

IELTS Speaking topic – Transport #3

le 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 plane flight that was unexpectedly good or bad

You should say:

- where were you flying to
- who was with you
- what was particularly good or bad about the flight

and say if the memory of that flight is a pleasant one.

Model answer

When I was still at school our family decided to go to Italy for a fortnight. We were scheduled to fly from Istanbul to Rome via Budapest. For some unfathomable reason the direct flight was much more expensive, so our father opted for a slightly longer journey. It actually didn't sound too bad as we would get to see another country we have never been to, even if it was just its airport.

There were four of us - myself, my parents and my older brother. We have always packed lightly, and this trip was no exception - between the four of us we only had two bags and a backpack. So off we went early morning and by noon we were already enjoying the sights of Budapest out of the airport terminal window. But then disaster struck - it turned out that flight to our final destination had been cancelled. Thankfully, the air company was courteous enough to provide us with a hotel room in the airport building while they were looking to find us four places on another plane to Rome. The wait proved to be unexpectedly lengthy - we ended up spending almost ten hours before we were finally able to resume our journey.

Even though the delay is rarely a good thing, I have fond memories of that day. It was nice to walk around the airport, see all the duty free shops and eat at the food court. I guess you never know if something bad can actually turn out to be for the better.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Transport and the environment

Should car manufacturers be held accountable for the environmental impact their product has?

To the best of my knowledge they are. Governments impose stricter environmental regulations every years that car makers have to abide by. If the cars are not up to the emission standards, the manufacturers can be forced to pay environmental fines or be restricted from selling this car altogether. The latter is normally reserved for more severe cases where emissions are much higher than the currently set threshold. I think the regulations in some states will eventually force car makers to switch most of its line-up to electric vehicles.

Why do you think cycling is less popular than driving in most countries?

I think there are three main points that make people favour cars over bicycles - prestige, practicality in certain aspects, and infrastructure - I am listing these in no particular order. Having a nice car is seen as a mark of

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financial success, something that vast majority of us want to have or at least project. Similarly, if you don't have one people can interpret it as that you are strapped for money - and not many people would want to send that kind of message. Personal vehicles are also nice to have when you have to drive people around or move things - spacious interior offers something that a bike doesn't have. With a bike you can ride with one small child at most, so if you have two kids then you are **out of luck** - you will probably just **spare yourself the grief** and get a car.

The matter of car-centered infrastructure is probably the biggest **culprit** of popularising car ownership. The cities are built around driving, parking and **maintaining** cars. This comes **at an expense of** pedestrians, cyclists and public transport vehicles. Bike and bus lanes are a rare sight in many countries with only the main streets having them. Finally, an adult on a bike is something many people see as child-like behaviour. That's probably because they associate bikes with something a younger person would use.

Should people be forced to use more eco-friendly modes of transportation? If so, how?

I think they should be encouraged, yes. Forcing somebody to do something is very likely to **backfire** in most cases. As the saying goes "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink". Dramatic changes should follow two logical rules - they should be gradual as well as natural. By latter I mean that a person's desire should come from reasonable rather than imposed factors. For instance, a bike lane that is almost empty during **rush hour** looks very attractive to a person sitting in traffic jam. This naturally makes them consider the option of biking to work instead of driving.

As for the gradual bit, I believe that any grand change should take time. Car ownership has been an **integral** part of many cultures for almost a century now. It's a **tall order** to change that overnight. It is a matter of years before general public will **come to terms with** a simple fact - driving is not a **sustainable** option and the time to move on has come. **Reluctantly** at first, people will **eventually** switch to some other form of transport - be it an electric scooter, a monowheel or a bicycle. I firmly believe that the sooner we set these mindset changes in motion, the better off everyone is going to end up.

Cars and cities

What are some of the negative effects of a car-centered cities?

There are so many, to be frank. I would probably point out **air and noise pollution**, **traffic congestion** and surprisingly, social isolation. The first point should be self-explanatory: cars are loud and they emit a strong **fuel odour**. Both of these facts do not lend themselves nicely to a good quality of life, especially for people living in the city centre and next to busy highways. The constant **hum** of passing traffic can get quite maddening.

Traffic congestion is a topic that everyone **rants about** without realising that they are a part of the problem. Ironically though, they can't be blamed for this as a car-centric city leaves you little choice in terms of how to get to places. This is a **Catch 22 situation** where no matter how much you hate cars and driving in general you have little choice. It's all because car is the most convenient way to get to work or go shopping. Using cars make the situation worse for everyone though and there is now way out of this. It is especially true for bigger **metropolitan** areas where crucial infrastructure object are too far apart.

Finally, the matter of social isolation comes to mind. Cars introduce additional social barriers between people. It results in a loss of community cohesion because people spend more time isolated in their cars and less time interacting with neighbours and others in public spaces. While this might not sound too serious, but it is. It contributes to loss of the feeling of belonging and ultimately affects quality of life negatively.

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Is it more important for cities to prioritize public transportation or the use of personal cars?

