4 The world around us

Aims: Talking about the environment and climate
Using cleft sentences and complex sentences
Pronunciation: Long and short vowel sounds
Exam technique: Using news articles to improve your answers

Vocabulary: The environment





1 **Complete sentences 1–7 with words a–g. The sentences are all about ways to help the environment.**

a	Boycott	**c**	Recycle	**e**	Switch	**g**	Walk
b	Buy	**d**	Reduce	**f**	Use		

1 _____ paper, cans, plastic, glass and other items like mobiles.

2 _____ less water in the house and garden.

3 _____ the amount of household waste you produce.

4 _____ to energy efficient light bulbs.

5 _____ products that harm the environment, such as those made from mahogany, which grows in rainforests.

6 _____, cycle or use public transport instead of driving your car.

7 _____ organic foods that do not use harmful artificial fertilisers and pesticides.

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2 **Now think about these questions:**

Which of the things 1–7 in Exercise 1 do you do?
Do you do anything else to help the environment?

Practise talking about what you do for the environment and give details. If you do not do any of the things 1–7, say which ideas you think sound the most effective and why. Here are some useful phrases:

In our household, we ...
I try to reduce my carbon footprint by ... [-ing]
I think ... [-ing] sounds like the best idea.

Vocabulary: Climate

3 **Listen to the speakers 1–3 talking about their countries' climates. Which country is each speaker talking about? Write *Wales*, *Saudi Arabia* or *Iceland*. If you need to, read Track 21 on page 105.**

Speaker 1 _____
Speaker 2 _____
Speaker 3 _____

4 **Find words and expressions in Track 21, page 105, associated with hot, cold, wet and dry climates and write them in the table below.**

Hot climate	Cold climate	Wet climate	Dry climate

5 **Complete the texts below with words a–j, which collocate with the words in italics.**

a biting
b bitterly
c hot
d heavy
e high
f boiling
g rainy
h flooding
i rain
j unbearable

In my country, we have a (1) _____ *season*. During this time, there is really (2) _____ *humidity* so it gets awfully (3) _____ *and sticky*, and we often get (4) *torrential* _____, which can cause (5) *severe* _____. In the early summer, before the rains come, it tends to be (6) _____ *hot*. Most tourists (7) *find the heat* _____, actually, so I wouldn't recommend visiting then.

In the winter, it gets (8) _____ *cold*. We get (9) _____ *winds*, so cold that I have heard of people's ears freezing and then snapping off! Not only that but we get such (10) _____ *snow* that some people's houses get completely covered by snowdrifts and they have to be dug out.

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6 **Match sentences 1–8 to people a–c.**

a



b



c



1 I'm soaked to the skin. _____
2 I feel so dehydrated. _____
3 I wish I had my waterproofs on. _____
4 I'm drenched. _____
5 My teeth are chattering. _____
6 I wish I was wearing more layers. _____
7 I'm frozen to the bone. _____
8 I wish I could find some shade. _____

7 ***Get*** **is one of the most common verbs in English. It has many meanings.**

Examples: We often ***get*** *thick fog. (get = have)*
In the winter, it ***gets*** *absolutely freezing.* (gets = becomes)
The temperature often ***gets*** *above 40°C.* (gets = reaches)

Tends to be **is another useful phrase for talking about the weather.**

Example: In the summer, it ***tends to be*** *hot.* (tends to be = is usually)

Complete the sentences to describe the seasons in your country or region.

Examples: In the spring, we sometimes get quite mild weather.
In the rainy season, it tends to be very hot and sticky.

In _____ we (sometimes/often/always) get _____.
In _____ it (sometimes/often/always) gets _____.
In _____ the temperature (sometimes/often/always) gets _____.
In _____ it tends to be _____.

IELTS Speaking Exam: Part 1

22 CD1

8 **You are going to hear questions that are typical of Part 1 of the exam. Listen to each question and give your answer using language from Exercise 5. Record your answers.**

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Grammar: Cleft sentences

We use cleft sentences to emphasise information we particularly want to focus on, perhaps because the information is new or surprising, because it offers a contrast with what someone else has said, or because we are expressing a strong preference or attitude.

The typical structure of an *it*-cleft sentence is: *it* + *be* + emphasised information + relative clause.

