

IELTS Speaking topic - Friends and family

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

Describe a childhood friend you have lost touch with
You should say:

- where you met
- how you spent time together
- what you liked about your friend

and say why you think you have lost touch with them.

Model answer

*I'd like to tell you about Giorgio, my old schoolfriend. I met him in primary school - **we were assigned** to sit at the same desk and we **hit it off** **in no time** at all. He turned out to be quite keen on videogames, just as I was. This kind of **brought us together**.*

***We would** spend days either at my place or his talking about our hobbies, playing games or reading comic books. We would rarely go outside, which sometimes caused me **falling out** with my family. Other than that, my parents didn't stand in the way of our friendship.*

*What I really liked about Giorgio was his determination. I idolised his **persistence** in achieving whatever he would **set out to do**. I guess this quality has proved really helpful throughout his life. **Small wonder** he is so successful now!*

*I guess the reason **we grew apart** was a natural one. At some point Giorgio became a family man, too busy to have time for many things. I mean we still **have lots in common** and would find something to talk about, but it just isn't going to be the way it used to.*

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Family and friendship

What personal qualities make a good friend?

I'd say that a good friend is a person with **empathy**. You should be able **to relate to** other people's feelings - whether positive or negative ones. Another important trait of character is being **considerate** - paying attention to what other person says, thinks or needs. Finally, a great friend is a **selfless** one - in other words, they are ready to put other people's interests before their own. Surely there are many other important personal qualities, but these three are the **cornerstone** ones.

Who do people have stronger connection with - their friends or their family? Why?

This is a pretty tough question and it should be looked at a **case-by-case basis**. Some cultures have stronger **family ties** - whether it's their **immediate or extended family**. They have family meetings and dinner regularly. They have more respect for the elder members of their community as well. Others **bond** stronger with their friends - either childhood ones or those from school, college or work. One thing is true - while we can't choose our family, we can definitely pick friends - so it might be safe to say that the latter tends to be stronger as it is based on common interests or other things that **draw people together**.

Nowadays people tend to start families later in their lives. Why?

I think there is a number of **factors at play** here. First of all, the economic reasons. Young people today **have a harder time** finding a promising career. A good job **takes up** the majority of their time which leaves little room for the personal side of life. Similarly, raising a child can be quite **taxing** on family budget so many choose to **postpone** having a family and children until they are financially comfortable. Another possible reason is an overall shift in social paradigm - some people no longer see starting a family as an **integral** part of life.

Relationships

How has technology affected the way people communicate?

The **ubiquity** of the Internet and increasing popularity of mobile devices has had a dramatic effect on the way we **keep in touch**. In fact, the change was so vast that even phone conversations are becoming obsolete, rapidly being **ousted by** messengers. These **enable people** to send text or voice messages **virtually free of charge**. Consequently, people have moved from real-time conversations to sending and receiving messages that they can read or listen to **at their convenience**.

Has the way people meet their partners changed over the past twenty years?

I would say yes, the dating scene is much more different from what it was for my parents. In those days people would find their **other half** at disco bars, parties at their friends' or **introduced to** by **mutual acquaintances**. While some of these ways are still popular today, people have been increasingly preferring various online websites and apps for their dating needs. Some might say that the romance is now gone and the process of finding a partner has become devoid of thrill and excitement. All in all, the process has indeed changed.

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Friends and family vocabulary

Hit if off - to become friendly or to like each other quickly, usually right after meeting.

Bring together - if something brings people together, it unites them because they are equally interested in it.

Fall out (v) - when you fall out you have an argument or a row, usually verbal, non-violent one.

Grow apart - to stop being in touch, to stop talking or communicating. It happens gradually rather than abruptly.

Have lots in common - to be interested in the same thing, to be alike.

Empathy (n) - the ability to put oneself in other person's shoes, to try and understand how they might feel about something.

Relate to (v) - if you relate to a person you understand how they feel because you have experienced something similar in the past.

Considerate (adj) - a considerate person is one caring about how others feel and because of that they try not to offend anyone.

Selfless (adj) - a selfless individual sees other people's needs and desires as more important than their own.

Family ties - family connection, relation

Immediate family - parents and children. Your parents, sisters and brothers are your immediate family.

Extended family - grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews AS WELL AS the members of immediate family.

Bond (v) - to get closer spiritually, to connect.

Draw together - if something draws people together it helps them connect to one another.

Keep/stay in touch - to keep talking or communicating. See 'grow apart' as a rough antonym for this.

Other half - one's romantic partner, not necessarily a spouse.

Introduce (v) - introducing one person to another is telling them their name as to encourage communication.

Mutual acquaintance - a person both you and somebody else know.

General vocabulary

Be assigned (v, passive) - being told what to do or given something by a higher authority, e.g. a teacher or a manager

In no time - very soon, without waiting

Would (past form) - a construction used to talk about actions in the past that are no longer true. *When I was a child I would spend all summer running in the field playing with other kids.*

Persistence (n) - personal quality that helps do the same thing until you succeed despite difficulties or setbacks

Set out - if you set out to do something, you make up your mind about doing it and start doing so.

Small wonder - there is no surprise that ...

Cornerstone (adj) - fundamental, integral, crucial, very important

Case-by-case basis - a situation where each example has to be reviewed individually.

Factors at play - things that affect the outcome

Have a harder time at something - have difficulties at doing something.

Take up - to start doing something e.g. a hobby or a sport.

Taxing (adj) - tiring either physically or mentally

Postpone (v) - decide to do something later (similar to 'procrastinate')

Integral (adj) - see 'cornerstone'

Ubiquity (n) - the state of being available or present everywhere.

Be ousted by (v, passive) - to be replaced by someone or something better

Enable somebody (v) - allow or give the opportunity to do something.

Virtually free of charge - almost free

At one's convenience - whenever one finds it comfortable