

## IELTS Speaking topic – Studying

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 difficult test or exam you had to take

You should say:

- what was it for
- what was the subject
- how you did in this test or exam

and explain why you found it difficult

### Model answer

About this time last year I was graduating from secondary school. As my plan was to **carry on** with my education in college I had to **take entrance exams**. If I did well in these exams I would be **eligible for** **scholarship**. Anyway, one of the exams was math. Don't get me wrong - I have no problems with **numeracy**! However, more complex and abstract calculations are usually beyond my ability. As they say, some people were not just **cut out for** such tasks.

When I received the task I felt **intimidated**, there is no other way to put it. The **math problems** there were way more challenging than anything I had ever faced before. I even though I would have to **resit this exam** which meant spending whole summer with a **tutor**. This wasn't the greatest of **prospects**, to say the least.

I ended up passing the exam **on the verge of** failing it. I couldn't get scholarship, but at least I entered the college I wanted to. As for the reason why the exam proved to be so hard - I'm just not good at maths, okay?

## IELTS Speaking Part 3

### Teaching and teachers

#### How can teaching be made a more prestigious profession?

I can see two possible ways of making that a reality. The first approach is a straightforward one - higher salaries. Make teachers the ones who students look up to and want to be like. A snappy-dressed teacher who arrives to school in a new flashy car gives a very clear **message** - study hard and become smart and successful like they have. Another approach is less direct - make teachers heroes in popular media. Novels and other forms of **fiction** could help promote the image of modern teacher, movie adaptations could help **further** the idea. The options here are **vast**.

#### Has teaching changed over the past decade? If so, how?

I will be mostly talking about my own country as I have little knowledge about the situation worldwide. One of the more evident changes is **ubiquitous** use of technology. We watch and listen more than we ever have. The computers definitely contribute to **facilitation** of learning. Another noticeable development is that student nowadays have more freedom. The **curriculum** became modular - in other words we chose what we want to study, it has become less dogmatic and **prescriptive**. Finally, the teaching staff seems to be getting younger!

#### What new teaching methods can we expect to see in the future?

I think we might end up with fewer teachers. With the availability of study from home programmes the student-to-

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teacher ratio has increased dramatically. It showed that such approach can help **scale** the teacher's effort almost indefinitely. **In all likelihood**, there is a possibility of no-teacher programmes, where students will be led by smart AI tutors. This might sound too **far-fetched** now, but let's see how it all pans out in ten years' time!

## Studying and tuition fees

### Expensive private education increases the gap between the rich and the poor. Do you agree or disagree?

There are two sides to this argument. It is a given that high **tuition costs** go into ensuring that only the best teachers and professors are employed. However, this will not necessarily **foster** good studying environment as there will be plenty of students from **privileged background**. This type will not always have come there to study - on the contrary, they might be after **socialising** and partying. Therefore, such places can be counterproductive if it is actual education one is after.

### Is making higher education free a good or a bad idea? Why?

As we know, there is no such concept as "free" - ultimately, somebody has to pay what someone else gets or perceives as "free". In this case, the money is most likely to come from taxpayers' pockets. Therefore, the question is whether you would be willing to pay for a fraction somebody else's tuition? I believe this system could work on the basis of **merit** - academically able students could be identified through tests and granted free education. This would ensure that only **keen** scholars are admitted, creating a healthy academic environment. In fact, this should be the way it is today, but unfortunately it is not. No matter how smart and **zealous** you are, it is unlikely that you will have all of your tuition fees paid by a third party.

### Do you think that higher education should be made compulsory? Why/Why not?

To be frank, the opposite should be true. Schools and teachers have to be **held responsible** for promoting awareness about higher education. Today most students associate degree with guaranteed job placement and **competitive** salary. However, for many the reality is huge student debt and a job that has no connection with their newly-got profession. Learning a **trade** instead of wasting time and money on a degree should be an encouraged alternative, if not the first option a student should consider.

## Studying vocabulary

**Take entrance exams** - to take the exams needed to enter a college or university. Note the verb 'take' used with 'exam'.

**Scholarship** (n) - an agreement between the student and the school/college/uni or prospective employer where the latter pays some or all tuition fees (see below)

**Numeracy** (n) - ability to calculate and handle numbers

**Math problems** - any math equation

**Resit an exam** - to take an exam again

**Tutor** (n) - normally a privately hired and funded teacher who works individually or with a smaller group of students

**Curriculum** (n) - all the classes and subjects that together create the course of a school/college/uni

**Prescriptive** (adj) - mandatory, non-negotiable, compulsory

**Tuition fees** - the amount of money you have to pay for education

**Foster** (v) - to encourage development of something

**Privileged background** - coming from a well-off/well-known family, well-connected

**Merit** (n) - qualities or advantages of something/someone

**Keen** (adj) - eager, enthusiastic

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**Zealous** (adj) - having strong beliefs in something

**Trade** (n) - a set of practical skills, i.e. a plumber or an electrician have a trade.

## General vocabulary

**Carry on** - to continue

**Eligible for** (adj) - to have the right to do, have or get something

**Be cut out for** - to be made for a particular role or deed

**Intimidated** (adj) - feeling nervous or scared because of how difficult something is

**Prospect** (n) - possibility of something happening in the future

**On the verge of** - about to happen, very close to happening

**Message** (n) - (here) idea that someone tried to communicate

**Fiction** (n) - made up, not real, imaginary

**Further** (v) - to help something develop or progress, to encourage

**Vast** (adj) - huge in size or quantity

**Ubiquitous** (adj) - being everywhere

**Facilitation** (n) - making something easier, promoting something

**Scale** (n) - size (not literal) of something, e.g. business

**In all likelihood** - most likely

**Far-fetched** (adj) - unlikely