Speaking: Worked Exchanges, Long Turns and Pronunciation Practice

IELTS Academic

Make the listener understand one useful detail

A friend asks, "How did you learn to repair your bicycle?" "Practice" gives very little information. "My uncle showed me how to check the tyre. Then I tried while he watched" gives a clear event. Speaking practice starts with this difference: answer the actual question and make the meaning clear.

This supplement adds original speaking tasks and worked responses to the existing notes. The responses are teaching examples, not officially rated performances. Read them to notice choices, then speak about your own experience. A written model cannot show a speaker's pronunciation or real-time fluency.

Understand the three parts without predicting a band

The Speaking test lasts 11–14 minutes and is recorded. The examiner considers fluency and coherence, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation across your performance. These are related skills. Strong ideas still need understandable speech.

Part	What happens	Practice focus
1	Familiar questions, about 4–5 minutes	Answer directly and add a relevant detail
2	One minute to prepare; speak for one to two minutes	Organise a longer description
3	Related discussion, about 4–5 minutes	Explain, compare and consider possibilities

Part 2 also includes brief follow-up questions. Preparation and speaking together take about 3–4 minutes. The examiner controls the time. A stop or a new question does not itself reveal your score.

Use the older notes' score claims cautiously. One "yes" does not prove band 4; a timer does not guarantee half a band. A correction, a clarification request or one missing ending has no fixed penalty calculated here. A memorised answer may fail to fit a new question, but we cannot assign an automatic deduction. Work on the difficulty you can observe instead of predicting a score from one habit.

Practise familiar questions in different time frames

These original exchanges show a direct answer with enough detail to be useful. Their length is a practice choice, not a rule for every question. Do not force every answer into exactly three sentences.

Present: What do you usually do after school?

"I usually go for a short walk before starting my homework. It helps me rest after sitting in lessons all day. If it is raining, I stay inside and listen to music instead."

The answer states a usual activity, gives a reason and adds a relevant exception. Present forms fit a habit. "Usually" does not mean the activity happens every day.

Past: Did you enjoy cooking when you were younger?

"Not really. I found it difficult because I often burned the food. My grandmother taught me to make a simple soup, and that made cooking less frightening."

The speaker answers honestly instead of pretending to like the activity. "Found," "burned," "taught" and "made" describe past events. There is a clear change: an unpleasant experience became easier with help.

Future: Is there a skill you would like to learn?

"I would like to learn to swim properly. At the moment I can move through the water, but I get tired quickly. I hope to join a small class during the next school holiday."

A future wish can include present information. Do not put every verb into one tense. "I hope" is a plan or wish, not a promise that the class will definitely happen.

■ Try a new answer

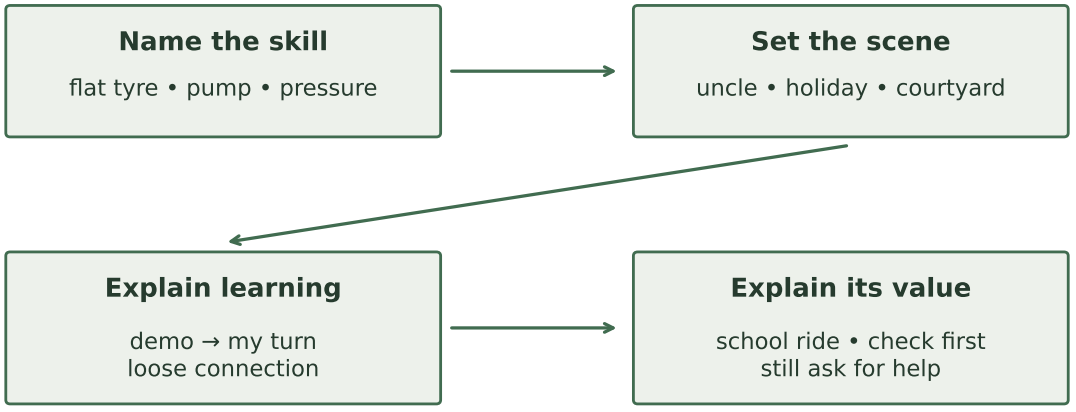
Answer these aloud without copying the examples: Where do you prefer to study? What did you like doing at primary school? What would you like to change about your daily routine? After each answer, ask whether your added detail answered the question or changed the topic.

Use the preparation minute to build a route

Original practice card: Describe a useful skill that you learned from another person. Say what the skill was, who helped you and how you learned it. Explain why the skill has been useful to you.

