the very beginning stage, there is no where to go.
- Make sure to present some **functional patterns** for stating opinions, expressing agreement, expressing solutions, etc.
- **Be focused and clear about your instructions.** If it is to practise a particular technique or point, bring it in step by step, rather than plunging students into the task '*now you try it*'.
- **Provoke a thoughtful discussion about the topics.** Ask students some stimulating questions and elicit information related to the questions. The best questions are neither too open-ended nor too limited. 'Yes or No' questions can halt the discussion. The best questions are open enough to have a few possible right answers, yet closed enough that students know how to approach it, and feel motivated to start talking.
- **Give the class time to think about the questions** before you expect any answers.
- **Rephrase Questions.** If you are waiting too long for students to respond, rephrase the question you are asking until someone answers. Sometimes students are quiet because they simply don't know what we are asking. Clarify issues where the class as a whole is uncertain.
- To increase STT; Student Talking Time, **introduce challenging rules** (e.g. answers must have more than ten words, each student must also use a function.)

- To give students of all levels confidence that they are progressing, **remind them regularly of what they have learned in the last few activities**. For example, say: 'Now, you know what structures to use to talk about your future plans, don't you?.'
- **Plan out your lesson carefully; stay on topic.** The instructor who knows what he or she needs to accomplish in class is less likely to become distracted than the one who doesn't. If you are prepared and have a lesson plan, you will probably see that the goals for a particular class are met. If you haven't taken the time to plan, you are more likely to shift the focus of the lesson to students' thoughts and concerns.
- **Vary the degree of difficulty of your questions** so that everyone has a chance of answering some of them.
- **Encourage students to offer comments that are related to the question you are addressing.** Try not to reward the students who say irrelevant things by giving them too much attention. If the discussion drifts away from the main topic, you may say:
 - 'This is an interesting question that we may discuss at a later time; but for now we would like to stay focused on ...'
 - 'This question goes beyond what we have planned to cover in this class; but I would like to discuss this topic with you after class.'
- **Don't allow anyone to monopolise the discussion.** Interrupt the 'speech maker' tactfully and lead the discussion to another person.
- To increase talking time, **regroup students** and ask them to share their ideas with other classmates.
Possible ways to regroup are:
Each group joins another group.
Each group sends one 'messenger' to the next group.
Assign a letter to each student in a group and form new groups of all As, all Bs, all Cs, etc.
- **Monitor the groups** as they work in groups, and **prompt them if they run out of things to say**.
- **Make sure students feel comfortable to voice even half-baked ideas.**
- You may **use students' names frequently in the discussion**; it is to help students get involved, and feel that they are noticed.
- **Provide a friendly atmosphere.** Permit friendly disagreement under discussion, not among personalities. Assign students positions on the topic (for/against). This will get students out of their personality.
- **To encourage students to speak out, agree enthusiastically and disagree gently and politely.**
 - *What a brilliant idea.* (Agreement)
 - *I'm afraid, I don't agree.* (Disagreement)
- **Always listen eagerly.** Show a real interest by nodding, smiling, saying, 'exactly', 'That's interesting', etc.
- For checking students' answers, go around and discreetly listen in, **take notes on common language mistakes** while students are presenting their various points of view.

At the end of the group discussion, **write a number of the most common mistakes on the board** and elicit corrections from students.

- **Don't rush.** If you find that you cannot fit all of the points you want to make into the discussion. You may omit some of them. It won't be the end of the world! More things are gained and learned if you cover the important points thoroughly than you rush through the list of the questions.

- **If you feel that some points are being neglected, mention them.**
- **Summarise periodically.** Stop occasionally to review the points that have been made.
- **Keep spirits high.** Help the groups feel at ease. Let everyone have a good time. Don't let the discussion drag or become boring.
- **The more engaging the better.** Provide a condition in which students express their opinions.
- **It is a good idea to have a general sense of the points that you are sure to cover,** and you can sketch out a general plan of how you think the discussion might go, but don't expect the class to follow your plan exactly, and don't try to force it to do so. Sometimes the best parts of a discussion are the unexpected turns it takes!
- **Expect a considerable amount of excitement, laughter, and noise during discussion.** Such feelings can be fine as long as the task is done properly. You may discontinue a discussion if:
 - a student begins acting in a silly or off-task manner.
 - a student gets aggressive or emotionally upset.
 - there is prolonged negative behaviour or confusion about where the discussion is going.
- **Praise all efforts.** Always say what you liked about an answer.
- **Ask students to reflect.** During the last five minutes of the class ask students to reflect on the lesson and write down what they have learned. Then, ask them to consider how they would apply them.
- **Ask them to summarise the lesson in their own words with examples.** If you'd like to check all students' understanding, have students write a summary of the concept and turn it in to you.

