

IELTS Speaking Exercise: Sentence Building

For you to receive a really high score, you have to demonstrate the ability to build your sentences. Demonstration of this skill is the key to acquiring a great score for sections 1 and 3 of speaking. In the examples below, I will show you how to sentence build and make the grader fall in love with your responses. A “Common Answer” is the typical low-scoring answer that most students provide and this is something that you can’t do. Note how in “Common Answers” students repeat the exact language of the question, which you should not do.

Question: Tell me about your family.

Common Answer: I have a brother and sister.

Better Answer: Although most families in Libya have 5 to 6 members, my mother and father are professionals and because of their busy schedules, they thought that having 3 children including myself was enough..

Note: This sentence is built to include what is typical in the country, how many in the family, and why only this amount. This is a solid compound complex sentence.

Question: What is your hometown like?

Common Answer: My hometown is a good place.

Better Answer: Even though most people think that their native city is great, Salvador Bahia is actually fantastic because we have the best combination of food, culture and activities. These activities include swimming, hiking, and dancing.

Question: How do you feel about your job?

Common Answer: I feel good about my job.

Better Answer: Most people in the world hate their jobs, but I actually happen to love what I do. Each day I wake up with a smile because it’s time to travel to work.

Question: What do you dislike about your classes?

Common Answer: I don’t like homework.

Better Answer: All in all, I love my classes, but sometimes our teacher assigns too much homework. This makes me feel depressed and stressed because I need more time to practice English in real life situations.

Note: Be sure to explain why you dislike it and use words that express emotion.

Question: What do you want to do in the future?

Common Answer: In the future I want to be an engineer.

Better Answer: When I was a child, I wanted to be a doctor, but as I got older I fell in

love with how things are built and as a result I settled on studying at a university next year to become an engineer.

Note: Notice how this answer brings up the past to lead into the future. Also note the “future” language.

Question: What do you do in your free time?

Common Answer: I play soccer.

Better Answer: As a student, I don’t have a lot of time for personal enjoyment. However, when time permits, I enjoy playing soccer since this is an activity I did a lot in my home country.

Note: Pay attention to the sentence structure. We have a complex sentence, followed up by a sentence using a transition word.

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

Common Answer: The typical day in my life is going to school.

Better Answer: On a daily basis, my life happens to be very structured because I am a student. Take for example yesterday, where I woke up, had a great breakfast, attended classes until 4 pm, and then went to the library for group study.

Question: What will you do when you go abroad?

Common Answer: I will study engineering when I go abroad.

Better Answer: Going to another country is always exciting. For me, the travel to a new country will afford me the chance to learn engineering in America, and to experience the different cultures they have in different parts of the country.

Question: What are some typical jobs that people do in your country?

Common Answer: The typical jobs that people do in my country involve oil.

Better Answer: As a Middle Eastern country, most job opportunities are related to the oil industry which is the main source of our gross domestic product. These jobs of accounting, engineering, and consumer sales all feed off the oil industry.

Question: Tell me about a celebration or festival in your country.

Common Answer: A festival that we have in our country is Carnival.

Better Answer: The biggest celebration in Brazil is Carnival, which is a celebration that involves parades of dance, costumes, and other cultural activities. I absolutely love this holiday.

Question: Do you like to go shopping?

Common Answer: Yes, I like to go shopping.

Better Answer: I would say that like most women in the world, I also enjoy shopping. I love to see the new items on sale and to try on all the exciting clothes.