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- Track 16: Unit 8 (Listening Section 1, full-length)
- Track 17: Unit 8 (Listening Section 2, three extracts)
- Track 18: Unit 8 (Listening Section 2, full-length)
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- Track 22: Unit 9 (Listening Section 3, extract)
- Track 23: Unit 9 (Listening Section 3, full-length)*
- Track 24: Unit 9 (Listening Section 4, extract)
- Track 25: Unit 9 (Listening Section 4, full-length)*

* In the IELTS test, there is a sufficient pause to allow students to read the questions. The recordings on this CD need to be paused at the relevant point(s) to enable students to do this.

Introduction

Aim of the book

IELTS Advantage Speaking & Listening Skills is designed for students who want to achieve a score of 6.5–7.0 or higher in the Speaking and Listening modules of the Academic IELTS exam. The majority of candidates aim to get at least 6.5, in order to study at university, to work abroad, to apply for a visa or to have proof of a good level of English. The book aims to develop your speaking and listening skills up to and beyond this level. Companion volumes in this series are *IELTS Advantage Writing Skills* and *IELTS Advantage Reading Skills*.

The book is divided into two sections: Speaking and Listening.

The content of the Speaking section has five main features:

- Format explanations and exam tips to help you predict and prepare for the Speaking test
- Grammar, vocabulary, collocations and expressions relating to the common themes and topics featured in the Speaking test
- Exam skills and strategies for the Speaking test
- Plentiful opportunities to practise speaking in the format of the Speaking test
- Audio examples on the accompanying CD of model Speaking tests

The content of the Listening section has three main features:

- Format explanations and exam tips to help you predict and prepare for the Listening test
- Development of strategies for listening and extracting the information necessary to answer the questions
- Listening practice material based on the accompanying CD

Using this book in the classroom

Each unit comprises around 90–120 minutes of classroom material. The lessons can be taught as a short stand-alone course of around 20 to 30 hours, or can be used as supplementary material.

Using this book for self study

This book has much to offer as a self-study resource. The exam tips and explanations, the language-practice activities and the audio material on the CD will provide a thorough preparation for the Speaking and Listening tests. To get the best from the speaking activities, work with a 'study buddy'. For most of these activities, one person plays the role of the examiner and the other plays the role of the candidate. Then you reverse roles and repeat.

Organization of the book

- Units 1 and 2: These focus on Speaking Part 1. In this part of the Speaking test, the examiner asks the candidate questions about familiar topics relating to his/her life.
- Units 3 to 7: These have an introductory section based on Speaking Part 1, followed by the main focus on Speaking Parts 2 and 3. In these parts of the test, the candidate prepares and delivers a short talk (Part 2), then discusses related topics further with the examiner (Part 3).
- Units 8 and 9: Listening

Some features of the Speaking section

- **Try it first!**

Before you start each section, you are encouraged to role-play speaking on the topic of the unit as if in the test. This can help to show you the strong and weak points of your speaking, so you can see how you need to improve.

- **Spotlight**

Explanation and practice of grammar, vocabulary, collocations and expressions which are particularly useful for talking about the topics of the unit and for answering the kinds of question typically asked in the Speaking test.

- **Exam skills**

Skills and strategies for improving the quality of your replies to the examiner's questions. These will help you to give more complex answers which fully demonstrate your ability to use English.

- **Prepare and practise**

Activities for organizing and developing your ideas so you will have plenty to say on the topics. These are followed by a role-play speaking on the topic as if in the exam, aiming to use language learned in the unit as much as possible.

- **Listen**

Listen to extracts from the Speaking test. Compare the model with your version in order to learn further useful ideas and strategies.

- **Pronunciation focus**

Tasks and suggestions for improving this essential aspect of spoken English.

- **Tips**

Extra advice and information for improving your performance on the day of the test.

- **Check and challenge**

Activities which review the content of the unit, plus suggestions for further study and skills development.

- **Four practice Speaking test role-plays**

Four full-length Speaking tests covering other topics which commonly appear in the exam. These give additional opportunities to practise speaking, and further demonstrate the structure of the test.