Use the minute to choose one manageable experience and a route through it. A **cue** 提示词 can be a short phrase that brings an idea back. Write enough to support your memory, not a complete speech to read. Nouns can help, but verbs, a date or a short contrast can also be useful cues.

One route through the bicycle skill card



Connected prompts support speech; they are not a compulsory order.

Follow the connections from learning an action to explaining its value.

Group	Example notes	What the notes help you say
Skill	flat tyre; pump; pressure	Name the skill precisely
Person and setting	uncle; spring holiday; courtyard	Introduce who helped and where
Learning	demonstrated; my turn; loose connection	Describe actions and one difficulty
Value	school ride; check first; still ask for help	Explain a practical result and a limit

These are notes for this card, not a fixed order required for every card. A card about a place, a person or a future plan needs different language. The explanation of value should connect to the actual skill, not a memorised sentence about "modern society."

Read a complete long-turn example

The following original response develops the bicycle notes. Read the whole response before studying the explanation.

A useful skill I learned was how to check and inflate a bicycle tyre. My uncle taught me during the spring holiday last year. I rode to school quite often, but I used to ask someone else whenever a tyre felt soft.

We worked in the courtyard outside his flat. First, he showed me how to read the pressure range on the side of the tyre. He explained that the right pressure depends on the tyre, so I should not copy a number from another bicycle. Then he connected the pump and showed me the pressure gauge.

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After that, it was my turn. I attached the pump badly at first, and air escaped around the connection. He asked me to stop and check it instead of pumping faster. On my second attempt, the connection was secure, and I could watch the gauge while I pumped. We also checked whether the tyre was losing air again afterwards.

The skill has been useful because I can now do a basic check before riding to school. It also taught me to look for the cause of a problem before rushing to fix it. I still ask for help if a tyre keeps losing air or seems damaged. Learning this small skill did not make me an expert, but it made me more confident about looking after my bicycle.

■ Notice the development

The opening identifies a specific skill and the person who taught it. The middle follows actions in order and includes a difficulty and response. The ending explains a result and an honest limit. This gives the listener more than a list of events.

There are past events and present results. The task does not require one tense throughout. The tyre story is a speaking example, not a complete repair guide. Choose your own experience and do not treat the response as a script to memorise.

Speak it aloud with a timer to see how your pace changes its length. Do not rush to fit a word target. Speaking has a time limit, not a required word count. If you finish early, add a real detail about a step, a difficulty or its result. Do not fill time with an unrelated prepared speech.

Move from a personal event to a wider discussion

Part 3 may discuss ideas connected to the long turn. Here, the personal event is learning a skill; the wider ideas concern how people learn. The following questions and answers are original classroom examples.

Comparison: Is learning from a person different from learning from a video?

"Yes. A person can notice a mistake and respond immediately, which is useful for a practical skill. A video has another advantage: you can pause and watch the same step again. For example, I might watch a demonstration before asking a teacher to check my attempt. So I think the methods can work together rather than one being better for every learner."

The answer compares feedback with replay, then suggests a combined approach. It does not turn one personal experience into proof about everyone.

Causes: Why do some people give up when learning a new skill?

"One reason may be that they expect progress too quickly. If the first attempt goes badly, they may think they have no ability. Small tasks can help. Someone learning to cook could master one simple dish before trying a full meal. However, time or money can also be a problem, so motivation is not the only explanation."

The answer explains a possible cause and recognises other causes. "May" limits the claim; it does not make the idea unclear.

Future: How might technology change the way people learn practical skills?

"People may get more immediate guidance while they practise. For example, a program could show a learner which stage to try next. That could make some skills easier to begin, especially without a teacher nearby. But practical safety checks may still need a trained person, so I would not expect technology to replace all teaching."

This is a possible future, not a prediction guaranteed by evidence. The response explains a benefit and a limit without inventing research results.

Evaluation: Should schools spend more time teaching practical skills?

"I think some practical lessons would be useful, especially skills students need in daily life. Learning to plan a budget, for instance, could help them make careful choices later. The difficulty is deciding what to remove from an already full timetable. I would support a small regular programme, but I would want schools to check what students actually learn."

A **qualification** 限定说明 makes the position more precise: support has conditions. The answer gives a benefit, a difficulty and a practical judgement. These are ways to develop ideas, not compulsory sentence patterns for every Part 3 answer.

