

IELTS Speaking topic – Nature and the environment

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 memorable visit to a park or the countryside

You should say:

- where it was
- who you went with
- what you did there

and explain what made the visit memorable.

Model answer

About two years ago when I was still studying at school we went on a **field trip** to a local **natural reserve**. It was situated pretty far from the city so we had to rent a bus to get there.

Even though attendance wasn't **mandatory** almost all of my classmates **turned up** - they were so excited to see the famous cliffs and the **abundant** wildlife the reserve had to offer.

We spent almost the entire day **hiking**, climbing up the steep hills, taking pictures of various birds and **rodents** there. It was a nice change from our regular classroom activities. The teacher imparted some wisdom on us about the local wildlife variety.

What made the trip **stick in my mind** was the perfect combination of fresh air, gentle summer sun and the pleasant physical exertion. After coming back I felt fresh and well-rested despite having walked over 20 miles on that day.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Nature and humanity

Some say that almost all emissions come from industries rather than people. Do you agree or disagree?

First of all, I believe the data is published out there somewhere so **if one was so inclined** it would be fairly easy to answer this question. However, owners of such industries and other parties with **vested interest** might try to hide the real statistics in order to stay in business. To be frank, seeing thousands of cars on the street puffing and blowing clouds of smoke, leaving puddles of oil it is difficult to say that contribution to **emissions** is sole responsibility of industries.

Do you believe that humanity will be able to coexist with nature peacefully in the future?

To address this question we have to take a look at the current trend of human-nature relationship. We've been **systematically** destroying the environment over the past 150 years and only recently have we realised **the extent of** harm we are causing. If we focus on **mitigating the damage** we have done the nature might be saved, and yes, in this case peaceful coexistence is possible. However, if the situation **gets out of hand** and we go back to our old ways of production which **disregard** the environment, then the definition of 'nature' might change itself. Consequently, it will turn into a different kind of question.

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Understanding the environment

What is the importance of nature in human life?

The first reason of nature being important is biodiversity - the number different species existing and coexisting. This is a very delicately balanced system where animals and plants are interdependent. For instance, a common result of deforestation is loss of **habitat** for many animals who have no choice but to migrate to other areas, creating an excessive presence of certain species there. This triggers backlash and nature tries to balance itself, sometimes **at the expense of** humans. One example is thousands of fish jumping out of the sea onto the shore, displaced by oil spills and consequently leaving bigger species who rely on it as food hungry.

Has society's attitude to nature changed over the years?

It definitely has - mostly thanks to the **media coverage** of the issue. They show us the **heart-rending** pictures of orphaned polar bears - such **imagery** is a very powerful tool. Many documentaries set out to depict the scale of the problem we have on our hands. Thankfully it did have an effect and people have become more environmentally-conscious. **On the flip-side** however one particular movement has been on the rise - one that denies climate change. These people state that climate and mean temperatures are cyclical and change all the time over the periods of hundreds of years. Bottom line here is that people are no longer indifferent to the issue, and that is what really counts.

What are the ways to raise environmental awareness?

I can see at least two rather different approaches to this - to educate or to penalise. Educating both young and old about the importance of natural world, how **fragile** the biosphere and the environment in general is likely to be effective. Once an individual learns the true scope of their impact and how it affects next generations is a truly **eye-opening experience**. The other way is to introduce penalties and fines for littering, improper oil disposal and other such infractions. Penalties could be as **harsh** as prison sentences, especially if the individual (or the business) has broken the rules several times.

Nature and the environment vocabulary

Field trip - a visit to the countryside, usually as a part of school curriculum, led by one or several teachers

Natural reserve - a piece of land with its animals and plants protected by the government. It is normally forbidden to do any development in such area.

Hiking (n) - a recreational activity that involves walking in hilly or mountainous areas.

Rodent (n) - a group of animals such as rats, mice, squirrels

Emissions (n) - (here) a collective word for all the harmful gases produced as a part of production or existence.

Mitigate the damage - make or try to make the harm lower

Habitat (n) - the area where a particular animal or plant exists naturally

Heart-rending - making somebody cry or regret something

Fragile (adj) - very easily broken, brittle.

General vocabulary

Mandatory (adj) - if something is mandatory, use must do it and have no choice about it, (see 'compulsory')

Turn up - (also 'show up') to attend a meeting, a party or other gathering where you should come to

Abundant (adj) - if something is abundant it is present in high quantity and easily available

Stick in one's mind - be very memorable, difficult to forget

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If one was so inclined - if you (or somebody else) really wanted to

Vested interest - if someone has vested interest in something they are interested in it to succeed because they will profit from it in some way

Systematically (adv) - done following some plan at even intervals of time and successfully

The extent of - the amount of something, how much something has been done or caused

Get out of hand - go out of control, to lose control over something

Disregard (v) - to deliberately pay no attention to something

At the expense of - if something is done at the expense of someone or something, it means it is done at their disadvantage, they lose or suffer something because of it

Media coverage - how media (the news, TV, radio, press) present something, such as an event or a situation

Imagery (n) - visual materials, e. g. pictures

On the flip side - on the other side

Eye-opening experience - experience that changes your attitude to something

Harsh (adj) - rough, hard, unforgiving