

IELTS Speaking Topic – Technology and progress #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 gadget you used a lot when you were a child

You should say:

- what the gadget was
- how you got it
- why you used it a lot

and say if your parents were happy about you using it a lot.

Model answer

My childhood memories are rather **patchy**, but one bright spot is a videogame device that I had. It was a **handheld gaming console**. It worked on two **AA batteries** and there was one simple game in which you control a spaceship and shoot asteroids. I got it as a gift from my mother for finishing my first year at school. The memory of unpacking the box, taking it out of the **bubble wrap** bag and putting the batteries in is something I can recall even today. I think it was so exciting I couldn't figure out how to turn it on.

I think the main **allure** of it was that you could take it with you wherever you wanted. I **would** often have it in my backpack to play it during school lunch breaks. Some of the kids from school probably wanted to **hang out** with me just to get a peek at my cool console. Mind you, the game wasn't anything fancy. My 7 year-year-old self was very **impressionable** at the time, and I'm sure that by today's standards the game would seem **rubbish**. Back then however it didn't take much to impress kids as we didn't have access to the super capable gaming consoles that are on the market today.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Technology in our life

Has technology made people more productive? Why/why not?

It would be foolish to say that technology failed to make working environments more efficient. Modern computers are as fast as they have ever been, so all the inputs and calculations get **processed** almost instantly. This makes working with them both quicker and more pleasant. The reason I am **singling out** computers is that because most of work nowadays is done sitting in a comfy office chair in front of a screen. However, tech progress has improved overall productivity **across the board** - manufacturing, education, medicine, agriculture. It would be more difficult to name a sphere that didn't benefit from technology progressing.

On the other hand, tech progress spawned the ultimate **distraction** - the smartphone. It doesn't take an eagle eye to notice what has been happening over the last decade. People have been getting more and more absorbed in their phones. I can definitely understand the appeal - like watching **bite-sized** videos that the **algorithm** suggests to you based on what you like. However, constant exposure to this increases your **dopamine tolerance** and shortens your **attention span**. The former means that you are not as easily entertained and interested. The latter is more serious as you find it increasingly difficult to keep focused on something for longer periods of time. Some blame this on **ADHD**,

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but in many cases the phones are the **culprit**. The result of this is that people can't be as productive as they used to be. They **crave** distraction constantly, maybe without even realising it.

Is there any danger in becoming too reliant on technology?

Yes, there definitely is. With the current state of tech, people no longer need to do or know things that were considered essential thirty years ago. For instance, they no longer have to know the city they live in. Their phones have detailed **interactive** maps that have all the shops and services listed and can navigate you there. I can see this especially **prevalent** with the younger people who don't even know the name of the streets in the city they've been living in for many years. Another example is growing **illiteracy**. We type a lot nowadays, and most typing environments have the auto-correct function that fixes all the misspelled words, oftentimes without even notifying us.

A more recent threat is the appearance of AI. Among many of its uses is the infamous ability to produce extended texts that are virtually **indistinguishable** from those that people write. A short description that you **feed to** the AI can produce tens of pages of quality text that can **pass as** your own work. Many industrious students has used this shortcut to avoid writing their own reports and researches, choosing to **delegate** this **laborious** process to the **prolific** AI. They fail to understand that the purpose of these papers is to teach them how to research, reference and present information.

Progress and development

How has progress in technology affected the entertainment industry, such as music and films?

One notable example of this is **CGI** tech that pioneered in late nineties with the Toy Story cartoon. Instead of drawing the characters over and over again to create an illusion of movement and change, animators and graphic artists got a much more **potent** tool in their hands. Instead, they would design a **three-dimensional** model of each character and animate it using computing power. This created a unique art style that has been pretty popular for the last 25 years.

Music became much more accessible thanks to technology. Anybody with a computer can now **try their hand at** creating music. There is software that is widely available which can **synthesize** sounds, noises and various musical instruments. Without getting into much detail I can say that it allowed talented people with no means to make and publish their music become globally recognized musicians. Of course, coupled with the Internet, becoming popular is only a matter of time, provided that the music you create is good and **stands out**.

How has the Internet affected the way we access and share information? Are there any negative developments?

Since the **inception** of the Internet in the seventies it has been clear that eventually it will grow to be the biggest store of knowledge and information. It all started well - the Web was a place for professors, scientists and other intellectual elite something like an alternative library that you could access with a computer. As the Internet became more available to general masses, the overall focus shifted towards entertainment rather than information and education. Of course the information was still there, but there appeared an issue.

The problem is that the ease and facility of access to information comes at a cost. Because the web space is so vast, it is impossible to effectively fact-check and **curate** all the information that ends up there. As a result we can no longer be fully sure if what we watch or read on the Internet is real or factually true. **A case in point** is Wikipedia. Since it can be edited by anyone, the information there can be incomplete, subjective or **outright** wrong.

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Has technological progress made our live simpler or more complicated?

I'd say it has made many things much easier. Most household chores have either been automated or made trivial. We now have robot vacuums that sweep the floor for us, dishwashers that take care of the washing-up, smart ovens that make sure your turkey is done to your liking. We even have fridges that order groceries online if they see you running low on something. Housekeepers have it easy nowadays, and that is a good thing.

It has also made difficult or unpleasant things more tolerable. Let's take healthcare. Invention of safe anesthesia made surgeries and other painful procedures virtually pain-free. Additionally, more precise tools allowed less intrusive approaches to dealing with ailments. Dental treatments is no longer every child's and grown-up's nightmare. It is not a nuisance at most. Finally, advances in prosthetics allowed people with disabilities to have a much higher quality of life, replacing missing limbs with artificial counterparts.

