IELTS Speaking topic – Transport

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 an time when your journey didn't go as planned
You should say:

- where you went
- when it happened
- what form of transport you used

and say what happened during the journey.

Model answer

Once I decided to visit my grandparents who lived in a remote village around 150 miles from the city. I borrowed my parent's car because mine was too old and I wasn't sure if it would make it all the way there and back. They were kind enough to lend me the car on condition that I would drive carefully. What could possibly go wrong, I thought to myself.

It was late November and we were getting quite a bit of snow. The snow would melt during the day and freeze up the roads at night, so in the morning the road surface would be covered with black ice. I'd just got my license back then and therefore didn't have much experience driving.

I drove out of the city no problem and then onto the motorway. The traffic was calm, the cars were few and far between. Then out of the blue I saw a bunch of stationary vehicles with their hazard lights on. I decided to slow down and pressed the brake pedal. Nothing happened, the car carried on in the same direction without reducing speed. It was because of black ice - I was rapidly sliding towards a pile-up of other cars.

The crash wasn't too bad. The front bumper cracked and I smashed one of the headlights. I guess the important bit is learning a valuable lesson - have better judgement behind the wheel!

IELTS Speaking Part 3

Public transport

How can people be convinced to use public transport more?
We have to understand the underlying reasons for public transit not being popular among commuters. First of all, the public transport network capacity could be insufficient - there can simply be not enough trains and buses to move everyone in comfort. Second reasons is that such form of transportation is often seen as unprestigious - many of us take pride in car ownership and want others to see the make and model of the vehicle they drive. By imposing additional taxes on private car ownership the government would kill two birds with one stone. They would get additional funding to buy more buses and at the same time people would be discouraged from using their cars.

What are the ways to make one's commute less stressful?
One surefire way to enjoy your commute is to introduce variety. Take the bus one day, walk the next one, use your bike if the weather permits. Alternate your entertainment on your way to the destination - read a book, watch a

movie, listen to an audio lecture or your favourite music. If you drive or ride - choose a different route*. You might want to change the hours you set off to avoid peak times during the* rush hour*. Ultimately, the advice is to stay away from routine and repetition which can really* take a toll on *your mood and well-being.*

What future change might public transport system undergo?
It's hard to speculate *on this topic as I'm no expert in the field. They say that many major cities are inevitably going to suffer from serious overpopulation, so to battle the* traffic congestion *the government will have to increase road network efficiency, otherwise the entire system will turn into one massive* traffic jam*. Therefore we might see a dramatic increase in* bus and bike lanes *as both take up much less space on the road when compared to a regular car with just one person in it. Another* viable *change is expansion of underground* transit system *to the point of creating huge cities with their own infrastructures deep down below. However, as I have said I don't know much about this so* don't take my word for it*!*

Transport and the environment

How can private transport regulation change in the future to reduce environmental impact?
If we take today's situation as a starting point then we can see how almost every mature first-world country individual owns a car. While this benefits local and global economies, it also puts a huge strain on *the environment. While it is illegal to force people to sell their cars, the government might* resort to *other* drastic *measures such as artificially increasing fuel prices or even introducing monthly travel* quotas*. What clear is that the current rate of car ownership increase is* unsustainable *and one way or another it will have to be* curtailed*.*

What new ways of local and international transport can we see in the future?
A suggestion by Elon Musk was an interesting one - creating underground tunnels for cars to reach key points in a city. Whether this is technically viable is another question - for all we know, he could be having a laugh with this suggestion. With air travel we might consider going back to supersonic plane, something like the Concorde but more technologically advanced. After all, it has been more than twenty years so the tech must have improved dramatically.

Is it possible that intercontinental air travel gets banned in the future because of the amount of pollution it generates?
It is indeed possible - they keep talking about the carbon footprint *that we leave when we buy a plane ticket. I do not think they would ban it* outright*, but some restrictions are likely to be introduced in some form. Making plane tickets* prohibitively expensive *is the most likely option. The extra money paid could be used to* offset *the environmental damage. I have no idea what other restrictions they could* impose*, but banning it altogether sounds unrealistically dystopian.*

Transport vocabulary

Remote (adj) - located far away from any major town or city
Make it all the way - manage to reach the destination
License (n) - (driving license) - a legal document that allows you to operate a vehicle
Motorway (n) (also highway in the US) - an out of city high-speed road with multiple lanes (paths for cars) that connects other towns and cities
Hazard lights (n) - amber lights on vehicles that blink, used to indicate that the car has broken down or to make it more visible
A pile-up - (here) several cars caught in one crash

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Commuters (n) - people that go to and from the same place everyday, e.g. place of work or study

Route (n) - the way that you take in order to reach your destination

Rush hour - time of the day that usually happens during the week in the morning and in the evening when the majority of people go to (or from) work or place of study

Traffic congestion - the higher the traffic congestion, the more cars are on the roads

Bus/bike lanes - lanes (paths on the road) dedicated to buses or bikes respectively

Transit system - transportation system

Unsustainable (adj) - impossible to support for a long time. For instance, if the city growth is unsustainable it will not be able to keep growing at this rate for a long time.

Carbon footprint - the amount of harmful emission gases that we produce directly (e.g. by using our car) or indirectly (by purchasing goods the production of which generates such gases)

Offset (v) - to make something harmful less so

Impose (v) - force some regulations on something or somebody whether they like it or not

General vocabulary

On condition that - pretty much just a fancy replacement for "if" or "as long as". Throw it in so that your IELTS assessor could tick one more box.

Few and far between - rare, very uncommon

Out of the blue - unexpectedly, without warning

Underlying (adj) - unseen on the surface, hidden beneath

Take pride in - to be proud about something

Kill two birds with one stone - to accomplish two goals at once

Surefire way - something that is certain to work

If the weather permits - if the weather is good/appropriate

Alternate (v) - take turns doing two things - first one, then the other, then the first one again and so on

Take a toll on - have a negative effect or impact on something on somebody

Speculate (v) - to guess something without having any knowledge or information on it

Viable (adj) - something that you can realistically use, as opposed to theoretically, e.g. renting is a viable alternative to buying a place of your own

Don't take my word for it - a code word for "I am not totally sure about what I have just said so be advised that I might be wrong"

Put a strain on - to make something or someone do more than they realistically can

Resort to (v) - to choose an option you wouldn't have chosen otherwise but there are no better options

Drastic (adj) - radical, extreme (about measures)

Quota (n) - an artificial limit on how much you can have or buy something, usually used in times of deficit

Curtail (v) - to use authority to officially stop or reduce something

Outright (adv) - totally, completely

Prohibitively expensive - to expensive for most people to afford