Simple sentence: *Torrential rain is the main cause of flooding.*
Cleft sentence: *It is torrential rain that is the main cause of flooding.*

The typical structure of a *what*-cleft sentence is: *what*-clause + *be* + emphasised information.

Simple sentence: *We like to spend our summers by the lake.*
Cleft sentence: *What we like is to spend our summers by the lake.*

9 **1 Rewrite the simple sentence below as an *it*-cleft sentence.**
Simple sentence: *I can't stand the monsoon season.*
Cleft sentence: _____

2 Rewrite the simple sentence below as a *what*-cleft sentence.
Simple sentence: *I want to go to the beach.*
Cleft sentence: _____

10 **Listen to the sample answers to the Part 1 questions in Exercise 7. Then read the Track 23, page 105 and underline three cleft sentences.**

11 **There are other kinds of cleft structures too. Complete sentences 1–3 so they are true for you. Then rewrite them as cleft sentences using the structures given.**

1 I (dis)like warm weather because _____.
The reason why _____.
2 I spend my summers in/at _____.
The place where _____.
3 I dislike _____ weather most of all because _____.
The weather that _____.

Exam tip: You can use cleft sentences to answer questions the examiner asks you. For example:

Examiner: What do you do when it's cold outside?
Candidate: What we tend to do is stay in and watch our favourite films.

Examiner: Which season is your favourite?
Candidate: Well, what I like best are the transitions between the seasons, when you first feel the weather begin to change.

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Grammar: Complex sentences

IELTS Speaking Exam: Part 2

12 **Read this Part 2 question and think about how you might answer it.**

Describe your favourite season.

You should say:

what the season is and when it occurs

what the weather is like during this season

what your typical activities are during this season

and explain why it is your favourite season.

It would be easy to answer this question using only simple sentences. For example:

Most people prefer the summer. My favourite season is spring. It is not too hot. I often go for long walks.

However, you will not achieve a high score if you use only simple sentences like this.

1 We can join the first two sentences using *although*.

Although most people prefer the summer, my favourite season is spring. OR

My favourite season is spring although most people prefer the summer.

2 We can join the last two sentences using *since* (as a conjunction meaning *because*).

Since it is not too hot, I often go for long walks. OR

I often go for long walks since it is not too hot.

13 **1 Join these two sentences using *although*.**

Snow is beautiful to look at. It makes it difficult to get to work.

_____

2 Join these two sentences using *since* (as a conjunction meaning *because*).

It rains so much in my country. We spend a lot of our time indoors.

_____

Grammar: Subordinate clauses

A subordinate clause is a clause that cannot be a complete sentence in itself. It must be joined to a main clause, which can be a complete sentence in itself.

The typical structure of a complex sentence with a subordinate clause is:

subordinate clause + adverbial subordinating conjunction + main clause OR
main clause + adverbial subordinating conjunction + subordinate clause

Example: Whereas I like hot weather, my sister likes cold weather.
My sister likes cold weather whereas I like hot weather.

Note: Most adverbial subordinating conjunctions, including those in these exercises, and their clauses can go at the beginning or the end of a sentence.

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14 **Complete sentences 1–7 using your own ideas. The words in italics are adverbial subordinating conjunctions.**

1 *Although* it was windy, _____.
2 _____ *while* the snow was falling.
3 *Because* I want to help to protect the environment, _____.
4 *Whenever* the sun shines, _____.
5 *Whatever* the weather, _____.
6 *Rather than* driving to work, _____.
7 _____ *as soon as* it stops raining.

15 **Give yourself one minute to plan your answer to the Part 2 question in Exercise 12, making notes if you wish. Then talk for one to two minutes. Use one or two cleft sentences, and one or two sentences with subordinating conjunctions in your answer.**

16 **Listen to the sample answer to the Part 2 question in Exercise 12. Find some useful language to use in your own answers.**

Pronunciation: Long and short vowel sounds

17 **There are five long vowel sounds in English. Listen to the sounds and the words with these sounds. Then listen again and repeat.**

1 /ɑː/ bard
2 /iː/ bead
3 /ɜː/ bird
4 /ɔː/ board
5 /uː/ booed

18 **There are seven short vowel sounds. Here you have six of them; the other is the schwa, /ə/, which you will study in later units. Listen to the sounds and the words with these sounds. Then listen again and repeat.**

