

IELTS Speaking Topic – City and the country #3

This is a sample response for IELTS Speaking Part 2 and 3. In addition to the model answer there are highlighted words and phrases. **Teal** is for vocabulary relating to this topic, **yellow** is for generally useful words and phrases.

IELTS Speaking Part 2

Describe a notable building or house in your city.

You should say:

- where it is located
- what it is
- what is notable about it

and say how well-known it is outside of your city.

Model answer

I am from a fairly small **non-descript** town, so honestly we don't have too many buildings worth noting. One that comes to mind is the one currently used as a museum of **contemporary art**. The building itself was **erected** in the middle of last century. It **stands three storeys high** in the historical part of our town, with beautifully-laid **brickwork** that has really **stood the test of time**. The real beauty of this building is that it **blends in** nicely with the rest of the street, **discreet** and **dignified**.

It usually hosts exhibitions, mostly by local artists. **Admission** is always free so anyone is welcome to come look at the exhibits of representative art. Normally we don't get any big names coming and **hence** not many people outside of our town know about the museum. It's a shame really because it really deserves more exposure and coverage by the media. However, maybe it is better to keep it the way it is, **a hidden gem**. It might help preserve the special charm it has now.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

City and the country

In your opinion, what are the differences between people living in cities and in the countryside?

The differences are **glaringly** evident **from the get-go**. **Urbanites** are much more **approachable** as they are always surrounded by others. When you have people around you all the time it is easier to establish new social connections. Rural folks live in more **secluded** communities so a new person for them is a rare sight. Naturally, they might feel **apprehensive** towards newcomers. However, their **bond** and friendship seems to be much stronger because of the general **sense of community**. **Conversely**, connection of people in the city is more **superficial** because of its **fleeting** nature. They might not feel inclined to stay in touch with somebody because there are many other people around, so friendship might be seen as something **disposable**.

Another important point to make is the difference in life experience. Rural folks have more practical skills and knowledge - because they have to do most things themselves. They can fix a roof, milk a cow and **raise crops**. Most citizens' skills are focused around their profession, so they have a very limited **array** of them. All this means is that the countryside people are more adaptable in the **hunter-gatherer sense**.

What challenges might people living in the countryside face?

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The problem of **infrastructure** is likely to be the biggest concern of living in the countryside. In the past, smaller villages didn't even have grocery shops so if you wanted to get anything you would have no choice but to drive to the nearest town. While it is **no longer the case** in my country, the problem persists elsewhere, **albeit** at a lesser scale. For instance, young families have kids who need to be taken to kindergartens and schools. Both can be either too far away or simply too full to take new children. Then there is the issue of **understaffed** hospitals that can also be too **remote** to reach easily. The list goes on and on.

Of course, the most obvious challenge is employment. Finding a job in **sparsely**-populated area such as a small town or a village is a **disheartening** task. Low population means low demand for goods and services, so there jobs are few and poorly paid. That is why many choose to focus on farming and agriculture to provide for themselves and sell any **surplus**.

Cities and nature

What can be done to make people living in cities feel more in touch with the nature?

People have to go back to basics to **reclaim** the sense of belonging, being one with the nature. One way to do so is to give up cars and walk and cycle to places. It helps get the feeling of scale, understand how huge modern cities are and how much time it really takes to get anywhere. It also makes you appreciate what little of nature modern cities still have - trees, bushes, birds. This should in turn encourage you to be more nature-conscious to preserve the **remainder** of urban wildlife.

This might seem a bit **too far-fetched** for some. A more **down-to-earth** approach is to adopt a pet. When you have a cat meowing next to you it serves as **a living reminder** of beautiful things in our lives. Caring for an animal brings you closer to nature and creates a sense of purpose. On a side note, it also makes you feel less lonely in the **concrete jungle** of modern cities.

In your opinion, what is the most effective way to reduce pollution in cities?

To **tackle the issue** of urban areas pollution we might want to rethink how cities work. The majority of air pollution comes from cars - that is a well-known fact. So one can either reduce the amount of cars on the roads or shorten the distance they have to cover. The former can be achieved by evenly spreading the traffic load over wider range of vehicles - buses, trams, bicycles. **Carpooling** is a great option too, but not many might be **down to that**. The latter - shorter commutes, **that is** - is more difficult to implement as it would mean forcing people to live closer to their place of work or study. This is a rather extreme regulation, but it can be slowly **enacted** nonetheless.

Finally, the state could **impose carbon offset fees** for those unable to give up on driving a car. They could pay for the pollution they generate and the money could then be used for funding environmental projects. Overall, the matter of city pollution is not an easy one and compromises are inevitable. Everyone has to work together to resolve this crisis that is getting more serious.

What measures can be taken to stop deforestation and protect urban forests?

Stopping deforestation within city limits seems like **a noble pursuit** - and it is. However, it is almost impossible due to one fact of life - city land is expensive. Construction companies **fight tooth and nail** for every inch of space within city limits to build apartment complexes. This often happens at the expense of trees that might be on the land that is meant for erecting new buildings. The trees end up uprooted and either thrown away or moved outside of the city in question.

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*One realistic solution to this should come from the state. Stricter regulations could be introduced which would oblige the building companies to dedicate certain percentage of land to natural vegetation. The effort could be taken further by planting more trees in place of old buildings that are due to be demolished. Such **proactive** approach would undoubtedly help cities look more cheerful and make the air cleaner.*

City and the country vocabulary

Erect (v) - to build something. *Local council erected a monument to commemorate the historic event.*

Stands three storeys high - is three storeys high. Used to talk about height of structures, people or other living things. *There he stood, almost seven feet high.*

Brickwork (n) - the way bricks are laid. *Exposed brickwork has been a popular design direction since 1960s.*

Blend in (phr v) - to fit in, to look like an organic part of something. *To blend in with the crowd I had to wear a raincoat that seemed to be very popular with the locals.*

Urbanite (n) - a person living in an urban area as opposed to people living in small towns or villages.