Recover meaning when a word or question is difficult

A **paraphrase** 同义改写 expresses the meaning in another way. If "pressure gauge" disappears from your memory, you could say "the small display that shows the air pressure." You can continue the story instead of stopping to translate a missing word. Practise this with real objects: a stapler, a measuring jug and a charger. Describe what each does without saying its name; ask a partner to identify it.

If a question is unclear, request **clarification** 澄清说明 briefly. "Sorry, could you repeat the question?" asks to hear it again. "Do you mean skills for work or skills for everyday life?" checks the meaning. Then answer the question you understand. Repeated requests are not a substitute for practising comprehension.

If you notice a mistake, repair it once and continue. "I learn it last year – sorry, I learned it last year" repairs the time form. Repeatedly restarting the whole story makes the ideas harder to follow. If an unfamiliar topic leaves you uncertain, say what you can reasonably explain. You do not need a dramatic opinion or an invented statistic to develop a relevant answer.

Make final sounds and grammar endings audible

Pronunciation practice should target a difficulty your recording or listener reveals. Learners with the same first language do not all have the same problems. Clear communication matters; replacing your accent is not the aim of this exercise.

Say "desk" without adding a separate vowel after the final sounds. Then say "The desk is near the door" and ask a partner which object they heard. A consonant can be less strongly released in connected speech; do not force every ending into a loud

extra beat. Keep the word recognisable and the sentence natural.

Regular past-tense endings have three common sounds. The sound before the ending matters more than its written letter.

Practice word	Ending sound	What to listen for
walked	/t/	One syllable; no extra “ed” beat
lived	/d/	One syllable; the ending is not /t/
needed	/ɪd/	Two syllables; the ending adds a vowel sound

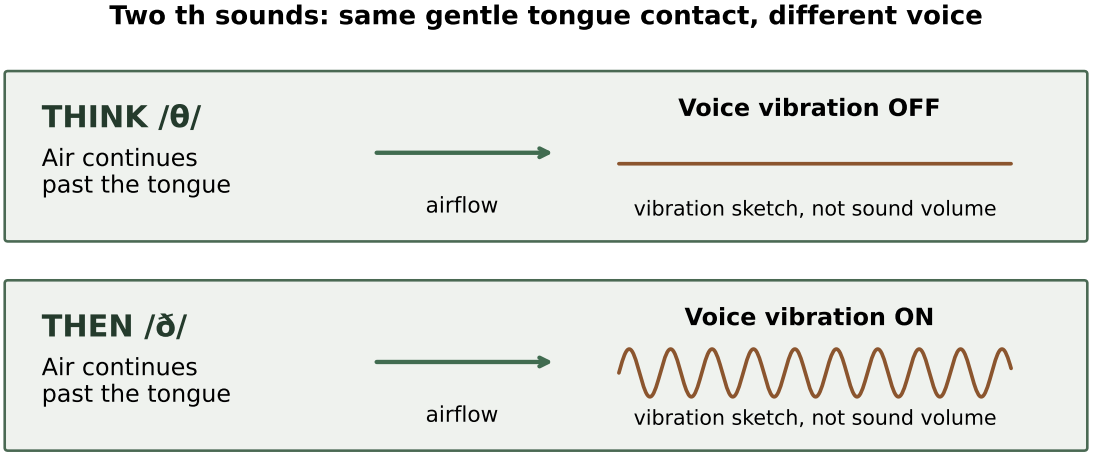
After /t/ or /d/, the regular past ending adds /ɪd/. After other voiceless sounds it is /t/; after other voiced sounds it is /d/. A **voiced sound** 浊音 uses vibration in the voice box. A voiceless sound does not use that vibration. Feel the difference by gently touching your throat while saying a long /s/ and then /z/.

Plural and third-person endings also vary. Say “walks” with /s/, “bags” with /z/ and “boxes” with /ɪz/. The last one has an extra syllable. Do not give every ending an extra vowel. The /ɪz/ ending follows sounds such as /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. For the other endings, voiceless sounds lead to /s/ and voiced sounds lead to /z/.

Use the words in sentences, not only a table: “She walks home with two bags.” “I lived nearby, so I walked there when he needed help.” Dropping an ending may hide time or number. No fixed two-criterion score deduction follows from this one example.

Practise contrasts without forcing a new accent

For the sounds at the beginning of “think” and “then,” use gentle tongue contact near the upper front teeth. Air continues past the tongue. Avoid closing the mouth completely as for a stop sound. “Think” begins with /θ/, a voiceless sound. “Then” begins with /ð/, a voiced sound. Do not bite hard or push the tongue far outside the mouth.



Keep the tongue contact gentle while changing whether the voice vibrates.

