

UNIT 2: HEALTH

SPEAKING

Exercise 1: In this unit, you will learn about the differences between IELTS Speaking Part 1 and Part 3 and learn ways to improve your Lexical Resource mark. Read the information. Then read the questions. Are the questions more typical of IELTS Speaking Part 1 or Part 3? Choose Part 1 or Part 3.

IELTS Speaking Part 1 questions tend to focus on finding out general information about you and testing your ability to answer questions about everyday topics. The questions will ask you to talk about ideas and experiences that are personal to you.

IELTS Speaking Part 3 questions take a broader world view and ask you to focus on issues and subjects that affect society, so the examiner's questions will ask you to consider topics more generally, rather than personally. Therefore, it is important to take a more objective point of view when answering Part 3 questions.

	Part 1	Part 3
1 Which sports are you interested in?	☐	☐
2 What are the sports facilities like where you live?	☐	☐
3 What do you normally do to stay healthy?	☐	☐
4 Do you think people are more health-conscious now than they were in the past?	☐	☐
5 What makes a good doctor?	☐	☐
6 Is there something in your life that you would like to change to become healthier?	☐	☐
7 How should children be taught to lead healthy lives?	☐	☐
8 Do you still play the same sports that you did when you were a child?	☐	☐
9 Some people say that working in offices is bad for people's health. Do you agree?	☐	☐
10 How have attitudes to food and health changed in recent years?	☐	☐

Exercise 2: Read the information. Then watch the video of three native English speakers asking and answering IELTS Speaking Part 1 questions. Put the questions that they ask in the correct order.
(Video 2.1)

Remember that in IELTS Speaking Part 1, the questions will ask you to think about your own life, experience and opinions.

The questions in IELTS Speaking Part 3 will focus on more general ideas, asking you to think about things that affect society or the world as a whole.

Do you have a healthy diet?

Do you use any of the local facilities in your area?

What do you do to stay healthy?

Do you enjoy exercising?

What do you reckon the most popular ways of exercising or keeping healthy in your area are?

Exercise 3: Read the information. Then read the IELTS Speaking Part 1 question and the responses given by four students. Which students do the examiner's comments refer to? Choose the correct answers.

In the IELTS Speaking test, it is important to answer questions accurately and appropriately. Try to extend your answers with relevant ideas and examples. Also, remember to answer the question that you are asked – one of the most common mistakes is to give a response that doesn't answer the question asked by the examiner.

Examiner: *What sports or physical activities do you do or play regularly?*

Student 1: I don't. I hate sports. And exercise. I prefer social media.

Student 2: Well, to be honest, sport doesn't really interest me. I would say this is partly because I am not a competitive person and partly because I am not very good at sports, especially those that involve running. However, I do like to go walking in the countryside, and I cycle to work every day. So, I would say that these are my main forms of regular exercise.

Student 3: I'm a big fan of football. My team is Manchester United and I try to watch all their games. I also collect their merchandise; I have posters, football kits and videos, and I follow a number of the players on social media. There are often two games per week during the football season, so a lot of my free time is spent watching their games.

Student 4: I think it is very important to do some kind of regular exercise, whether it is sport or something more relaxing, such as yoga. I think as a society, we are becoming more sedentary; that is to say, we spend more and more time sat down in front of computers or television screens. We are already seeing the effects of this, with increasing numbers of people suffering conditions like diabetes and obesity. So, in short, I would say that regular exercise is something we should do.

1 While your answer is personalised, you have not really answered the question. The question was not about the sports that you watch, but those that you actually do. On the positive side, your language is quite good, and you have tried to give an extended answer.

Student 1 / Student 2 / Student 3 / Student 4

2 You answer the question honestly, but in such a brief way that you would not score highly in the IELTS Speaking test. Some questions will relate to subjects that you might not be able to talk about extensively, but you should still try to support your responses with reasons and examples.

Student 1 / Student 2 / Student 3 / Student 4

3 This is a well-constructed answer with some excellent language and use of discourse markers. The problem is that it is not an answer to the question you were asked. Your answer focuses on people and society in general rather than your own experiences, which means that your approach is more suitable for IELTS Speaking Part 3 than for Part 1.

Student 1 / Student 2 / Student 3 / Student 4

4 This is a well-constructed answer and would score well in IELTS Speaking Part 1.

Student 1 / Student 2 / Student 3 / Student 4

Exercise 4: Read the information. Then watch the videos of the three native English speakers answering IELTS Speaking Part 3 questions. Choose the questions that the speakers are discussing.

1) (• Video 2.2)

- What are the main health issues affecting your society?
- Why do you think so many people suffer from health problems that didn't exist in the past?

2) (• Video 2.3)

- Do you think people should use the internet to research their own illnesses?
- Will internet doctors ever replace real doctors?

3) (• Video 2.4)

- Do governments need to do more research into mental health problems?
- It has been said that the fast pace of modern life is bad for our mental health. Do you agree?

4) (• Video 2.5)

- What do you think are the major health issues affecting your country today?
- What do you think were the biggest health issues affecting your country 30 years ago?

5) (• Video 2.6)

- What medical breakthroughs would you like to see in the next ten years?
- What were the most important medical breakthroughs of the last 50 years?

6) (• Video 2.7)

- What are the possible effects of increased life expectancy?
- Why is life expectancy increasing in many countries?

Exercise 5: Read the information. Then watch the discussions again. Choose the ten discourse markers that the speakers use to extend their answers.

In IELTS Speaking, it is important to give *extended answers* in Part 1 and particularly in Part 3. To achieve this, try to use a variety of *discourse markers* and *connecting words*. Make sure you know ways of adding information, giving examples, contrasting ideas, stating cause and effect and summarising ideas.

