

IELTS Speaking topic – Holidays and celebrations

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 celebration in your country.

You should say:

- the name of the celebration
- how people celebrate it
- if it is known outside of your country

and say what you like or dislike about it.

Model answer

*I'm going to tell you about Oktoberfest, the **renown** festival of beer that, naturally, is in the month of October. The finest beermakers come there for the public to have a taste of their product. Naturally, this celebration of beer attracts many enthusiasts from all around the world. It is no surprise that many **plan** their trip **around** visiting it!*

*The celebration itself does not have too much variety - people go from one tent to another to taste the finest beer Bavaria **has to offer**. In addition to drinking, there are other activities available such as fun rides and dancing. During the festival they play traditional Bavarian music which really **sets the mood** of the celebration. It is quite popular with foreigners - as I have said, we get many folks coming over just to experience this unique atmosphere of **revelry** and **merriment**.*

*One thing I find upsetting though is the culture of drinking. Here in Bavaria we nurture the idea that you drink beer to **savour** the taste, not to get drunk. With many festival visitors it doesn't seem to be the case. Often they get so drunk they can barely walk. However, I tend to think it is the **irresistible** taste of fresh beer so they simply can't have enough of it!*

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Holidays and consumerism

Some say holidays exist do encourage people to buy presents and other things. What do you think?

*I agree with this statement to some extent. As people's financial well-being grew over the years, they could afford to spend a little bit extra. The **disposable income** often goes to treating their **nearest and dearest** with presents, sometimes extravagantly expensive ones. But is it such a bad thing after all? I believe that a reasonable person will not overspend if they can't afford it - therefore, there is no need to be too concerned with the issue. The increased spending rate is an indicator of a healthy economic situation rather than people being too eager to part with their hard-earned cash.*

Are holidays more or less materialistic than they used to be?

*I will probably have to count on my grandparents experience to **draw parallels between** nowadays and the way it was some decades ago. According to them, holidays in the past used to be more about **reuniting** with your friends and family. A celebration would mean getting to see your distant relatives and others **of kin** who you wouldn't*

IELTS Speaking topic – Holidays and celebrations

normally meet. Today it seems more about an excuse **to splash out on** some trip abroad or treating yourself and your family to a nice dinner, things like that. So I guess yes, the holidays have indeed become more about consuming rather than seeing your close ones.

Holidays and celebrations

Some people stay at home for holidays while others choose to travel. What are the advantages of each choice?

People love to say that travelling broadens your mind. I think this can be **misleading** - what exactly do they mean by that? If we talk about holidays, most just spend a fortnight soaking in a pool, drinking **complimentary**, watered-down drinks counting the days till when they have to go back to work. This isn't much different from walking around your hometown, but it sure is much more expensive. So while travelling is a nice change indeed, financially it makes more sense to stay at home since your holiday is going to be pretty much the same anyway.

Do birthdays and anniversaries lose their significance to people as they grow older?

They probably do - I mean the novelty of birthday parties really wears off after about twenty years. Looking at older people I can see how they definitely do not feel as excited about their upcoming birthdays. I believe that as you grow older the day just means that you have lived one more year, while when you are young you look forward to the awesome presents and the great party you are going to throw. With anniversaries it might be another situation, like a marriage that has **stood the test of time** means that both spouses have made the right choice and they understand the idea of commitment.

Holidays and celebrations vocabulary

Set the mood - to create a certain atmosphere

Revelry (n) - a big, noisy celebration that usually involves consumption of alcoholic drinks

Merriment (n) - the state of being happy and drunk

Nearest and dearest - your closest relatives

Reunite (v) - to get back together after a long time

Of kin - related to one another

To splash out on smth - to spend a large sum of money

General vocabulary

Renown (n) - fame or popularity of something or someone

Plan around - if you plan around something, you see it as a key part of your plan. I usually plan my vacation around visiting as many museums as possible

Have to offer - to have available

Savour (v) - to enjoy something slowly and thoroughly

Irresistible (adj) - difficult to refuse or turn down, tempting

Disposable income - the amount of money you have after you have paid for essentials such as food and bills

Draw parallels between - to compare

Misleading (adj) - not being what it appears to be

Complimentary (adj) - free of charge

To stand the test of time - to keep working or existing after a lot of time has passed