

Speaking Part 1

Topic List & Practice Questions

Twelve of the most common Part 1 topics, with authentic practice questions for each. Use them to drill answers with A-R-E™ — Answer, Reason, Extension. From Appendix E of the Speaking Guide.

How to use this list. Part 1 lasts 4–5 minutes and covers 3 familiar topics with 4–5 questions each. Rehearse ideas and vocabulary — never full memorised answers, which examiners are trained to detect. Most answers run to two or three sentences; some run to one. Length is not the target, and the structure on page 3 explains why.

01 Hometown

- ◇ Where is your hometown?
- ◇ What do you like about it?
- ◇ Has it changed much in recent years?
- ◇ Would you like to live there in the future?
- ◇ Is it a good place for young people?
- ◇ What is it famous for?

02 Home & Accommodation

- ◇ Do you live in a house or an apartment?
- ◇ What's your favourite room?
- ◇ Would you like to move?
- ◇ What can you see from your window?
- ◇ Is your home close to your work or school?
- ◇ What would you change about it?

03 Work

- ◇ What do you do?
- ◇ Why did you choose that job?
- ◇ What do you enjoy most about it?
- ◇ Would you like to change jobs?
- ◇ Is your job stressful?
- ◇ What skills are important in your work?

04 Study

- ◇ What are you studying?
- ◇ Why did you choose that subject?
- ◇ Do you prefer studying alone or in groups?
- ◇ What's the hardest part of your studies?
- ◇ Do you use technology to study?
- ◇ What will you do after you finish?

05 Hobbies & Free Time

- ◇ What do you do in your free time?
- ◇ Have you taken up any new hobbies recently?
- ◇ Do you prefer indoor or outdoor activities?
- ◇ Did you have more free time as a child?
- ◇ Who do you spend your free time with?
- ◇ Is it important to have a hobby?

06 Technology

- ◇ What kind of apps do you use most?
- ◇ How often do you use your phone?
- ◇ Has technology changed how you study or work?
- ◇ Do you think you spend too much time online?
- ◇ What technology could you not live without?
- ◇ Are you good with new gadgets?

07 Food & Cooking

- ◇ Do you enjoy cooking?
- ◇ What's your favourite meal?
- ◇ Do you prefer eating in or out?
- ◇ Has your diet changed over the years?
- ◇ Are there foods you avoid?
- ◇ Who does the cooking in your home?

08 Travel

- ◇ Do you enjoy travelling?
- ◇ Where was your last trip?
- ◇ Do you prefer travelling alone or with others?
- ◇ What kind of places do you like to visit?
- ◇ Do you prefer the seaside or the mountains?
- ◇ Where would you most like to go?

09 Weather & Seasons

- ◇ What's the weather like where you live?
- ◇ What's your favourite season?
- ◇ Does the weather affect your mood?
- ◇ Do you prefer hot or cold weather?
- ◇ Has the climate changed where you live?
- ◇ What do you do on rainy days?

10 Shopping

- ◇ Do you enjoy shopping?
- ◇ Do you prefer shopping online or in stores?
- ◇ How often do you go shopping?
- ◇ Do you ever buy things on impulse?
- ◇ Are you a careful spender?
- ◇ What was the last thing you bought?

11 Music

- ◇ What kind of music do you like?
- ◇ Has your taste changed over time?
- ◇ Do you play any instruments?
- ◇ When do you usually listen to music?
- ◇ Is live music popular where you live?
- ◇ Is music important in your culture?

12 Friends & Family

- ◇ Do you have a large family?
- ◇ Who are you closest to?
- ◇ How often do you see your friends?
- ◇ What do you like to do together?
- ◇ Are friends or family more important to you?
- ◇ Have you known your friends for a long time?

Three moves — but a shape, not an order.

A-R-E is not three sentences produced in sequence. It is the shape an answer tends to have, and real speakers bend it constantly. Bending it is not a failure of the framework; it is the framework working.

A

Answer

Direct. No preamble.

"Yeah, most days."

R

Reason

Say why — a concrete reason, not a stated "because".

"It's quicker than driving."

E

Extension

A detail, an example, a limit or a counterweight.

"...though it's hopeless in the rain."

The four bends — practise these deliberately

THE BEND

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Drop the R when the reason is obvious

"Do you like music?" — "Yeah, love it. I've got something playing pretty much all day."
Nobody needs telling why a person likes music.

R before A when the reason is the interesting part

"Do you enjoy your job?" — "It's changed a lot recently — we've gone fully remote — so yes, much more than I did a year ago."

E as a clause, not a sentence

"Do you cook?" — "Most nights, yeah, though it's pretty basic on a work day." Four words hanging off the end. It still counts.

A on its own when the examiner is moving on

"Yes, I'm a student — second year, engineering" is a complete answer. Extending every single answer to its full length is itself a tell.

The seam test. Record an answer and listen for the joins. If a listener can hear where the Answer stopped and the Reason started — a pause, a gear-change, a phrase that arrives on cue — the structure is showing. It should hold the answer up from inside, the way a skeleton does. You should not be able to see it.

And say it like a person. Part 1 is a conversation about familiar things, not a presentation. "I currently reside in a bustling metropolis" is the wrong register for a chat about your hometown — "I live right in the centre, actually, it's pretty hectic" is the right one. That is not simpler English; it is appropriate English, which is what Lexical Resource actually asks for. The register lifts in Part 3, where the questions turn abstract. Do not arrive in Part 1 already speaking like Part 3.

The full method

These are 72 questions from Appendix E of the Speaking Guide. **IELTS Speaking Mastery: The Complete Band 7+ Guide** contains all fourteen frameworks — A-R-E™ for Part 1, P.P.F.E.™ for Part 2, F-E-E-L™ for Part 3 — plus **157 free shadowing audios**, the L1-Transfer Danger List for Chinese speakers, and full model answers with paragraph-by-paragraph feedback.

Buy the e-book at deencoxielts.com/shop.html — ¥128, watermarked EPUB + PDF, delivery within 24 hours. Also in paperback on Amazon.