Well, it really depends on the aims the city in question pursues. Comfort and convenience at the cost of commute time and carbon footprint? Then cars are the way to go, although the priorities here are very questionable. Do the authorities have foresight to think long-term? Public transport is the answer - it has much more impressive numbers when it comes to environmental friendliness, cost basis and contribution to traffic congestion. Imagine streets with no private cars, but trams and buses - these streets would be jam-free even in peak hours. Therefore, it all comes down to what we are really after - the superficial or tangible benefits.

What are some of the biggest challenges involved in transitioning to a car-less city?

Realistically, the biggest challenge would be making good use of the existing infrastructure and adjusting it to car-free environment. The majority of gas stations, service shops and other car-related services would be rendered useless, which means a lot of people and equipment becoming redundant. As they say, you can't make an omelette without breaking some eggs. Changes can be scary and come at a price, but change for the better is to everyone's benefit. Some will have to pay the price of progress, and it is government's responsibility to make the transition less shocking to the ones most affected, I believe.

Transport vocabulary

Pack lightly - when travelling, only take things you absolutely need to have as little baggage as possible.

Off we go - an expression that means the start of a journey, adventure or new activity. We use it to suggest excitement and enthusiasm for embarking on a new experience.

Emission standards - regulations imposed by the government to reduce harmful gases that cars and other fuel-burning things create.

Line-up (n) - a series of products that a producer presents. *The current Apple laptop line-up covers needs of most users, however all of their devices are quite pricey.*

Maintain (v) - to keep something in good working order by cleaning, lubricating or replacing components. *My grandfather maintained his car regularly, that's why it is still in top shape.*

Rush hour - peak traffic time at early morning and evening when people go to and from work respectively. *Rush hour traffic today is especially horrible - we've been stuck at this intersection for half an hour now.*

Sustainable (adj) - able to be maintained or continued over a long period of time without depleting natural resources or causing harm to the environment. It refers to the ability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Air and noise pollution - the excessive amount of harmful gases and car engine or tyre noises respectively. *To reduce noise pollution, the state erected sound-proof walls between highways and the living quarters.*

Traffic congestion - a situation when too many vehicles are on the road at the same time, causing traffic to slow down, stop or even become stuck. It can be a result of high volume of cars, traffic accidents or roadworks.

Fuel odour - unpleasant smell of fuel (petrol or diesel). *Even when operating under regular conditions, cars tend to emit noticeable fuel odour.*

Metropolitan (adj) - relating to city rather than rural area.

Carbon footprint - the total amount of waste that one leaves measured in carbon monoxide (a harmful by-product). *Reducing carbon footprint is one of the parts of environmental mindset.*

Peak hours - see rush hour.

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General vocabulary

Abide by (v) - to follow or obey something like a rule or a regulation. *If you don't abide by the traffic rules, sooner or later you will get fined by the police.*

Altogether (adv) - completely. *After three months we stopped seeing each other altogether.*

Favour (v) - to show preference for something, to choose it over something else. *The coach decided to favour the rookie player for the starting position.*

Out of luck - if someone is out of luck, the situation they are in is unfavourable to them. *You're out of luck Chuck - your team has already left without you.*

Spare somebody the grief - not to do something that would make somebody sad or offended. *I'll spare you the grief and won't tell what exactly she had said about you.*

Culprit (n) - a person or a thing responsible for some mistake, error or any other undesirable consequence. *Our car wouldn't start and the culprit turned out to be dead battery. Once we had charged it, the car came back to life.*

At the expense of - when somebody wins or gets some benefit when the other person or party loses. *I managed to find more time for studying at the expense of spending less time with my friends.*

Backfire (v) - to cause or get unexpected negative effects. *Skipping literature classes really backfired when it turned out that your attendance accounted for 50% of your mark.*

Integral (adj) - vital, crucial.

Tall order - something that is challenging or impossible to do. *Passing this exam with a high mark is a tall order because the professor is grumpy and really hard to please.*

Come to terms with - to accept something, especially something you are uncomfortable or unhappy with. *Lucy had to come to terms with the fact that singing career wasn't a realistic option for her.*

Reluctantly (adv) - in an unwilling manner, not wanting to. *Reluctantly, she let me join the class despite me being late.*

Eventually (adj) - at some point in the future, as opposed to right here and now. *She eventually decided to apply for a job despite refusing to do so for quite some time.*

Hum (n) - low-frequency, usually unpleasant sound made. Some examples are a fridge or a person who hums some melody under their breath, sometimes without realising it.

Rant about (v) - to complain about something, usually without taking any actions to actually do something about it. *My grandfather loves ranting about the current government and their silly policies.*

Catch 22 situation - a situation that is impossible to get out of because the action required to fix it relies on some other action or situation that is connected to the first one.

Foresight (n) - ability to understand or predict what is going to happen in the future. *His foresight made him a great entrepreneur.*

Come down to - used to emphasize what is really important. *You can be the best friend with your manager but it really all comes down to your sales figures. If they are low, no matter how good your relationship is, you will never get a promotion.*

Render (v) - (here) to make, to turn. *All my attempts to get her attention got rendered useless by that new guy who just directly approached her and asked her out.*

Transition (n) - the process of change. *Transition from planned to market economy is not easy for any developing nation.*