

## IELTS Speaking Part 2

Talk about a relative that you respect

You should say:

- who the relative is
- what they do
- why you respect them

and say if you have always respected them

### Model answer

There is one member of my **extended family** I have always **looked up to** - my grandfather from my mother's side. He's a stocky man in his late eighties now, but he is as bright as any young fellow. There are no signs of **senile dementia** or anything like that. That's probably because of his occupation - you see, he used to be a chief accountant at a major law firm. He would run numbers in his head all the time.

My uncle doesn't do much nowadays. He has been retired for more than a decade. He goes fishing quite often, he is **no stranger to** exercising in general and cycling in particular. All in all, he tends to stay quite active both physically and mentally. I **hold him in high regard** for two reasons: he is quite **level-headed** even in times of stress and his great sense of humour. His occupation shaped him into the hardy but sensible man he is today.

I have to say that it took me a while to see the real character of my grandfather. He would always be there for me when I was a child, but I paid little attention to that. Nowadays, I am much more **appreciative** of who he is and how much he has done for me.

## IELTS Speaking Part 3

### Family and career

#### Does having a family help or harm your career opportunities?

When one starts a family, they should be ready to face the simple fact that having one requires attention and dedication. Your **spouse** is not just a co-tenant that you share expenses with. They are an integral part of your life now, and this means they will take up a major fraction of your time, possibly **hindering** your professional success. The time that you could otherwise spend to achieve greater career heights. Naturally, this takes a toll on your career opportunities.

On the other hand, a person with a family shows that they are able to **commit** and are therefore more dependable. According to publicly available data, people in senior managerial positions are almost always married. Therefore a married person is not necessarily torn between work and family. The two spheres can organically coexist and contribute to your success. Family can provide you with strong emotional support in times of need.

#### In the past, husbands worked, while their wives stayed at home. Has the situation changed? Why?

The situation today is drastically different from the past for two reasons. The first one is a rather negative one - inflation. **Single-income households** have mostly become the thing of the past because increasing inflation has led to lower **purchasing power**. One hundred euros today can't buy you nearly as much groceries as they would a decade

ago. Real estate prices and mortgage rates have skyrocketed as well, while the salaries simply couldn't keep up with this surge.

Another reason is on the more positive side: women have finally become equally paid, no longer reduced to the demeaning 'fairer sex' stigma. Employers are becoming increasingly aware of women's contribution at the workplace. This was reflected in more adequate compensation, and HR more willing to interview and hire female professionals.

## Friends and friendship

### Do you agree that childhood friendships last the longest? Why?

That's definitely true. The simple fact of life is that bonding is easier when we are young. You are more open to things, changes, and people in your younger years. As you mature, you grow more skeptical, cautious, even cynical. This can get in the way of meeting new people. Terms like "networking" and "mingling" show the artificial, inorganic nature of forcing oneself to find new connections and acquaintances for the sake of social or professional growth. When you are young, you just meet people because you like them.

### Is friendship always a good thing? Can there be situations when friendship can affect you negatively?

Friendship comes in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes friendship can be of a very unnatural kind. For instance, if you come from a wealthy family, people will naturally want to be on good terms with you, as a rich friend is always great to have. This can lead to you being taken advantage of because you can pay for them or might want to buy them expensive gifts as they see you as a friend. This can also be true for people holding any kind of power, like government officials. Sometimes this fake friendship goes both ways, and people just choose to stay well-connected to make use of their acquaintances for personal gain. This can be covered by the façade of friendship, which it isn't, of course.

### Is it possible to stay friends with a person who has moved away?

It makes sense for distance to stand in the way of friendship. People who have been friends for years will eventually grow apart if they don't see each other for a prolonged period of time. Keeping in touch via email can help, but nothing substitutes face-to-face communication. I am convinced that any friendship, no matter how strong, will fizzle if you don't see the person for over a year. It will turn into a lukewarm friendliness first, and then you won't be interested in one another at all.

## Friends and family vocabulary

**Extended family** - your uncles and aunts, cousins and other relatives that are not included in your immediate family.

**Hold somebody in high regard** - to respect somebody, to have a high opinion of them.

**Appreciative (adj)** - to value and treasure something or somebody.

**Spouse (n)** - one's wife or husband, i.e., somebody you are officially married to.

**Commit (v)** - to promise and keep your promise of being a part of something, i.e. commit to do a job or be a part of a family.

**Single-income household** - a family where only one of the spouses works while the other usually does household chores, mind the kids and so on.

**Bonding (n)** - the process of becoming friends or understanding each other better.

**Mingling (n)** - connecting and engaging with other people at some social gathering.

**Be on good terms with somebody** - to be in good relationship with them.

**To take advantage of something or somebody** - to use smb or smth in an abusive way, i.e. for personal gain. Used negatively.

**Grow apart** - to gradually become less interested in and connected with somebody.

**Fizzle** - very similar to growing apart, it also implies a rather disappointing ending.

### General vocabulary

**Look up to somebody** - to think of somebody highly and to try to be like them.

**Senile dementia** - a condition that elderly people are prone to. Characterised by forgetfulness and generally worsening cognitive function.

**No stranger to** - knowing something well or having experience with it. *Charles was no stranger to street fighting so he felt confident even at the more seedy parts of town.*

**Level-headed** - composed, not impulsive, rational.

**Hinder (v)** - to slow down, to prevent from developing fully.

**Purchasing power** - an economic term. The ability to buy and afford goods and services.

**Keep up with** - not to fall back, to stay at the same pace as something or somebody else.

**Reduce smth/smb to smth/smb** - (here) to think poorly of somebody because you fail to see their real potential.

**Façade (n)** - fake front that usually hides something else, either worse or illegal. *Her seemingly happy life was only a façade that hid her financial problems.*

**Substitute (v)** - to be an alternative to something. *Nothing substitutes a good two weeks of rest at the seaside.*