

IELTS Speaking topic – Hobbies and free time #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

Talk about a hobby that is popular in your country

You should say:

- what the hobby is
- how long it has been popular
- what kind of people it is popular with

and say if you share passion for this hobby yourself

Model answer

*My answer might surprise you, but one of the national **pastimes** our country has is birdwatching. This is a practice of observing everything related to birds, like trying to **make out** the species of birds, see any patterns in their behaviour, how they interact with each other and so on. It doesn't sound like much, but once you **get the hang of it** the activity becomes almost addictive. It is surprising how quickly it grew in popularity among us. That said, I think it's a fairly new trend - I don't remember many of us being interested in birdwatching ten years ago. It has to be a rather recent phenomenon, yes.*

*The hobby is mostly popular with young adults and older people. I guess you can attribute it to the fact that much younger folks are too busy with their mobile apps and playing videogames. Learning to **appreciate** nature in its purest expression takes dedication and experience - both qualities are more likely to be found in older people. Therefore it should come as no surprise why the older you get, the more likely you are to get into such ruminative things.*

*As for me, I do enjoy the activity very much, however I don't get to engage in it as often as I would have liked to. I have to study a lot nowadays, my **academic pursuits** take the **lion's share of** my available time. And I have a part-time job **to boot**, so it leaves me with very little time to spare. But whenever I get a chance, I try to look up and see if there is an interesting species of sparrow or jackdaw flying over my head somewhere.*

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Hobbies today and tomorrow

What are some hobbies that are popular today that were not common in the past?

*I'd say that the newly-emerging hobbies are in one way or another related to the recent **advances** in technology. One example is videogames, that became widely-available some thirty years ago and over the years turned from a **niche** thing for **hobbyists** into a billion dollar entertainment industry. I guess the rise of the Internet in general and streaming services like Twitch in particular helped popularise this activity and advertise it to the masses.*

*Similar thing could be said about casual mobile games which have shown a much more rapid growth with the cost of the industry **well into** tens of billions dollars yearly. Finally, **virtual reality headsets** are probably the newest addition to the tech-related family of leisure activities. This groundbreaking device enables you to fully **immerse** into*

IELTS Speaking topic – Hobbies and free time #3

whatever **setting** you wish - starting from an action or adventure game and going as far as turning you into a **protagonist** of an interactive movie.

Do you think traditional hobbies such as knitting, painting or gardening will still be popular in the future?

It's hard to **speculate** on such things as future time and time again proves how wrong we can be about our idea of what it might look like ten or even five years from now. Named activities will undoubtedly survive, but I would not go so far as to say that they are going to be popular. If we look at today's adults, knitting or gardening are a rather niche thing. They say the latter is quite popular in the UK, as popular as it has always been, but it is can be explained by the national peculiarities. The Brits have always been crazy about gardening, planting trees and taking care of plants, that kind of thing. But in general the listed hobbies might become more rare, but they will nonetheless find their followers.

Do you think people will have less time for hobbies in the future? Why or why not?

I believe the contrary is a more likely scenario. Consider the following - as AI slowly **takes over** menial tasks coupled with the increased usage of robotic machinery for such **undertakings** many people will find themselves out of job. This might sound alarming, but in fact they will simply have to work much less and do a completely different type of labour than most of us are used to. It is hard to imagine what exactly their occupation might be, but one can safely assume that the amount of free time an individual will have at their disposal is going to be much more than today. This in turn will mean that the **abundance** of free time will have to be filled with something. Something like hobbies! Therefore, I'd say that people will finally be able to dedicate more time to what they truly love doing.

Advantages and disadvantages of hobbies

What are some of the drawbacks of having a hobby?

Some hobbies can get quite expensive. I have a friend who **is really into** collecting Funko Pops. These are basically dolls, or action figures, made in their own unique style. There are hundreds of different ones and it seems that once people get into buying and **hoarding** there is no stopping them. Long story short, the friend of mine ended up wasting all of his income and even getting into debt to get the latest and greatest editions of those dolls.

Another drawback I can think of is that one can get too **engaged with** the hobby, to the point where it comes **at the expense of** their productivity, social life and other important aspects. This is where the **fine line between** hobby and addiction is drawn. An **innocuous** activity like playing videogames can quickly overpower a weak mind, I know many such cases. They are right to say that everything can be good **in moderation**, but too much of anything is never good. Even if seems so at first.

Do you think there is an ideal age to start pursuing a hobby?

It largely depends in the nature of hobby. Hobbies with **steep learning curve** are best to take up in your late teens while you still have great **aptitude for** learning and at the same time already possess discipline and focus required to **persevere** in mastering something challenging. Some examples that come to mind are programming, robotics, maths. Other hobbies need considerable initial investment and are therefore better suited for individuals with steady income - in other words, adults. Whether you are into competitive cycling or collecting vintage cars, money goes a long way there. But **when all is said and done**, there is no such thing as ideal age for anything - I guess you just follow your passion and see how it all **works out for you**.

IELTS Speaking topic – Hobbies and free time #3

How can hobbies help connect with people and build relationships?

Hobbies can act as a great **social equaliser** - both a millionaire and a student with a part-time job can be **avid** readers and would both be eager to discuss a book they have recently read, all on equal terms. What I mean to say is that your hobby can lead to friendships and acquaintances you would have never thought to be possible. This is especially true for the more shy type of people who feel **reluctant** to connect with others just for the sake of connecting - usually it just **doesn't sit well with them**.

