**THE IELTS SPEAKING TEST: TIPS & STRATEGIES**

1. **What’s the MAIN AIM of the test? 2) What will the examiner listen for?**

 **Pronunciation** - This is only important if it gets in the way of communication. Speak clearly and you will be all right.

 **Vocabulary** - Some students try to improve their speaking score by using difficult words. However, using words incorrectly will LOWER your score! Avoid using difficult words or expressions unless you are sure of how to use them.

 **Sentence Structure** - Using better sentences is the best way to improve your speaking score in a short time, because using better sentences is how we communicate.

 **Fluency and Coherence** - Of course fluency is very important but it is useless if you are not understood (if you are not "coherent"). You do NOT have to speak quickly, but too many hesitations are bad.

**2) Your Score**

 If you cannot make good sentences, if you hesitate too much, if your speaking is not clear or if you use words incorrectly, you will be Band 4 or below.

 To be Band 5, you can make mistakes and have hesitations, but you must make simple sentences easily and without mistakes.

 To be Band 6, you must be able to use longer sentences with fewer hesitations. You need to use a variety of language. You can make some small mistakes if your meaning is still clear. Also, you should be able paraphrase.

 To be Band 7, you should be able to do Part 2 with no problem. You must use a variety of sentences and connect the sentences well. You must correctly use difficult vocabulary. You can make very small mistakes if your meaning is clear. You should be able to paraphrase very well.

 To be Band 8, you need a very wide vocabulary and the ability to speak fluently on any topic. You may make a few tiny errors, if those errors do not get in the way of communication.

**Strategies for the IELTS Speaking Test**

**Part 1 - Warm-up**

**What kind of questions will the examiner ask you?**

 The questions are easy, so the examiner cannot be sure of your level from only Part 1. You can give very easy answers, but this is a chance to make a good impression.

**Part 2 - the "Long Turn"**

**Why should you take notes?**

 The biggest mistake students make is to not take notes. The examiner will give you a piece of paper and a pencil to take notes because speaking for two minutes without stopping is not easy.

Students who don't take notes often say, "Uh, I think maybe, um.... Um..., well... It seems to me...". "Uh" and "Um" are Band ZERO! Use notes to help you remember what you want to say. If not, you WILL get a low score.

 Use the P.R.E.P. method. 1] Start with "P" - make one sentence about your main Point. Then give two or three sentences to provide 2] "R", a Reason. 3] Next give "E", an Example. Describe the example using two or three sentences. 4] Finish by repeating "P", your main Point, but use a different sentence. If you have extra time, give a second example.

 You must practice! Use a watch and give yourself one minute to take notes on a topic, then two minutes to make four or five sentences using the PREP method. You should practice one or two topics every day before the test.

**Part 3 - General Questions**

**Why is Part 3 the hardest part of the exam?**

 Part 3 is the hardest part of the Speaking Test because the examiner expects you to talk about topics in GENERAL (e.g. “Do you famous sports people should earn huge salaries?” These more GENERAL questions are usually RELATED to your Part 2 topic", you know Part 3 is coming immediately after Part 2. Be ready!

 Use the General-Specific technique. As soon as you hear the question, give a general opinion about the topic. Then give a specific reason or example in the next sentence or two.

  Do not worry about mistakes - everybody makes them! Instead, think about communicating well.

 Do not worry about your accent. Just speak clearly.

 Do not speak either too fast nor too slow.

 You cannot ask questions on Part 1 or Part 2, but you SHOULD ask questions on Part 3 if you do not understand.

 Do not change the topic. The examiner will think you cannot speak enough on that topic and will give you a lower score.

 Do not memorize answers to prepare for the test. The examiner will hear that you are not speaking naturally and will change the topic.

 Practice speaking with a watch. You should use about 4 minutes for each part of the Speaking Test.

 Practice speaking with a friend. Your friend can surprise you with all kinds of questions.