

# Level 4 Upper-Intermediate

## Speaking Practice 4

### IELTS Speaking Practice — Level 4 of 6

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These are practice questions, not official IELTS exam questions. Students should practice answering aloud rather than writing their answers first.

## Level 4: Upper-Intermediate to Advanced

Focus: Abstract ideas, nuanced opinions, hypothetical situations, comparisons, and complex sentence structures.

At Level 4, students should move beyond describing personal experiences. They need to explain broader ideas, evaluate different viewpoints, speculate about the future, and support their arguments with relevant examples.

These are original IELTS-style practice questions, not official exam questions.

## Part 1 — Introduction and Interview

Time: 4–5 minutes · Aim for 3–5 natural sentences per answer.

10 practice questions

Show prompts

Public spaces

1. What kinds of public places do people enjoy visiting in your area?

Rules

2. Were there any rules at school that you thought were unnecessary?

Celebrations

3. What kinds of occasions do people celebrate in your country?

### Clothing

4. Do you think the clothes people wear influence the way others see them?

### News

5. How do you usually find out about important events happening around the world?

### Patience

6. In what situations do you find it difficult to be patient?

### Handwriting

7. Do you think handwriting is still an important skill today?

### Public speaking

8. How comfortable are you speaking in front of a group of people?

### Traditions

9. Is there a tradition in your country that you would like to see continue?

### Plans

10. Do you prefer to plan your activities carefully or make decisions spontaneously?

Teacher's challenge: If a student answers confidently, ask a follow-up such as “Has this always been the case?” or “Would everyone agree with you?”

## Part 2 — Individual Long Turn

Preparation: 1 minute · Speaking: 1–2 minutes

### Task card

**Describe a decision you made that had an important effect on your life.**

You should say:

- What the decision was
- When you made it and what circumstances influenced you
- What other options you considered
- What happened as a result of your decision

And explain why you believe this decision was important.

Your speaking challenge

Speak for 1½–2 minutes. Discuss the factors that influenced your decision, compare the alternatives, and reflect on the consequences. Where appropriate, explain whether you would make the same decision again.

## Advanced vocabulary

| Expression                   | Meaning and use                                        |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Weigh the pros and cons      | Consider the advantages and disadvantages              |
| A turning point              | An event that significantly changes a person's life    |
| Far-reaching consequences    | Effects that influence many things or last a long time |
| A calculated risk            | A risk taken after considering possible outcomes       |
| To make an informed decision | To decide using relevant information                   |
| To have reservations         | To have doubts about something                         |
| In retrospect                | When looking back at a past event                      |
| To take responsibility for   | To accept accountability for an action or decision     |

A long-term implication

A possible effect in the future

To reconsider one's position

To think again about an opinion or decision

## Sample answer structure

Students should use this framework to organise their own ideas rather than memorise a prepared speech.

### 1. Introduce the decision

“One decision that had a significant impact on my life was...”

Explain the circumstances and why a decision was necessary.

### 2. Compare the alternatives

“Although one option seemed more secure, the alternative offered greater opportunities for...”

Explain the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

### 3. Describe the consequences

“As a result of this decision, I was able to...”

Explain the immediate outcome and any longer-term effects.

### 4. Reflect critically

“In retrospect, I realise that... Nevertheless, I believe...”

Consider what you learned and whether your perspective has changed.

## Part 3 — Abstract Discussion

Time: 4–5 minutes · Aim for developed answers of around 4–7 sentences.

These questions are designed to encourage evaluation, comparison, speculation and balanced arguments.

## **Topic A: Success and personal values**

1. How should society define success, and does that definition change over time?
2. Do people place too much importance on financial success compared with personal fulfilment?
3. To what extent should individuals sacrifice their own ambitions for their families?
4. Is personal happiness more important than social recognition?

## **Topic B: Culture and social change**

5. Why do some cultural traditions survive for centuries while others disappear?
6. Should governments take an active role in preserving traditional customs?
7. How can societies balance cultural preservation with changing social attitudes?
8. Do you think globalisation makes cultures more similar or encourages people to protect their identities?

## **Topic C: Education and lifelong development**

9. Should education focus more on developing independent thinkers than teaching established knowledge?
10. Is competition beneficial for students, or can cooperation produce better results?
11. To what extent should schools prepare students for employment rather than personal development?
12. How might the purpose of education change over the next 30 years?

## **Hypothetical and comparison language**

Students at this level should be able to discuss situations that are not real, compare competing ideas and acknowledge uncertainty.

### **1. Hypothetical situations**

Use these to explore imagined situations and their possible outcomes.

- “If governments invested more in public education, society might benefit in the long term.”
- “Were people given more opportunities to retrain, they might adapt more easily to economic change.”

- “If I were responsible for designing the curriculum, I would place greater emphasis on critical thinking.”

## 2. Comparing alternatives

- “Whereas traditional education emphasises established knowledge, modern approaches may place greater value on independent learning.”
- “Although competition can motivate individuals, excessive pressure may undermine cooperation.”
- “Compared with short-term rewards, long-term personal fulfilment can be more difficult to measure.”

## 3. Qualifying an opinion

- “To some extent, this depends on the individual's circumstances.”
- “I would argue that this is generally true, although there are notable exceptions.”
- “It would be misleading to assume that one approach works equally well for everyone.”
- “While I acknowledge the advantages, I remain concerned about the potential disadvantages.”

## Sample Part 3 answer

Question: Should education focus more on employment or personal development?

Example answer

“I believe education should strike a balance between preparing students for employment and supporting their personal development. On the one hand, practical skills are essential because they enable people to find work and contribute to the economy. On the other hand, education should also encourage critical thinking, creativity and social responsibility. If schools concentrated exclusively on employment, students might be less prepared to deal with challenges that cannot be solved by technical knowledge alone. Ultimately, I would argue that education is most effective when it prepares people both for their careers and for life in general.”

Why this is effective: The answer gives a clear position, considers two perspectives, uses a hypothetical conditional and reaches a reasoned conclusion. Advanced vocabulary helps only when it is used naturally and accurately.

## Interactive teacher assessment checklist

Use this while students complete their speaking test. Tick each skill that the student demonstrates consistently.

Develops abstract ideas with relevant reasoning  
Compares alternatives and evaluates consequences  
Uses hypothetical and conditional structures appropriately  
Qualifies opinions rather than making absolute claims  
Uses precise vocabulary naturally  
Combines simple and complex sentences accurately  
Organises extended answers coherently  
Speaks fluently with clear pronunciation  
Responds flexibly to follow-up questions  
Supports opinions with relevant examples

Skills demonstrated

**0 / 10**

Reset checklist

This checklist is a classroom tool, not an official IELTS band score. For formal feedback, assess fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation separately.

## Homework challenge

Ask each student to record a two-minute response to this question:

“If you could change one aspect of the education system in your country, what would you change, and what effects might this have?”

Students should include:

- A clear position and two supporting reasons.
- At least one hypothetical conditional.
- A comparison between the current situation and their proposed change.
- One possible disadvantage or alternative viewpoint.

They should then listen to their recording and identify one improvement in vocabulary, one in grammar, and one in the organisation of their ideas.