

Brainstorming useful phrases for IELTS Speaking Part Two

Brainstorm at least three phrases into each of the gaps below, avoiding simple language if you can. If you are scoring, you will get one point for each suitable phrase that no other group wrote, and five points for any okay phrase which isn't in the answer key. If your teacher gives you a list of key words, you can use that to help, but first try with no help.

Checking the meaning of the task sheet phrases

Checking your choice of topic phrases

Asking to start early phrases (optional)

Starting IELTS Speaking Part Two phrases

Thinking aloud/ Filling silence phrases

Vague statements/ Soft statements (if you don't remember well, etc)

Getting back on topic phrases

Adding extra info phrases (if you want to speak for longer, forgot something, etc)

Referring back to what you said before phrases

Moving through the four sub-topics/ questions phrases

Answering particular wh- questions phrases
Answering who questions phrases

Answering where questions phrases

Answering when questions phrases

Answering how long questions phrases

Answering how often question phrases

Answering how + adjective questions phrases

Answering other how questions phrases

Answering what... like questions phrases

Answering why questions phrases

Ending the Speaking Part Two presentation phrases

Choose ten phrases which you think no one else will have thought of. Then compare as a class, noting down any useful phrases from other groups which you didn't think of.

Compare with a list of useful phrases, then share any of your phrases which are not there.

The big list of useful phrases for IELTS Speaking Part Two

The most useful phrases are near the top of each section and underlined.

Checking the meaning of the task sheet phrases

“Sorry. Could you explain this word (here/ which I’m pointing at)?”

“Excuse me. Can I ask what one word means?”

“Sorry but I’m not sure what this (first/ second/ third/ last) bullet point means.”

“Sorry, what does this word mean?”

“Sorry, is this (first/ second/ third/ final) question asking about...?”

“Sorry (before I start preparing), can I (just) check if I understand the task?”

“I’m sorry but (before I go on) can I ask a question about the task sheet?”

“Sorry, can I just check? Would... be an example of...?”

Checking your choice of topic phrases

“(It’s not exactly..., but) can I speak about...? (Great. I’ll pick that, then)”

“Excuse me. (I’m not sure if it is really..., but) is it okay to speak about...?”

“The only thing (that/ which) I can think of to speak about is... Is that okay?”

“Sorry. Does... count (as a sort of...)? (Really? How about...?)”

“So, does that mean that I can talk about...?”

“Sorry. Can I check my choice of topic? Is... a kind of...?”

“Can I just check? Would... be off topic?”

“So, with this task, am I allowed to talk about...?”

“Sorry but I’m not sure if what I’ve thought of (really/ perfectly) matches this task. (The only thing that comes to mind is...)”

“Does this topic include...?”

Asking to start early phrases (optional)

“(OK.) I think I’m ready (to start, if that’s okay).”

“(Sorry,) can I start?”

“Shall I get started?”

“Is that one minute?”

“My notes are ready, so I may as well get started (if you don’t mind).”

“I can’t think of anything else (to write), so I’d like to (make a) start (if that’s allowed).”

“I reckon I’ve done enough prep to be able to talk about it (whenever you are ready).”

Starting IELTS Speaking Part Two phrases

“(OK.) I’d like to speak about...”

“(Right.) I’m going to talk about...”

“(So,) I’ve chosen to speak about...”

“I’m (really) glad that I got this topic because...”

“I’m so pleased that this is the topic because...”

“It’s a strange coincidence (that) I got this topic because (just) the other day...”

“The only (suitable) thing I could think of to speak about is...”

“There were many things I could’ve spoken about, but I chose...”

“It was (really/ quite) difficult to choose a topic, but I (finally) settled on...”

“I ... a few/ several/ quite a lot of/ many ...s, but the one I’d like to talk about is...”

“I ... a couple of/ quite a few/ so many ...s, but the one that stands out is... because...”

“The obvious choice of topic for me was... because...”

“(Well,) I’ve decided to tell you about...”

“The topic that (first) sprang to mind was...”

“There’s only one thing which I can talk about, which is...”

“It wasn’t (at all) difficult for me to choose what to talk about. I chose... due to...”

“It was difficult to decide whether to talk about... or... but I went for... because...”

Thinking aloud/ Filling silence phrases

“Just a moment while I look (again) at the task sheet.”

“Just a minute while I check my notes.”

“Just a second while I (have another) look at the task (OK. Got it now.)”

“What was I going to say (next)? Oh yes,…”

“Let me (just) have a look at the task sheet again.”

“I can’t remember the name in English, but…”

“I’m not sure how to say it in English, but…”

“It’s difficult to explain, but…”

“What does this bit say? Oh, yes,…”

“What was the next question again? Oh yes,…”

“Sorry, I’m having problems reading my (own) handwriting. Ah yes,…”

“Why? That’s a good question, why?? Well, I guess...”