Important features:

- The discussion is focused on a topic, and everyone understands what the topic is.
- Everyone actively participates in the discussion.
- The key concepts get described in different ways from different views.
- The teacher may even learn something from the discussion.
- It is so lively and productive that you don't like to break it off, simply because time is running out.
- Key results get summarised at the end.

Critical thinking:

- Explain the task and go over the example.
- Explain the purpose of the activity. (The answers may be assigned for homework if necessary)
- Have students complete the task; students think of as many key words or responses as they can.
- Ask students to compare their answers in pairs.
- Have students discuss their notes in groups. Walk around the class and monitor.

Linking words and phrases:

- As homework, ask students to use their dictionaries to find at least one example for each connective word.
- Ask students to pair up and compare their examples.
- Set an appropriate time limit.
- Ask students to write and read out their own examples.

Self-assessment:

- Focus students' attention on the 'Self-assessment' activity. Ask how well they can do these things now.
- Students complete the self-assessment template.
- Encourage students to work on their weak points.

Lesson plan:

There are many different approaches to teaching English. However, most of these plans tend to follow this lesson plan format.

- 1) Warm-up 2) Presentation 3) Controlled practice 4) Free practice 5) Production

LESSON PLAN						
TEACHING OBJECTIVES:						
TEACHING POINTS:						
Timing	Stages & Contents	Teacher's Activities	Student's Activities	Teaching Materials & Aids	Extra Activities	Anticipated Questions & Problems
	Warm-Up					
	Presentation					
	Controlled Practice					
	Free Practice					
	Production					

Dear colleague,

I hope you find the ideas mentioned in the book useful.

A good way for making our classes livelier is to exchange ideas.

I'd like to share my definition of 'TEACHING' with you.

To me, Teaching is to balance the following paradoxes:

- To be scientific and artistic
- To plan and improvise
- To seek practical solutions and theoretical reasons
- To have serious work and humorous fun
- To emphasise narrow focus and broad outlook

I look forward to your comments

Thank you,

Alireza Memarzadeh

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IELTS Maximiser Educational Book is the source that many English teachers and students have been waiting for. It contains:

- sample interview questions with answers
- 100 IELTS speaking cards with 20 sample answers
- 100 A-Z IELTS-type topics followed with 'Discussion Questions'
- revision activities
- speaking test tips and teacher's manual

100 Absolutely Essential Topics

1. Accidents	26. Crime	51. GM food	76. Obesity
2. Acid rain	27. Cultural heritage	52. Happiness	77. Over population
3. Addiction	28. Culture	53. High rise buildings	78. Parenting
4. Adoption	29. Culture shock	54. History	79. Personality
5. Advertising	30. Diet	55. Hobbies	80. Pets
6. Aging	31. Disability	56. Holiday	81. Poverty
7. Agriculture	32. Distance learning	57. Home schooling	82. Public transport
8. Aids	33. Divorce	58. Homelessness	83. Recycling
9. Air pollution	34. Doping	59. Housing	84. Satellites
10. Animal testing	35. Education	60. Illiteracy	85. School discipline
11. Art	36. Energy	61. Industrial relations	86. Smoking
12. Astrology	37. Environment	62. (The) internet	87. Space exploration
13. Automation	38. Fame	63. Jobs	88. Sport
14. Brain drain	39. Family	64. Juvenile delinquency	89. Sporting events
15. Bribery	40. Family ties	65. Language	90. Sportsmanship
16. Charity	41. Famine	66. Law	91. Stress
17. Child care	42. Fashion, clothing	67. Life expectancy	92. Success
18. Child labour	43. Fear	68. Marriage	93. Tourism
19. Childhood	44. Festivals	69. Mass media	94. Traffic
20. Children's education	45. Field trips	70. Memory	95. TV
21. City life	46. Film	71. Migration	96. Unemployment
22. Climate	47. Friendship	72. Modern life	97. Urban sprawl
23. Computer games	48. Generation gap	73. Music	98. Violence
24. Computerisation	49. Global warming	74. Natural disasters	99. Water pollution
25. Country life	50. Globalisation	75. Noise pollution	100. Zoos

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