Compare “thin” with “sin,” and “then” with “den.” A partner writes which word they hear. Check whether the intended contrast is understood. Repeat a short sentence after listening to a reliable dictionary recording. Written phonetic symbols help identify a sound; they do not replace hearing it.

Try “light,” “night” and “right” in the same sentence frame: “I heard the word _____.” Ask a partner to identify the word without seeing your notes. For “very,” the lower lip touches the upper front teeth for /v/. For the start of “wet,” round the lips for /w/ instead. “Very” and “wery” are not a pair of ordinary English words; use “vest” and “west” for a listener check. Choose the contrasts your own recording shows you need.

Use word stress, sentence focus and useful pauses

Word stress gives one syllable more emphasis within a word. These capitals mark the stressed syllable, not the spelling you should write in an essay: PHOtograph, phoTOGraphy, photoGRAPHic, eCONomy and ecoNOMic. The stress moves within these word families. Verify new words with dictionary audio.

Sentence focus can change the meaning of the same words. “I borrowed the BLUE book” contrasts its colour with another colour. “I borrowed the blue BOOK” can contrast the object with something else, such as a notebook. The surrounding conversation affects the exact interpretation.

A slash can mark a useful practice pause: “After the first attempt / I checked the connection.” Pause between groups of meaning, not after every word. Listen back: can the listener follow the action and its result? The voice can rise or fall for different purposes. Do not force every question to rise or every list to use one tune. Practise a statement, a genuine question and a polite request with their context.

Review twelve speaking decisions

Try each task before reading its explanation. These written checks support speaking practice; they cannot assess your spoken performance by themselves.

1. A learner says one “yes.” Can you assign the whole Speaking band from it?
2. “What did you enjoy at primary school?” A learner answers only about next year’s plans. What needs changing?
3. For the skill card, choose useful notes: a complete memorised introduction, or “uncle; pump; loose connection; school ride.” Why?
4. Must the long turn use only past tense because the learning happened last year?
5. In the bicycle example, add a relevant detail if there is speaking time left. What could you explain?
6. A Part 3 answer says “Videos are better because I like them.” What comparison is missing?
7. Replace the forgotten words “pressure gauge” with a description.
8. Correct “I learn it last year” once, then continue with a sentence about the result.

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9. Sort walked, lived and needed by /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/. Which adds a syllable?
10. Which ending in walks, bags and boxes adds a syllable?
11. A partner hears “sin” when you intend “thin.” What contrast should you practise?
12. You can recite the model perfectly. What should the next practice task change?

■ Explained answers

1. No. The examiner considers performance across the test and several criteria. One word gives too little evidence.
2. Answer the past question first. For example: “I enjoyed drawing because I could make my own stories.” Add a relevant past detail.
3. The short grouped notes support this particular story. A prepared introduction may not fit; full sentences take preparation time.
4. No. Past events can lead to present results. “My uncle taught me” and “I can now check a tyre” serve different purposes.
5. Explain how you noticed the loose connection or how you now check before riding. Keep the detail linked to the skill.
6. Compare an actual feature: personal feedback versus replay. Explain when each helps instead of treating preference as proof.
7. “The small display that shows how much air pressure is in the tyre.” Other clear descriptions also work.
8. “I learned it last year. Now I can do a basic check before school.” Correct the verb and continue; do not restart every sentence.
9. Walked ends /t/; lived ends /d/; needed ends /ɪd/. Needed has the extra syllable.
10. Boxes, with /ɪz/. Walks ends /s/ and bags ends /z/, without an added vowel.
11. Practise /θ/ versus /s/, with gentle tongue contact for /θ/. Ask the partner to identify the word again in context.
12. Use a different card or follow-up question and your own experience. Transfer the skill rather than reproducing the text.

Record, diagnose and retry

Choose one new long-turn card about a place where you learned something. Prepare for one minute and speak aloud for one to two minutes. Record only your own practice, then listen once for meaning before checking small errors.

Write one strength and one difficulty: a clear sequence, an unclear word, a missing ending or a long search for vocabulary. Ask a listener to describe the main point. Their summary shows whether your meaning travelled. Choose one focused change, then record a fresh response to a different card. Keeping the new task different helps you practise flexible speech.

Use a small practice record

Record the date, the task, the difficulty, the practice action and what the next listener heard. For example: "Skill card; then sounded like den; checked tongue contact and voicing; listener heard then correctly." This is evidence of one improvement, not an overall band prediction. Build regular practice around the needs you find, rather than treating one routine as a score guarantee.