

## IELTS Speaking topic – Friends and family #2

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 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 he has a great sense of humour. His occupation shaped him into the hardy but sensible man that 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 what 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 - 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 their work and family. The two spheres can organically coexist and contribute to your success. Family can provide you with strong emotional support in the times of need.

#### In the past husbands used to work while the wives would stay 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 household** has mostly become the thing of the past because the increasing inflation has led to lower **purchasing**

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**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 more aware of women's contribution and the workplace. This reflected in more adequate compensation and HR more willing to interview and hire female professionals.

## Friends and friendship

### Do you agree that childhood friendship lasts 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 stand 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 - 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 friend for years will eventually **grow apart** if they don't see each other for a prolonged period. 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 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 friend 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 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

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cognitive function

**No stranger to** - to know something well or to have 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.*