Some features of the Listening section

Explanations, advice, strategy ideas and practice relating to all the formats of the

Listening test:

- Multiple choice
- Matching
- Completing sentences
- Completing tables
- Completing forms
- Completing notes
- Writing short answers
- Completing summaries
- Completing flow charts
- Labelling maps/diagrams

About the Speaking test

Structure

- **Part 1:** The examiner asks general questions about familiar subjects such as your home, family, free-time interests and occupation or studies. It's common for the examiner to begin with questions relating to the practical side of your personal life, and then to move on to your leisure interests and/or other experiences of everyday life.
- **Part 2:** The examiner gives you a card with instructions to talk about a topic for up to two minutes. You have a minute to prepare, and can make notes if you wish. After the talk, the examiner may ask one or two 'rounding-off' questions about the topic.
- **Part 3:** The examiner asks further questions which develop the topic of Part 2 and generate a conversation featuring more abstract ideas and issues related to the topic of Part 2.

The total length is 11 to 14 minutes, and the whole interview is recorded.

During the test

IELTS examiners are thoroughly trained to give standard conditions in the tests. They are assessing your ability to communicate effectively, and you will not usually lose marks for minor errors or hesitations. It's normal to feel nervous before the test, and the examiner will try to help you feel more relaxed. He/She will talk to you in a friendly and informal manner, and will not try to trick you into making mistakes.

In simple terms, the Speaking test starts easy and gradually becomes more difficult.

However, that doesn't mean that you shouldn't aim to give complex answers in Part 1.

The examiner works from a printed set of questions, but has some flexibility to ask additional questions in order to discover the extent of your English ability as accurately as possible.

You should try to give your ideas and opinions, but will be assessed solely on the quality of your English, not your knowledge of the topic or your personal views. The examiner will not ask you directly about politics or religion. You can refer to those if you wish (provided they are relevant to the question), but you are recommended to avoid topics which make you feel emotional, as this may distract you from giving your best possible performance in English.

What are the examiners looking for?

The IELTS examiners are assessing several different things, and this book is designed to help you in each of these areas:

- **Vocabulary**

You need to have a good range of words and phrases relating to the typical topics featured in the test. Unlike the Writing test, it's not necessary to use formal, academic English. Standard conversational English is acceptable. You will gain marks for good use of collocations (or 'word partnerships'), fixed expressions and words and phrases for linking ideas.

- **Grammar**

You need to use grammar accurately. To get a high score, you need to show you can use a range of complex structures for purposes such as describing relationships between the past, present and future, and describing relationships of cause and effect. A common mistake made by candidates is to answer using simple and repetitive grammar rather than showing they can use more complex language.

- **Organization**

You need to speak in a clear, well-organized way and give answers which are easy to follow. The structure is not quite as important as it is in the Writing test, but you will gain marks for presenting your ideas in a well-structured way. A common mistake, especially in Part 2, is to give ideas which lack structure and a clear purpose.

- **Ideas and arguments**

You need to communicate complex and well-developed ideas and to answer the questions fully and with clear points of view. Common mistakes are failing to answer the examiner's question properly, and giving answers which don't go into enough detail to demonstrate a high level of English.

- **Pronunciation**

The accuracy of your pronunciation is very important. Speaking with a non-native accent is not a problem, but the examiner will assess how easy it is for a listener to understand your pronunciation.

- **Speed**

If you speak too fast, it will make what you say difficult to follow, especially if you also make some language and pronunciation errors. If you speak too slowly, it may suggest that you need too much thinking time for normal conversation. It may also mean you don't have enough time to demonstrate your English fully.

The above features are often summarized as:

- fluency and coherence (general ability to communicate effectively)
- lexical resource (vocabulary)
- grammatical range and accuracy
- pronunciation.

About the Listening test

Structure

There are four sections, each comprising ten questions. You get one mark for each correct answer.

- **Section 1:** a conversation between two people in an everyday social situation
- **Section 2:** a monologue in an everyday social context
- **Section 3:** a conversation between two (or occasionally more than two) people in an education or training situation
- **Section 4:** a talk or lecture in an academic style on a subject of general interest

The test lasts for approximately 30 minutes, followed by ten minutes for transferring answers to the answer sheet. Each part of the recording is played only once.

