



## SPEAKING FLUENTLY

Fluency is a measure of how easily and smoothly you communicate in English. Do you speak easily and at a natural pace or slowly and have to stop to think of what to say when talking?

Fluency is particularly important in Part Two of the interview – the individual long turn. This is where you will be speaking at length on a given topic, on your own without any prompting, so your ability to speak effectively, smoothly and continuously will be on show.

There are two features to consider when talking about fluency:

- smoothness and continuity of your speech
- rate or speed of your speech

### IELTS Tip

Practise talking on a range of topics in order to build your confidence.

Record yourself speaking and listen for how often you pause or hesitate. Check that you have logically organised your ideas and used appropriate linking words.

Practise speaking at every opportunity. You can't improve without practice!

### **Smoothness and continuity of your speech**

How easily you speak without hesitating or pausing too often is how smoothness and continuity is measured in your speech. It is natural to pause or hesitate when speaking but only if it is at a natural pace.

When there are lengthier segments of silence in your talk this may indicate a lack of communicative grammatical structures and/or a limited range of conversational vocabulary. Are you searching for language or ideas?

### **Communicative grammatical structures**

It is important to build a bank of grammatical structures and expressions which help communicate or express how you feel about something. Being emphatic about something or wanting to emphasise a point is one such structure.

### **Emphatic structures**

Drawing attention or importance to a reason, example, opinion or comparison is relevant to all parts of the speaking test.

There is a variety of structures used for emphasising a particular point or idea in an effective manner or signalling something is important. These can include:

- fronting
- inversion
- cleft clauses

## Fronting

In spoken English when you want to emphasise a contrast or comparison with something in the previous sentence then that information is placed at the beginning of the sentence and is called **fronting**.

Fronting information changes the normal word order in a sentence and subsequently changes the emphasis and focus.

Example	
<b>Usual word order</b>	There are many yet unexplored places to visit in Australia. The rainforests of Kakadu would be <b>the most exciting</b> .
To emphasise there is something special about Kakadu the superlative structure with that information is placed at the beginning of the sentence.	
<b>Fronting</b>	There are many yet unexplored places to visit in Australia. <b>The most exciting</b> would be the rainforests of Kakadu.

## Inversion

Another structure used to give more emphasis or create a more dramatic effect is subject-auxiliary inversion. The auxiliary (do, have) is placed before the subject and the rest of the verb phrase follows. There are also other expressions that use this pattern of inversion as well.

Example	
Expressions	Inversion
hardly, rarely, little, few, never	<b>Little did he know</b> what the consequences of his actions would be. <b>Never have I</b> seen such an amazing performance.
not only ... but also	<b>Not only</b> does she speak English well, <b>but also three</b> other languages.
no sooner ... than	<b>No sooner had</b> we started our tour <b>than</b> the coach broke down.
adverbs of time (first, next, all day)	<b>All day</b> I waited for the service man to come to fix my refrigerator.

## Cleft clauses

Cleft clauses are often used to draw attention to a particular piece of information. The information is divided into two parts and each has its own verb. Introductory noun phrases are generally used in cleft sentences. These can include **wh-** clauses and other noun phrases.

Examples	
Introductory noun phrases	Cleft sentences
wh- clauses: the person (who); the place (where); the reason (why); the time (when); the thing that	The <b>person who is</b> responsible for the accident <b>is</b> John. The <b>place where you'd want</b> to visit <b>is</b> Egypt because of the pyramids. The <b>thing that worries</b> me <b>is</b> the cost of living.
the thing is; the point is; the fact remains; the trouble is; the problem is	<b>The thing is</b> , I've run out of money. <b>The fact remains</b> that we've got to sit the test.

## Conversational vocabulary

In addition to building a bank of communicative grammatical structures, it is also helpful to build up your vocabulary around a topic area. This allows you to more easily express yourself because you would have a bank of relevant and related vocabulary from which to draw on when speaking on that topic.

The kind of vocabulary items to learn would include synonyms and opposites in particular, because they allow you to extend your talk by using words or phrases of similar meaning or they can provide additional information which is opposite in meaning. This can give **continuity** to your speech and this will help maintain **fluency**.

The general topic area of health is developed below. Practise using this vocabulary and add new items as you come across relevant vocabulary.

### Topic area: Health

Topic vocabulary				
health care, health, diet, health food, obesity, nutrition, medicine, exercise, conditions, lifestyles, consume, illness (cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, immune system)				
Word forms				
adjective	noun		verb	adverb
	thing	person		
healthy, healthful	health		x	healthily
obese	obesity		x	x
nutritional	nutrition; nutrient	nutritionist	x	nutritionally
preventative; preventive	prevention		prevent	x
Related words				
synonyms				
serious	grave; debilitating; severe; major; life-threatening; chronic; painful			
nutritious	nourishing; wholesome; beneficial; health-giving; invigorating; strengthening			
unhealthy	harmful; unwholesome; damaging; toxic; diseased; deleterious; unfit; out of shape			
opposites				
healthy	unhealthy			
thin	obese			
scale				
	← thin slim heavy fat overweight obese →			
idiom				
	prevention is better than cure; an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure (saying)			
Collocations				
	(adj.) + noun + (adj.)	verb + noun		(prep.) + noun + (prep.)
diet	balanced ~; sensible ~; healthy ~; poor ~; weight-reducing ~; low-calorie ~; high-protein ~	to go on a ~; to follow a ~; to have a ~; to stick to a ~		on a ~; a ~ of; in a ~
health	~ problems; ~ risk; ~ education; ~ benefits; ~ services; good ~; declining ~	to enjoy good ~; to look after your ~		in good/poor ~
illness	stress-related ~; minor ~; chronic ~; debilitating ~; long-term ~; physical ~; mental ~; serious ~	to suffer from ~; to develop an ~; to contract an ~		onset of ~; because of ~; due to ~; associated with ~
Other related collocations				
catch a cold; to nurse a cold; come down with the flu; develop high blood pressure; suffer from high blood pressure; suffer from stress; have a splitting headache; have a nasty cold				



### Rate or speed of your speech

Fluency is not only about your ability to speak smoothly and continuously but your ability to speak at an effective speed as well.

How quickly or slowly you speak is how the **rate or speed of your speech** is measured. Speaking too slowly or too quickly is unnatural. Aim to speak at a relaxed and natural pace.

There are different ways of achieving fluency but one of the most effective would be experiencing and listening to good varieties of English speech. Being aware of speaking styles and knowing how to listen will help you become a more fluent speaker of English. Record your speech and check whether you're speaking at a natural and relaxed pace. Practise modelling the pace of your speech on that of a native speaker.