

Part 1 Speaking in Detail

To get a low to medium score (around band 5)

Here is an example of three typical Part 1 questions, and three answers from a candidate who would get a low to medium score (around Band 5):

Examiner: Let's talk about your home country. What is the climate like?

Candidate: It's hot most of the time. Sometimes there is rain.

Thank you. What are the main industries?

Making cars and buses. And there are many factories which make plastic things.

I see. And what are the main festivals?

What does 'festival' mean?

It means a special time when communities and families celebrate something.

Oh, ok. Well, our big festival is in summer.

I see.

2-STEP PROCESS: Why is it so much better?

Examiner: Let's talk about your home country. What is the climate like?

Candidate: It's generally hot and humid, although it rains heavily in October. This has a big influence on our way of life and our industries, because work tends to stop in the rainy season.

Thank you. What are the main industries?

The main industry is the production of cars and buses, which are mostly exported. Plastic items, especially toys, are important exports as well. In fact, we tend to export most of the products that we manufacture.

Comments

In this second example, the candidate was using more advanced vocabulary (*e.g. humid, tend to, exchange.*) This is one reason why the mark would be higher. However, the main reason the Band score is high is because the candidate used a 2-step process to answer the questions.

Let's explain what this means. The candidate said:

It's generally hot and humid, although it rains heavily in October. This has a big influence on our way of life and our industries because work tends to stop in the rainy season.

Here the candidate describes the climate and then gives a second, more general piece of information about the climate, telling us about its *influence*.

Let's Practice

Please tell me about your home town. What do people do in the evenings?

Let's talk about your plans for the future. What kind of career do you want to follow?

Tell me about your family. What do they do?

Tell me about your country's food and dishes.

Where are you living at present?

Let's Check

Please tell me about your home town. What do people do in the evenings?

Band 5 or 6: People go to the main square and drink coffee.

Band 9: Many people socialise in the main square, especially in the coffee shops. You could say that the main square is the most important social meeting place, because we don't have a beach or any big night clubs, as some other towns do.

Let's talk about your plans for the future. What kind of career do you want to follow?

Band 5 or 6: I want to be a food scientist, maybe for a big company.

Band 9: I plan to be a food scientist, which would mean finishing my degree and joining a large retail company. That's a challenge, but I think that my personal skills are well suited to that type of environment.

Tell me about your country's food and dishes.

Band 5 or 6: Our favourite food is meat. Our national dish is a lamb dish, like curry.

Band 9: We tend to eat a lot of meat, although these days people are trying to eat less meat for health reasons. We have a national dish which is similar to lamb curry, but made in a unique way. Not many people know the recipe, so eating it is always exciting for us.

Where are you living at present?

Band 5 or 6: I'm living with two other students in an apartment.

Band 9: At the moment I'm renting an apartment with two other students, because we want to be close to the campus, and property in that area is actually quite expensive. I'm pleased with the location, because it's very convenient and it's quiet at night.

Remember that the questions in Part 1 are always about you and your life. You should have some comments ready to give about any aspect of your life, using the 2-step process explained here. Practise with a friend if possible, using the following topics. All of these topics are taken directly from the list of IELTS examiners questions for Part 1.

Your home country – its industries, food and dishes, festivals, climate, geography, education system, media, history, infrastructure and transport arrangements.

(For example *'Let's talk about transport in your country. How do people generally travel around?'*)

Your home town, city or village – its appearance, population, main businesses, education facilities, public amenities, entertainment possibilities, history

(For example *'Regarding your home town, what are the main schools?'*)

Your plans for the future – your planned examinations, work and career, place to live, places you plan to visit, experiences you would like to have.

(For example *'I'm interested in your future plans. Which job would you like to do? Are there any special exams you will need to pass?'*)

Your family and friends – the jobs that your relatives and friends do, what you like to do when you are with your family or friends, how you keep in touch with your family or friends, your best friend's situation

Hometown

- Where is your hometown?
- Do you like your hometown?
- Do you often visit your hometown?
- What is your hometown like?
- What is the oldest place in your hometown?
- What is there for a foreigner to do or see in your hometown?
- How could your hometown be improved?
- Has your hometown changed much since you were a child?
- Is there good public transportation in your hometown?
- Do you think your hometown is a good place to bring up children?

Work

- What is your job?
- Where do you work?
- Why did you choose that job? Is it a popular job in your country?
- Do you like your job?
- Do you get on well with your colleagues?
- What was your first day like?
- What responsibilities do you have at work?
- If you had the chance, would you change your job?
- Do you plan to continue with your job in the future?

Study

- What do you study?
- Where do you study that?
- Why did you choose that subject?
- Is it a popular subject in your country?
- Do you like that subject?
- Do you get on with your colleagues?
- What was your first day like?
- What are the main aspects of your subject?
- If you had the chance, would you change subject?
- Do you plan to get a job in the same field as your subject?

Home

- Where is your home?
- Do you live in a house or a flat?
- Who do you live with?
- Are there many rooms in your home?
- What is your favourite room?
- How are the walls decorated?
- What would you change about your home?
- Do you plan to live there in the future?
- What facilities are there near your home?
- What is your neighbourhood like?
- Do most people live in houses in your country?

Art

- Are you good at art?
- Did you learn art at school when you were a child?
- What kind of art do you like?
- Is art popular in your country?
- Have you ever been to an art gallery?
- Do you think children can benefit from going to art galleries?

Birthdays

- Do you enjoy your birthdays?
- Do you usually celebrate your birthday?
- What did you do on your last birthday?
- Can you remember a birthday you enjoyed as a child?
- Do most people celebrate their birthdays with a party in your country?
- Which birthdays are considered important in your country?

Clothes

- Are clothes important to you?
- What kind of clothes do you usually wear?
- Do you ever wear the traditional clothes of your country?
- Where do you usually buy your clothes?
- Have you ever worn a uniform?
- Do most people in your country follow fashion?

Daily Routine

- When do you usually get up in the morning?
- Do you usually have the same routine every day?
- What is your daily routine?
- Do you ever change your routine?
- Is your routine the same today as it was when you were a child?
- Do you think it is important to have a daily routine?

Family & Friends

- Do you spend much time with your family?
Who are you closest to in your family?
- Do you prefer spending time with your family or friends?
- Who is your best friend?
- Are you still friends with people from your childhood?
- Is family important in your country?

Food

- What's your favourite food?
- Have you always liked the same food?
- Is there any food you dislike?
- What is a common meal in your country?
- Do you have a healthy diet?
- What do you think of fast food?