

IELTS Speaking on festivals and celebrations

IELTS Speaking Part One on festivals and celebrations

Take turns asking each other questions from below for two minutes, changing which section you use each time you switch. You can use the follow-up questions in brackets if the first answer is very short, but you can mostly just move onto another question.

Xmas and New Year

- Do you prefer spending Xmas and New Year with your friends or your family? (Why?)
- How do people usually mark the New Year in your country? (Do you usually do that?)
- How do you usually celebrate Xmas? (Was that different when you were younger?)
- What did you do on New Year's Eve last year? (Did you enjoy it?)
- What is your typical Xmas and New Year like? (Do you enjoy it?)

Particular times of year

- Did you enjoy summer festivals when you were younger? (What did you usually do?)
- Is there anything you dislike about this time of year? (Do most people feel the same?)
- What is the most important day of the year for you? (Why?)
- What is the most important festival in your hometown? (What do people do then?)

Celebrations with family and friends

- Can you cook any traditional foods? (When do people usually eat that thing?)
- Do you enjoy large family gathering such as weddings? (Why/ Why not?)
- Do you have any plans to buy presents? (On what occasions do you usually do so?)
- How did you celebrate your last birthday? (Is that typical for someone your age?)
- How do you think you will celebrate your next birthday? (Is that similar to the last one?)
- How often do you meet up with your extended family? (On what kinds of occasions?)
- If you could receive any gift, what would you choose? (Do you think you might receive that in the future?)
- On what occasions do you eat special meals? (Can you cook most of that food?)
- What would your dream birthday be like? (How much do you think that would cost?)
- What is the next big celebration in your family? (What are you going to do?)
- When did you last meet up with your relations? (What did you all do?)

Festivals

- Are there any festivals you would like to go to in the future? (Why that one?/ Why not?)
- Are you planning to go to any festivals this year? (Why that one?/ Why not?)
- Can you tell me about the last festival you attended? (Had you experienced something similar?)
- Do you often wear traditional clothes? (When is it common to do so in your country?)
- Does your hometown have any famous festivals? (Would you recommend visiting?)
- What festivals would you recommend to a foreign tourist visiting your country? (Why?)
- What is your favourite festival or celebration? (Why?)
- What was the last festival you went to? (Did you enjoy it? Why/ Why not?)
- When did you last go to a festival? (Would you recommend it?)
- When do you think you will next buy someone a present? (How much will you spend?)
- When's the next festival around here? (What happens there?)

When your teacher stops you, look at all of the questions and ask about any you don't understand, are not sure you answered well, etc.

Do the same in exam format, using the first part of the examiner's script below.

IELTS Speaking examiner's script

*Parts in italics are instructions, not things that the examiner actually says. *** means that the candidate should speak and * means a short answer by the candidate.*

IELTS Speaking Part One examiner's script – four or five minutes

"Come in and take a seat. Good morning/ afternoon. Can I see your ID?"

*

"Thank you. My name's _____. Can you tell me your full name, please?"

*

"So, what would you like me to call you?"

*

"Okay (*name*), in the first part of the test, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself, if that's okay."

*

"Let's start with (*the name of a Speaking Part One topic*)"

(the examiner asks two or three questions on that topic, mixing up present, past and future and using follow-up questions only if the initial answers are short)

"Now, I'd like to ask you about (*the name of a different Speaking Part One topic*)"

(the examiner asks 2-3 questions on that topic, using the follow up questions only if needed, moving onto the next topic or stopping if 4-5 min is up)

"Okay. Let's move onto (*the name of a third Speaking Part One topic*)"

(the examiner asks questions until four or five minutes is up)

IELTS Speaking Part Two examiner's script – three or four minutes

"Now I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one or two minutes. Before you speak, you have one minute to prepare what you are going to say. You can make notes to help you if you like. Here's a pencil and some paper for making notes. Here's your topic on this task card. I'd like you to speak about (*read only the top line of the card*)."