It is also important to use more complex discourse markers in your answers to increase your Fluency and Coherence mark. However, you don't need to use complex discourse markers all the time. It is perfectly OK to also use simple discourse markers such as *and*, *but*, *so* and *because*, as these are common in spoken English.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ also | ☐ however |
| ☐ as well | ☐ in addition to that |
| ☐ at the end of the day | ☐ nevertheless |
| ☐ but | ☐ on the other hand |
| ☐ for example | ☐ say |
| ☐ for instance | ☐ so |
| ☐ furthermore | ☐ ultimately |

Exercise 6: Read the information. Then look at the discourse markers in the box. What are their functions? Complete the table with the discourse markers. The first one has been done for you.



Knowing and correctly using a variety of *discourse markers* in the IELTS Speaking test can help improve your Fluency and Coherence mark. Higher level students should be able to correctly use more complex discourse markers and include them in some of their answers.

Make sure you are clear on what the function of a discourse marker is and also how to correctly use it in a sentence. The best way to achieve this is through practice.

ultimately	in the end	I would add that	in addition to this / that	
on the other hand	as a result	this means that	consequently	that said
in short	in a nutshell	one reason for this is	furthermore	having said that
whereas				

adding information to a previous point	giving a reason based on the previous point
on top of that	

making a contrast or concession based on the previous point	summarising what you have said

Exercise 7: Read the information. Then read the examiner's questions and the student's answers. Choose the incorrect words and phrases.

Make sure you know how and where discourse markers are used in sentences. Not all discourse markers that share a particular function have the same meaning or are used in the same way. For example, *as well* and *also* both have the same meaning, but *as well* is used at the end of an idea, whereas *also* can begin a sentence or be used before the main verb (except with the verb *be*, which it follows):

He **also** plays tennis.

He is **also** a great tennis player.

Also, he is a great tennis player.

He is a great tennis player **as well**.

However, we can begin a sentence with the discourse marker *as well as this*:

As well as this, he is a great tennis player.

Examiner: *Who do you think should be responsible for ensuring that children eat healthily?*

Student: I would say that the parents are responsible for ensuring that their children eat healthily as / because / so it is the parents who understand the effects of a poor diet far better than a child. As well / In addition, / I would add that I think teachers and schools should play a role in educating children. I would argue that nutrition is so important that it should have a place on the curriculum, say, / such as / that said, in a biology class. Having said that, / That said, / Whereas I do think the age of the child is important when answering this question. Once a child hits their teenage years, they should really start taking some responsibility for themselves, and this should include what they put into their bodies.

Examiner: *It has been said that the fast pace of modern life is bad for our mental health. Do you agree with this?*

Student: To some extent. I do believe that certain aspects of modern life, an example of this is / for instance / such as long working hours, can have an enormous effect on mental health. Many people feel a lot of pressure at work to do extra hours and to meet deadlines and as a consequence / as a result / the reason being, put too much pressure on themselves. This can cause stress-related illnesses. Having said that / However / Moreover, it should be remembered that many aspects of modern life are much easier for us than they were for, say, our grandparents, so perhaps life nowadays is no more stressful than it was in the past.

Examiner: *Should physical education be a compulsory subject at school?*

Student: Personally speaking, I would say so. Exercise is a habit that needs to be learnt when you are young. If children learn sports at school or get accustomed to doing exercise, they are more likely to continue this habit in later life. Having said that / On the one hand / That said, I do believe that there should be more options available for physical education. Many school children don't enjoy certain sports, especially / in particular / specially competitive sports or ones that involve hand-eye coordination. Perhaps if schools offered other alternatives, like yoga or t'ai chi, more children would want to participate. In a nutshell / In the end / When all is said and done, the important thing is to help children find physical activities that can become lifelong habits.

Exercise 8: Read the information. Then watch the video of a native English speaker answering questions. Match the idiomatic expressions with the parts of the video in which they are used.

There are more idiomatic expressions than you need. (Video 2.8)

One way to help improve your Lexical Resource mark is to include some *idiomatic expressions* in your answers. Idiomatic expressions are phrases that are commonly used by native speakers. Their meaning is often different from the meanings of each word on its own. For example, the idiomatic expression *to feel a bit under the weather* means *to feel slightly ill* – it has nothing to do with the weather!

as fit as a fiddle

as old as you feel

have a frog in your throat

in good shape

kick the habit

on the mend

under the weather

you are what you eat

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

Part 5:

Exercise 9: Match the idiomatic expressions with the definitions.

1 in good shape

2 as old as you feel

3 under the weather

4 you are what you eat

5 kick the habit

6 on the mend

7 have a frog in your throat

8 as sick as a parrot



really unwell



what we put in our bodies affects our health



not completely well



your level of fitness is more important than your physical age



to stop doing something harmful that you have done for a long time



in good physical condition



to have difficulty speaking, often because your throat is dry or you want to cough



recovering / feeling better

Exercise 10: You are going to do IELTS Speaking Parts 1 and 3 on the subject of health and sports.

Part 1

- 1) *What activities do you do to stay fit?*
- 2) *What are the sports facilities like where you live?*
- 3) *Are there any sports or forms of exercise that you would like to try?*
- 4) *How important is it for you to eat healthily?*

Part 3

- 5) *How important is sport within your society?*
- 6) *Are famous sports people good role models for young people today?*
- 7) *Do you think famous sports people are paid too much money?*
- 8) *What are the benefits of hosting an important sporting event such as the Olympic Games to the host country?*