Vague statements/ Soft statements (if you don’t remember well, etc)

“I don’t remember ... (very well/ exactly), but ...”

“(It was a very long time ago, but) as far as I remember,…”

“(It was ages ago, but) I reckon...”

“The way I remember it (now),…”

“I can’t recall whether... or... not, but probably...”

“a kind of...”

“some sort of...”

“My memory is (a little) hazy, but...”

“..., or something like that (anyway)”

“... or something of that sort.”

Getting back on topic phrases

“As I was saying (before I went off topic),…”

“Sorry but I seem to have gone (slightly/ completely) off topic. Getting back to...”

“Where was I? Oh yes,…”

“Sorry, I should (really/ actually) have been talking about...”

“Anyway, to get back on track,…”

“Sorry, (I think) I’m going off topic. Just a moment while I see what I should’ve been describing. Ah ha, I see. Well,…”

“Sorry, I went off topic for a second there. Anyway, getting back to the questions,…”

“Sorry, I’ve wandered off my original topic, which was...”

Adding extra info phrases (if you want to speak for longer, forgot something, etc)

“Adding to what I (just) said (about...),…”

“What else (can I say/ is there to say/ should I say about that/ is relevant)? Well, I suppose...”

“One more thing I could say about... is...”

“On the same topic,...”

“About... I could add that...”

“The other relevant thing which I could say about... is...”

“And what else should I say? Well, I didn’t mention...”

“Answering the same question,...”

“Connected to that,...”

“Did I miss anything? Well, I suppose...”

Referring back to what you said before phrases

“As I said (earlier) (when I was talking about...),...”

“Going back to what I said (before/ earlier) (about...),...”

“I already (basically) answered the question... (when I said that...), but I could add that...”

“Although I said earlier that..., it’s also true that...”

Moving through the four sub-topics/ questions phrases

“Starting with...”

“Turning to the next question,...”

“Moving on to the question about.....”

“As for...”

“What’s the next point (that I have to talk about/ on the task sheet)? Oh yes,...”

“Have I answered all of the questions? Not yet. I also need to say...”

“And the next thing (that I’m supposed) to talk about is...”

“I don’t think I’ve talked about... yet. Well,...”

“When it comes to.....”

“Regarding.....”

“And about.....”

“As far as ... is concerned,...”

“The other thing that I’m meant to talk about is... Well,...”

“Have I covered all four points? Oh, no...”

“Which part of the question haven’t I answered (yet)? Oh yes, this bit. Well,...”

“Taking an(other) look at the task sheet, I see that I should also talk about...”

Answering particular wh- questions phrases

Answering who questions phrases

One of my...

A... of mine

An ex-.../ A former.../ My then...

My fellow...

Somebody who I...

A (close/ distant) relation/ relative

An acquaintance

The participants/ The attendees

My... in-law

Answering where questions phrases

the location
the venue
be held
take place
my (final) destination
in my neighbourhood
in my hometown
(really/ fairly) near/ close to...
(not so) far from...

Answering when questions phrases

(quite) a long time ago/ ages ago
the day before yesterday/ the ... before last
the day after tomorrow/ the ... after next
from ... to .../ between ... and...
by ... (at the latest)

Answering how long questions phrases

for ages
for quite a while/ for quite a long time
not for long
since (the beginning of/ middle of/ end of)...

Answering how often question phrases

always/ all the time
virtually always
almost always
usually/ generally/ typically
(very) often
occasionally/ from time to time
hardly ever
almost never
virtually never
never ever
once/ twice/ ... times a day/ week/ month/ quarter/ year/...
once every two/ three/ four/... ..s
every...
every other...
(bi-/ semi-) annual
quarterly
monthly
weekly
(twice-)daily

Answering how + adjective questions phrases

extremely/ exceedingly/ so

really/ very

pretty/ rather

fairly

somewhat

slightly/ a bit/ a little/ a little bit/ not very/ not so

very slightly/ a tiny bit/ hardly at all

not at all

Answering other how questions phrases

The (best/ only) way is...

by (way of/ using)...

The method I...

Answering what... like questions phrases

(At first sight/ From the outside/ From a distance) it looks/ seems/ appears...

Its (outward) appearance...

I could describe it as...

If you can picture...

Answering why questions phrases

because (of)...

due to...

The (main/ chief) reason...

There are many reasons, including...

Ending the Speaking Part Two presentation phrases

"That's (absolutely/ more or less) all I can think of to say."

"I think I've (probably) covered everything."

"Are there any other important points that I missed? I don't think so, so..."

"I can't think of anything else to say."

"Can I stop there? (My mind has gone blank.)"

"That about covers it."

"(Umm), that's it (I reckon)."

"I seem to be going off topic, so I'd better stop there."

"I could go on about this forever, but I think that covers these four points."

"I'm pretty sure I've covered all four points."