Therefore, a hobby can be the **proverbial middleman** in bringing **the meek** together, the much needed **social lubricant**. It can be the first **stepping stone** in a great relationship. I can safely say that because I've gone through something similar, meeting great people through shared interests, many of whom I still get together with regularly to this day.

Hobbies and free time vocabulary

Pastime (n) - an activity that is done for fun in one's free time. Basically a fancy synonym for 'hobby'. It often comes with the adjective 'national'. Watching and playing rugby is a national pastime in New Zealand

Get the hang of something - get better at doing something through practice and understanding. My mother got the hang of making spreadsheets in Excel in less than a week

Niche (adj) - not very widespread due to its special or specific nature. Watching art house movies is a very niche hobby

Hobbyist (n) - a person interested and engaged in a particular activity for fun. Car hobbyists usually form groups focused around different car makes

Virtual reality (VR) headset - a special piece of high-tech equipment that you put on your head. It has two displays that show you two similar pictures at slightly different angle, creating an illusion of three-dimensional imagery.

Immere (v) - (here) to get deeply engaged in some thing or activity. He fully immersed himself in English to get better at it

To be into - if you are into something or someone, you are very fond of it (or them)

Hoard - to accumulate possessions that you do not necessarily need. She hoards all of her mother's sound records even though she doesn't even have a music player and she refuses to sell or share them

Engage in/with - to take part in some activity. *The director has to be heavily engaged in production of the movie till the very end of filming*

In moderation - if something is taken or done in moderation then it is done in reasonable amount, not too much, without excess. *In moderation, red wine can be very good for your cardiovascular system*

Steep learning curve - something that has that is very difficult to learn from the very beginning or becomes drastically more difficult at some point

Social equaliser - something that makes the rich and the not so rich seem equal because a situation like that does not take into account how much money or influence one has. *Being stuck in an elevator can be a real social equaliser situation*

Avid (adj) - enthusiastic about something and engaged in it

Social lubricant - something that helps people overcome natural shyness. *They say that alcohol is the oldest social lubricant known to humanity. It puts you at ease and makes meeting new people much less stressful*

IELTS Speaking topic – Hobbies and free time #3

General vocabulary

Make out - (here) to try to identify something that is difficult to see. *Because of the darkness I couldn't really make out the face of the man who was approaching me*

Appreciate (v) - to value something. *I appreciate your help, but to be frank I didn't really need it.*

Academic pursuits - a general term for learning-related activities. In context of more serious levels of research it can mean more specific goals. *Joanne decided to quit her part-time job to focus on her academic pursuits*

Lion's share of - a bigger part of something

To boot - (informal) in addition too, as well as. *We ordered six pizzas, four sushi sets and a big cake to boot*

Advances (n) - (here) progress or success in some field. *Thanks to modern advances in medicine many previously incurable diseases can now be dealt with*

Well into - way more than. *Last year the sales figures for the company were well into ten million*

Setting (n) - a term for books movies and other forms of media. Refers to the time and place where the action takes place. *The setting of her newest book was 12th century France*

Protagonist (n) - the main character of a book, a movie etc.

Speculate (v) - to talk about something without much knowledge, experience or data on the subject. *They speculate about what could have happened with him. He looked extremely depressed*

Take over - to become in control of something. *Big corporations taking over the market by forcing smaller companies out of business through price manipulation and aggressive practices*

Undertaking (n) - an act of taking part or starting something, usually a business or a business-related activity

Abundance (n) - if there is abundance of something there is more than enough of it. *There is an abundance of phones on the market today for everyone to find their perfect model*

At the expense of something/somebody - if something is done at the expense of somebody, the action affects them negatively. *We managed to increase management salaries at the expense of lower-ranked employees*

Fine line - a difference that can be difficult to notice but that is important. A fine line between bravery and stupidity

Innocuous (adj) - without meaning harm or offense, harmless. *He made an innocuous remark about her sales figures and all of a sudden she became furious*

Aptitude (n) - a person with an aptitude for something finds it easier to learn and master it. *Her aptitude for natural sciences paved her career path*

Persevere (v) - to keep on doing something despite hardships or difficulties. *He persevered with the diploma paper even though the pace of progress was almost non-existent*

When all is said and done - at the end of the day, after all. *Some people didn't like Mary's management style, but when all is said and done she is a great leader that will be hard to replace*

Work out (for somebody) - if something works out it means it succeeds. *If renting a flat doesn't work out for you there is always an option of staying with your parents*

Reluctant (adj) - not enthusiastic about something, unwilling. *Joe was reluctant to leave the party so early but his girlfriend insisted that they left immediately*

Not to sit well with somebody - to be unacceptable for somebody. *My plan to spend the summer in the countryside didn't sit well with my parents. They had planned a part-time job for me*

Proverbial (adj) - something that is well-known or frequently spoken of because it is commonly used in proverbs or idiomatic expressions. It can also refer to something that is widely accepted as being true or characteristic of a particular situation or person, often used to describe a cliché. For example, the proverbial "apple a day keeps the doctor away" implies that eating healthy can help prevent sickness, while the proverbial "raining cats and dogs" suggests that it is raining heavily.

Middleman (n) - a person that helps run some deal between two other people to ensure safety of the transaction. *If you don't want to risk losing your money, consider hiring a middleman for a small fee.*

Meek (adj) - shy and socially awkward. *Also, not proud.*

Stepping stone - something that means another stage on the way to your aim. *Getting a good degree is an important stepping stone to successful career.*