1 /æ/ pat
2 /e/ pet
3 /ɪ/ pit
4 /ɒ/ pot
5 /ʊ/ put
6 /ʌ/ putt

19 **You may find it difficult to pronounce words with short and long vowel sounds distinctly. For example, do you pronounce *sleep* (long vowel) the same as *slip* (short vowel)? Listen to the pairs of words on Track 27, where the only difference is the vowel sound. Then listen again and repeat, trying to pronounce the words accurately.**

Short vowels		Long vowels	
1 /ɒ/	shot	/ɔː/	short
2 /ɒ/	cot	/ɔː/	caught
3 /ɪ/	slip	/iː/	sleep
4 /ɪ/	hill	/iː/	heel
5 /ʊ/	pull	/uː/	pool
6 /ʊ/	look	/uː/	Luke

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CD1

20 **Read the pairs of words 1–4. Then listen and underline the word you hear.**

1 skid / skied	**2** pitch / peach	**3** full / fool	**4** wok / walk

Work with an English-speaking friend. Say one of the words from each pair above. Your friend must guess whether it is a word with a long or short vowel sound. Then swap roles.

21 **English spelling is far from phonetic, but certain letters are often used to represent certain sounds, and this can help you to guess whether a word has a long or short vowel sound. Look at the table below. Add at least one more example word for each vowel spelling.**

Vowel sounds	Common spellings	Example words
/ɪ/	i	igloo _____
/iː/	ee	tree _____
	ea	beach _____
	e	he _____
/æ/	a	bat _____
/ɑː/	ar	far _____
	a	plant _____
/ɒ/	o	dog _____
/ɔː/	or	tortoise _____
	a	fall _____
	aw	paw _____

Vowel sounds	Common spellings	Example words
/ʌ/	u	sun _____
/e/	e	nest _____
/ɜː/	er	person _____
	ir	girl _____
	ur	hurt _____
/uː/	oo	moon _____
	u	computer _____
/ʊ/	u	put _____
	oo	foot _____
	ou	could _____

Exam tip: In the IELTS Speaking exam, the examiner will listen for accurate pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds.

Which vowel sounds do you find it difficult to pronounce, maybe because they do not exist in your language? Find words with these sounds, find a 'talking' dictionary (electronic or online) so you can hear the words being pronounced, and practise saying them.

Which vowel sounds do you find it difficult to differentiate? Find minimal pairs, where the only difference between two words is the vowel sound. You can find examples of minimal pairs online or in pronunciation books. Practise pronouncing the minimal pairs accurately.

22 **Ask an English-speaking friend to listen to your recorded answer to the Part 2 questions in Exercise 12. What do they think of your pronunciation of vowel sounds? Are any of your vowel sounds unclear or inaccurate? Practise those sounds and then re-record your answer, focusing on your pronunciation.**

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Exam technique: Using news articles to improve your answers

Exam tip: The Part 3 topics do not require specialist knowledge and you will not be marked on your opinions. However, you may find it difficult to think of enough to say and your answers may lack depth. For this reason, you should regularly read news articles to build up an awareness of current affairs and develop your opinions on a wide range of topics, such as the ones in this book.

1 **Read the following excerpt from a newspaper article.**

What do you think about the article? Do you find the report worrying? What is your country doing to reduce its footprint? What are the environmental consequences of the lifestyles that the people in your country lead?

Do some research, make some notes, and then discuss the topic with someone. How do your views differ?

We Will Need A Second Earth

A new report reveals that if we fail to reduce our rates of consumption, we will soon need a new earth to meet our needs. The report, issued by conservation groups, warns that our demands on natural resources are unsustainable and that if they continue to rise at the same rate, by the mid-2030s we will require a second planet to maintain our lifestyles.

A spokesperson for one group said, 'Our reckless consumption is destroying the planet. In addition, there are economic repercussions - with the unprecedented depletion of natural resources, food, water and energy costs are set to soar.' The US and China are the worst offenders, together accounting for forty per cent of the global ecological footprint.

IELTS Speaking Exam: Part 3

2 **You are now going to hear some Part 3 questions. The research you have done, and your practice discussing the topic, should mean that you have much to say. Pause the CD after each question and give your answer.**

Now listen to the sample answer and read Track 29 on page 106.

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