

IELTS Speaking topic – Money and shopping

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 purchase you were unhappy with

You should say:

- what you bought
- where you bought it
- why you were unhappy with the purchase

and say what you did with the thing you bought.

Model answer

*Back in school I had a part-time job at a local **fast-food joint**. I remember getting my first **paycheck** and going on a **shopping spree** right after. Among other useless things I had bought one was especially silly. It was a really expensive mobile phone that I purchased at the brand's **retail outlet**.*

*I'm unsure why exactly I felt dissatisfied with buying it. It was probably the fact that I spent **a lion's share** of my money on it. Or maybe because it had become obsolete a year later, just like most tech pieces at the time did. Anyway, the **feeling of novelty wore off** after a couple of days and I was left with an overpriced gadget.*

*I think I ended up using the phone for a year when one day it slipped out my **palm** and I dropped it. The screen cracked and I was **quoted** such a high price for replacing it that it was simply not worth it.*

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Money in society

Is money necessary to be happy?

*As far as I know there has been an extensive research done in this field and the **findings** were quite surprising. Basically, once you have enough money to cover your **basic needs** such as food, housing and other necessities, further increase in **monetary well-being** does almost nothing to the level of happiness. Once this **point of diminishing returns** is reached, the happiness-to-money ratio **tapers off**. It really makes you think whether excessive wealth **contributes** very little to your outlook on life. So as long as you have enough money not to worry about where to sleep and put food on the table, you are as happy as the rich guy next door, if not more!*

Should schools pay more attention to teaching about money and spending it?

*At school they teach us many things - how to read and how to count, historical dates and factual data, how the world works. However, there seems to be a deficit of real-life-oriented subjects. We graduate with our heads filled with mostly abstract information that has little application to the problems we face daily. Knowing what money is, how to make, spend and handle it is one of such vital skills most people lack. Classes of economics are yet another strictly academical discipline and do not tackle the **problem at hand**. Financial **literacy** is as important as ever nowadays, therefore overlooking it is simply unacceptable.*

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Shopping and spending habits

Some people do buy things at shopping centres while others prefer markets. Why?

Two things come to mind here. First of all, shopping centre is an expensive place to rent and run your shop, so the **overheads** have to be factored in the price. Naturally, the buyer is the one ending up paying for that. Markets on the other hand are simple outdoor **venues** with stalls that you can use for very little money, sometimes free of charge. The other possible reason is the experience of **haggling**. I know some people who are keen on trying to drive the price down when **on a hunt for a bargain**. I know a guy who bought a chestnut dining table with a set of chairs to match it **for a song**. At the end of the day people who don't mind paying a little extra purchase things at shopping centres.

Is it better to buy new things or pre-owned ones?

I'm afraid there is no **definitive answer** to this as it all comes down to your preferences, budget and attitude to conscious consumption. The advantages of buying new are evident - the joy of being the first and only owner is a serious source of dopamine for people.

Reasons to buy used are on the surface as well. First and foremost, it's the price. You would normally expect to pay considerably less for a slightly used item just because it is not new. You also get to meet the person who is likely to have similar interests as your since you both enjoy the item in question. Finally, purchasing a pre-owned thing is a great way to reduce your **carbon footprint** since you will effectively be 'recycling', or using something again. I strongly believe that choosing to get a used article is a much more reasonable choice for the reasons above.

Money and shopping vocabulary

Paycheck (n) - informally, it means the amount of money you get for your job

Shopping spree - a behaviour when you do a lot of shopping, usually buying many unnecessary things in the process

Retail outlet - a shop aimed at retail customers (not companies or businesses)

A lion's share - bigger part of something

Quote (v) - (here) to give an estimated price for some goods or services

Basic needs - things you can't live without like food, clothing and shelter

Monetary well-being - situation when you have more than enough money

Point of diminishing returns - in statistics, a point when increase in one factor no longer provides the same increase in the other corresponding factor

Overheads (n) - business expenses associated with renting a venue, paying your staff etc.

Haggle (v) - to try and convince the other person to give you a better price when buying or selling something

Bargain (n) - something bought at a much lower price

For a song - if you buy something for a song, you get it for a very low price

General vocabulary

Fast-food joint - another name for a fast-food restaurant

Feeling of novelty wears off - when you no longer feel the joy from owning something that you have bought recently

Palm (n) - the inner part of your hand i.e. where the fingerprints are

Finding (n) - (here) something that has been discovered through a survey or an experiment

Taper off - to stop increasing, usually used in statistics i.e. when describing a line graph

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Contribute (v) - (here) to affect something, to take part in changing it in some way

Problem at hand - a current problem that demands attention

Literacy (n) - how well you know and understand something: computer literacy is knowing how to use computer well

Venue (n) - a place where something happens

On a hunt for - looking for something

Definitive answer - a solution to something that everybody is happy with

Carbon footprint - the amount of harmful gases that someone or something produces as a result of existing