Approachable (adj) - easy to talk to, welcoming. *Teacher has to be approachable among other things so that students wouldn't feel shy about asking a question.*

Secluded (adj) - located far away from other places or people, private. *The park had a secluded valley not many people knew about.*

Sense of community - a state of trust, friendliness and cooperation within a group of people. *Most major cities are unlikely to have any sense of community even among people living in the same apartment complex.*

Infrastructure (n) - all the services that are essential to high quality of life - shops, hospitals, schools and so on. *Newer district in the city already come with all the necessary infrastructure prebuilt.*

Remote (n) - very similar to secluded - far away from everything else. Unlike 'secluded', does not have the 'private' aspect. *A remote village cut away from civilisation.*

Concrete jungle - a figurative phrase that compares cities with the jungle, both equally cruel and dangerous in their own ways.

Carpooling (n) - the practice of sharing a private car to commute together in order to save on gas and reduce environmental impact. *I have been carpooling with Jack and Victoria for six months now and so far it's been going great.*

Impose (v) - to introduce some restrictions or regulations, usually by a governing body such as the state.

Carbon offset fees - payments made by companies or individuals to make up for the environmental damage they have caused.

General vocabulary

Non-descript (adj) - not worth attention, uninteresting. *A non-descript person approached us and said that he is our tour guide.*

Contemporary art - art that was produced relatively recently, i.e. in 20th and 21st century. *Contemporary art is easier to understand than art of the renaissance age because it is not so removed from us in terms of time.*

Stand the test of time - remain relevant in terms of idea, style or other aspects despite being made or having begun a long time ago. *We had many differences, but despite that our friendship stood the test of time indeed.*

Discreet (adj) - (here) not easily seen, careful and tactful. *Her discreet appearance was very pleasing to the eye and didn't clash with the overall theme of the party.*

Dignified (adj) - with sense of self-worth. *Members of the royal family always have to act in a very dignified way*

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not to lose face.

Admission (n) - payment to be a part of something (or lack thereof). *Admission fee can range from \$5 all the way to \$100 for priority tours.*

Hence (adv) - therefore, this is why, as a consequence. *You have missed most of my classes hence your low mark for the semester.*

A hidden gem - something like a book, movie or any other form of media that is good but unknown to most people.

Glaringly (adv) - in an obvious way, clear and easy to see.

From the get-go (informal) - from the very beginning. *It became clear from the get-go that Clarisse was one of the brightest students in her class.*

Bond (n) - a connection such as friendship, love or shared interests that unite people. *Bond among students was getting stronger with every year.*

Apprehensive (adj) - having doubts and concerns about something, especially something new or unknown.

Conversely (adv) - on the other hand, contrastingly. Used to introduce an opposite idea or point of view.

Superficial (adj) - shallow, lacking depth, or simply concerned with appearance rather than substance. *Her understanding of the subject was superficial - she would use terms without even understanding what they really mean.*

Fleeting (adj) - passing, disappearing quickly. *The fleeting youth came and gone, leaving nothing but memories and regrets.*

Disposable (adj) - something that is not essential, replaceable. Also something that you can use without worrying about it. *My disposable income went to buying skiing equipment and saving for a vacation and a mountain ski resort.*

Raise crops - to grow edible cultures such as wheat or rice.

Array (n) - a range or selection of something, usually used positively. *She had an array of impressive talents. She could play most instruments, speak three languages and even ride a horse!*

Hunter-gatherer sense - if you refer to somebody in this sense you mean their general survival skills and how ready they are to deal with basic problems of life such as finding food, shelter and dealing with danger.

No longer the case - not anymore, no longer so. *She used to live with her parents, but unfortunately that is no longer the case. After high school she had to move out.*

Albeit (adv) - although, however.

Understaffed (adj) - not having enough workers. *The kitchen is understaffed today because Bella has called in sick. Be ready to work harder, people!*

Sparsely (adv) - small number of something spread over large area. *The garden had some flowers sparsely planted along the fence.*

Disheartening (adj) - something that is so difficult that it discourages you from attempting to try it because there is no hope of succeeding. *Lisa's failure to enter the college so disheartening that I decided not to try it myself.*

Surplus (n) - an extra amount of something doesn't get used. *Any surplus clothing here is usually given away for charity.*

Reclaim (v) - to get back something that you previously had, especially if it was rightfully yours in the first place.

Remainder (n) - something remaining of the whole; the rest of. *For the remainder of the party we just stood at the balcony chain smoking and peering into the dark streets below us.*

Far-fetched (adj) - unlikely, not realistic. *Her expectations of the trainee becoming a competent professional within six months are way too far-fetched.*

Down-to-earth (adj) - practical and reasonable.

A living reminder - something that is a real life examples that serves to make you remember something. *My older*

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cousin is a living reminder that having no full-time job does not work out well for most of people.

Tackle the issue - to take care of the problem, to solve it.

Be down to something - (informal) to agree to do or take part in something. *Surprisingly, she is down to partying with us.*

That is - a phrase to explain or clarify something, usually with a comma before it.

Enact (v) - to make something a law. *Enacting a six-day working week might benefit the economy but will definitely disgruntle most employed people.*

A noble pursuit - an aim worth fighting for because it represents human ideals.

Fight tooth and nail - to fight hard for something (figuratively or literally) because it is desirable.

Proactive (adj) - taking action before negative consequences happen.