(candidate prepares for one minute)

"OK. Now, remember that you have one or two minutes for this. Don't worry if I interrupt you. I'll tell you when the time is up. Can you start speaking now, please?"

(candidate speaks for one or two minutes)

"Thank you." (*examiner takes back the task sheet and asks one or two extra questions on the topic, e.g. finding out extra details with "You said... wh...you...?"*)

*

IELTS Speaking Part Three examiner's script – four or five minutes

"So, we've been talking about (*the name of the topic in Speaking Part Two*) (Wh...)...?"
(examiner asks discussion questions about the same topic, split into two sub-topics)

"Thank you. That is the end of the speaking test."

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IELTS Speaking Part Two on festivals and celebrations

Use the second part of the examiner's script above to set each other tasks from below, stop each other after 2 min. (if needed), and ask at least one (easy, short) follow-up question.

Speak about the last festival that you attended. You should include:

- Where it was
- What was there
- What people did there

And if you think most people enjoyed it or not, and why.

Talk about a festival or celebration that you have mixed feelings about. You should include:

- What people do
- What is positive about it
- What is not so positive about it

And say if you think most people share your mixed feelings or not, and why.

Talk about a festival that you'd like to attend. Speak about:

- Your reasons for wanting to go there
- Its location
- Its special features

And talk about what kind of people it would and wouldn't be suitable for, and why.

Speak about a festival or celebration that you enjoyed when you were younger, including:

- What happened
- Why you enjoyed it
- What other people felt about it

And say if you would enjoy that just as much now or not, and why.

Describe a traditional item of clothing. You should say:

- What it looks like
- What it is made from
- When it is usually worn

And say if you think that thing is less popular now than it used to be or not, and why.

IELTS Speaking Part Three on festivals and celebrations

Prompt your partner to talk about more general issues on festivals and celebrations with questions below. You can also ask them for reasons, suggest other views they should think about, etc, using questions like those in brackets (). You can change subtopic at any time, without needing to show that you are doing so (unlike Speaking Part One).

Traditions

- Are people in your country generally interested in attending traditional festivals? (Is that changing over time?)
- Are people in your country worried about old traditions disappearing? (Is anything being done to encourage people to continue traditions?)
- Can you explain why people continue doing things for good luck even when they say they don't believe in them anymore? (Does it matter if people are superstitious or not?)
- Can you give some examples of traditions which have become more instead of less popular? (What helps a tradition not die out?)
- Do people nowadays tend to appreciate what public holidays are meant to celebrate, or do they just treat them like any other day off? (Do you think it matters if people know what particular public holidays mean?)
- Do you think it is okay for governments to spend money on local festivals? (Why do you have that opinion?)
- Do you think that people your age in your country like wearing traditional clothes? (Why?/ Why not?)
- How can the government or festival organisers make them more relevant to and popular with young people? (Is that happening anywhere now?)

New traditions

- Are there any examples in your country of special days which were originally made up by the marketing departments of companies, e.g. Grandparents Day? (What do you think about that?)
- Are there times when it's better to give cash rather than presents? (How do you feel about receiving cash?)
- Can you think of any bad effects of celebrating foreign holidays and festivals? (Do you think it matters what the origins of a holiday or festival are?)
- Can you compare a traditional wedding to a typical wedding nowadays? (Which do you prefer?)
- Do you think any festivals or celebrations in your country are over-commercialised? (Does it matter?)
- Do you think festivals and celebrations in your country are becoming more Americanised? (Can you give some examples?/ How do you feel about that?)

Xmas and New Year

- Could you describe how people in your country celebrate New Year? (Do most people enjoy that period?)
- At what age do you think it's okay to tell children that Santa doesn't exist? (At what age did you realise?)
- What do you think about people who aren't Christian but celebrate Christmas anyway? (Is that common in your country?)

When your teacher stops you, ask about questions above you couldn't answer, are not sure you answered well, etc, answering them as a class each time.