Technology and progress vocabulary

Handheld gaming console - a portable gaming gadget with dedicated controls. Some notable examples are Nintendo Wii and Nintendo 3DS.

AA batteries - common batteries found in most electric devices like remote controls or computer mice. Pronounced as "double A batteries".

Process (v) - (about computers) to take some data and return a result. *This newest model can process over 300 megabytes a second, this is a very impressive number.*

Algorithm (n) - a special software that analyses and then suggests things like videos, ads or articles based on your search or view history. *I have been watching some cat clips on YouTube and now the algorithm gives me nothing but pets videos!*

ADHD - attention deficit human disorder, a mental conditions that makes you difficult to focus or stay focused on something for longer periods of time.

Interactive (adj) - if something is interactive it means it changes based on your inputs such as clicks, keystrokes, voice commands and other. *Our interface is fully interactive and you can even customise the way it looks!*

Illiteracy (n) - a state of being illiterate - not having basic knowledge of the matter. Often used to mean spelling or grammar illiteracy. *Computer illiteracy is inexcusable in today's world.*

Feed to (v) - (about computers) to input some data in order for it to get processed. *I feed this numbers to the system and it does all the calculations for me.*

Delegate (v) - to assign a task, responsibility, or authority to another person or group of people (instead of yourself). *I usually delegate all the simple accounting tasks to junior staff. It gives them the invaluable experience and lets me focus on the more complex things.*

Prolific (adj) - able to produce large volumes of work. *Prolific writers find sheer pleasure in sharing their stories with the world.*

CGI - computer-generated imagery. Basically, computer graphics and special effects that get used in movies and cartoons to create different visuals.

Three-dimensional - also referred to as 3D, it means the standard dimensions of physical world, i.e. width, height and depth. *3D games were the most mind-blowing thing of early nineties.*

Synthesize - to create something new through artificial means, especially through chemical processes. *We can now synthesize this element and do not have to worry about finding an alternative.*

Automated - done automatically, as opposed to being done manually (using hand labour). *Most large-scale*

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manufacturing in first-world countries is automated.

Artificial - man-made, the opposite of natural.

General vocabulary

Patchy (adj) - incomplete, fragmented. *Her competence in this field is patchy at best.*

Bubble wrap - a special synthetic material lines with tiny bubbles that prevents damage during transportation.

Allure (n) - powerful attraction to something. *The allure of ski resorts is in its glamour, fresh air and relative danger.*

Would do something - a structure like this is used to describe action that happened often in the past but do not happen nowadays. *She would smoke a whole pack of cigarettes during her night shift. Then her doctor said she might get lung cancer, so she had to quit smoking.*

Hang out - (informal) to spend time somewhere. To hang out with means to spend time with somebody.

Impressionable (adj) - easily impressed or influenced. *It is only natural for the young to be impressionable. That's much better than being jaded, that's for sure.*

Rubbish (adj) - (here) bad, low quality. *This bike is rubbish, I wouldn't take it even if it was given to me for free.*

Single out (phr v) - (here) to focus on something in particular.

Across the board - something that is true or can be applied to all things in the group, with no exceptions. *His marks improved across the board - physics, math, even PE - all because he now spends less time playing video games.*

Distraction (n) - something that takes your attention away or prevents from focusing.

Bite-sized (adj) - used figuratively here to mean content that is small and requires no long commitment to go through it. *Bite-sized texts are more likely to get attention from magazine readers.*

Dopamine tolerance - dopamine is the hormone of happiness. It is produced when you do something you like, i.e. eat ice cream. If you produce more dopamine than you normally would, then tolerance builds up. It means that in order to get the 'feel-good' effect, you need expose yourself to more of it, like eating more ice cream in our example.

Attention span - how long one can stay focused on something. *Short attention span can be a serious problem for students who have to spend considerable time studying new things.*

Culprit (n) - a person, thing or situation responsible for something bad. *The car wouldn't start and the culprit turned out to be the empty gas tank.*

Crave (v) - to want something very much.

Prevalent (adj) - happening more often than others; widespread. *Tuberculosis is prevalent among people living in Far North, especially if they have no access to good healthcare.*

Indistinguishable (adj) - difficult to tell apart from something else. *The twins are almost indistinguishable apart from their hairstyle.*

Pass as something - to pretend or to look as something, even though it isn't. *This fake ID I have just printed might pass as a genuine document.*

Laborious (adj) - involving a lot of effort, especially physical.

Try your hand at something - try some new activity. *We tried our hand at hiking and now I can't wait to do it again.*

Stand out (phr v) - to be different from something else because of its remarkable qualities. *This pupil stands out in particular with his perfect attendance and great marks throughout the years.*

Inception (n) - beginning or starting point of something, especially an activity or an institution.

Curate (v) - to select something to be used as a good example of it. *This content is curated by experts in the field.*

A case in point - a good example of something.

Outright (adv) - (here) completely, totally. *After the bombing, the city was outright run to the ground.*

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Trivial (adj) - easy or simple to the point of being primitive. *Giving our students these trivial tasks isn't going to improve their problem-solving skills.*

Run low on something - to have something in low supply. *I'm running low on pencils, could you order some from our office supplier?*

Tolerable - acceptable. *Your academic performance is still tolerable, but I can see that you aren't putting any effort in it.*

Have smth easy - to have an easy time doing something. *Students nowadays have it easy with access to the Internet where you can get any book you like, no matter how rare it is.*

Ailments - diseases, poor health conditions.

Prosthetic (n) - an artificial limb.