What are the examiners looking for?

The test is designed to assess your skills in several different areas, including:

- listening for the gist
- listening for the main points
- listening for detailed information
- listening to understand a complex idea or argument
- listening to infer the opinion of a speaker
- listening to make deductions about an unfamiliar topic
- listening to make deductions despite not understanding all the words.

The IELTS scoring system

IELTS exam scores go up in steps of 0.5 from 1.0 to 9.0. A score of 9.0 is considered to be very near native-speaker level. However, as the tasks are difficult and the time is limited, even native speakers are not guaranteed to get a score of 9.0. It's rare for a non-native speaker to get more than 8.0, and very few organizations and institutions require a score of more than 7.5.

The Common European Framework of languages (CEF) categorizes IELTS scores as follows:

level	CEF	IELTS
Upper-intermediate	B2	5.0/5.5/6.0
Advanced	C1	6.5/7.0
Upper-advanced/Proficiency	C2	7.5+

Here is a guide to what you can normally do with these scores. However, be sure to check with the employer or educational institution you are applying to.

- 5.5–6.0 Entry to a university Foundation course
- 6.0–6.5 Entry to a Bachelor's degree course
- 6.5–7.0 Entry to a Master's degree course
- 7.0+ Typically required to work in English-speaking countries in professions such as medicine, law and accounting



SPEAKING PART 1: OCCUPATIONS

In Part 1 of the Speaking test, the examiner asks you some general questions about your personal situation. These may include questions about your occupation (or the way you spend your time if you don't have an occupation). It's a good idea to prepare some ideas for speaking about this. What can you say that is interesting or unexpected? Can you give some opinions as well as the basic information?

Try it first!

Try talking about your occupation as if you were doing Speaking Part 1. If you are working with a partner, take it in turns to play the roles of examiner and candidate. Here are some typical questions.

Examiner: I'd like to ask you some questions about your occupation.

- Do you work, or are you a student?
- What's the most interesting part of being a [candidate's occupation]?
- What's the most difficult part of being a [candidate's occupation]?
- Would you say it's a good occupation? (Why? / Why not?)
- What kind of work would you like to do in the future?



Spotlight 1

Useful language for talking about your occupation

Grammar: present simple or present continuous?

Your choice of grammar shows how you feel about your occupation.

Present simple

I work for a company which makes car engine parts.

This implies you feel the job is long term.

Present continuous

I'm working for a company which makes car engine parts.

This implies you feel the job is temporary.

If you're a student, it's common to use the present continuous to describe your course:

I'm doing a Master's degree in Forest Management.

1 Choose the best sentence from each pair.

- 1 a I study Chemistry at the local university.
b I'm studying Chemistry at the local university. ✓
- 2 a I don't work at the moment.
b I'm not working at the moment. ✓
- 3 a My family owns a chain of opticians, and I run one of the branches. ✓
b My family is owning a chain of opticians, and I'm running one of the branches.

Vocabulary: prepositions with work

2 Choose the best preposition to complete each of these sentences.

- 1 I work to / for a marketing company.
- 2 I work in / at advertising.
- 3 I'm working of / at the local library.
- 4 I work by / with some interesting people.
- 5 I'm working on / about a very interesting project at the moment.
- 6 I work as / at a theatrical lighting designer.

Vocabulary: expressions connected with work

3 Complete the sentences below giving opinions about occupations using the expressions in the box.

career prospects	job satisfaction	job security
paid by the hour	physically demanding	work long hours

- 1 Doctors often have to work long hours.
- 2 I work in a restaurant, and I don't have a regular salary. I'm paid by the hour.
- 3 I love seeing children learn. That's why I get so much job satisfaction from being a teacher.
- 4 I don't work for any one newspaper. I'm a freelance journalist. That means I have no job security.
- 5 In sales, you can start at the bottom and work your way to the top. It's a job with excellent career prospects.
- 6 I'm a road mender. My job mostly involves filling holes in the road. It's tiring and physically demanding work.

Tip

There are many fixed expressions in English. Learning and using them can make your English seem more 'natural', and will help improve your score in both the Speaking and Writing tests.