IELTS Speaking topic – Technology and progress

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 gadget or a piece of technology that you heavily rely on
You should say:

- what it is
- what do you use it for
- how long you have been using it

and say how you would feel without it.

Model answer

I am not going to be original about the gadget and like most people I use my phone daily. My generation has been relying on this type of technology since childhood. It's a thing that does it all, really - it teaches and entertains you, provides information, allows to keep in touch with your nearest and dearest. In addition to that, I often use it to track my jogging routine - it is able to measure my speed as well as the time I spend exercising.

I have had this particular phone for more than three years now. Normally I try to get a newer model only after my phone's battery is no longer able to keep reasonable amount of charge. Another case when I switch to another one is when it gets heavily damaged, like the screen cracks or there is a firmware malfunction. But if we talk about how long I have been using mobile phones in general then the answer is well more than a decade! I can't say for sure.

If I were to do without my phone I would feel miserable, isolated, stranded, even helpless! I guess it really makes one think how much reliant we have become to the conveniences of modern technology. After a while though I'm sure I would get over it and find ways to live without one.

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Technology and people

What technological advances have improved people's lives the most?
The answer really depends on how far back we are willing to move. If we think of the ancient times, then the invention of the wheel was probably the most groundbreaking one as it made transportation of heavy objects possible. This practically kickstarted further technological advances. The creating of the printing press by Gutenberg made, for the first time in human history, books and manuscripts that could be bought for reasonable amount of money by anyone willing and able to read. Finally, the discovery and further adoption of electricity allowed people to use the endless array of electronics available today that otherwise wouldn't have existed.

Are there any technological discoveries people would be better not making?
Honestly, I believe that the invention of the Internet has done more harm than good. First of all, the World Wide Web has become a platform to parade people's vanity, ignorance and their contrarian views. Secondly, since the Web is largely uncontrolled and unmoderated it is possible to disseminate all kind of information, including one that is factually wrong and even harmful - such as fake news, for instance. Finally, this invention has made everyone more similar as we all read the same jokes and stories on the same websites. The Internet effectively reduced diversity of thought and ideas in that way.

IELTS Speaking topic – Technology and progress

Progress today and tomorrow

Talking about progress, how much different people's lives are going to be in twenty years' time?
It is very likely that thanks to availability of Internet access, people will be moving towards working from home. Another noticeable shift will be phones becoming the most popular form of entertainment, overtaking both personal computers and gaming consoles. As they advance technologically, we will witness the appearance of features such as holographic projections that ==complement== the already existing ==augmented reality==.

Would you say that people were happier in the past than they are now?
If you ask the old-timers how life was back when they were young, you are likely to hear that it indeed had been better. There was the thrill of ==bumping into== a friend instead of messaging him in advance. People wrote actual letter and put them in envelopes. And I see no reason not to believe their experience. Nobody is going to argue that life used to be much simpler - and maybe easier to be happy with. Whether this was down to technological progress alone or due to other factors is another big question.

Is progress always a good thing?
If we once again take a look at human history, almost all of the inventions were aimed at improving general quality of human life. However, some of the discoveries ended up harming some individuals and society on the whole. Namely, some ==breakthroughs== in the pharmaceutical domain made it possible to synthesize substances that are lethal to living things. Such substances can cause a great deal of pain and suffering if they end up in the wrong hands. Another example of progress gone wrong is drugs and I believe any further explanation here would be ==redundant==.

Technology and progress vocabulary

Gadget (n) - a portable, high-tech piece of equipment such as a mobile phone or an mp3 player
Firmware (n) - similar to software (piece of code), but used to control the most essential parts of a device and usually difficult to change
Malfunction (n) - a breakdown in a mechanism or other complex manmade object
Groundbreaking (adj) - very important, influencing other things in its field
Adoption (n) - (here) wider acceptance and usage of something like a device or an idea
Augmented reality - a type of visual effect where you can see real life on the screen together with virtual objects such as player models, monster and so on
Breakthrough (n) - similarly to 'groundbreaking' it means an important achievement or a milestone

General vocabulary

Nearest and dearest - usually used to refer to your immediate and extended family as well as your loved ones
Stranded (adj) - lost or stuck somewhere without a chance of escaping, getting out or finding your way back
Kickstart (v) - to set something in motion, to begin something with energy and enthusiasm
Array (n) - a range, a list or a number of something
Parade (v) - to show something in a very easy to see way, conspicuously. Used negatively
Vanity (n) - false feeling of self-importance
Contrarian (adj) - a contrarian view is opposite to that of the common view just for the sake of being opposite
Disseminate (v) - to spread or to share information or knowledge
Complement (v) - if one thing complements another then it matches or goes well with it. Not to be confused with 'compliment'
Bump into - (here) to meet with someone you know accidentally, without meaning to
Redundant (adj) - unneeded or unnecessary