

IELTS Speaking – when the question doesn't match the answer

Work together to think of what you could say if you couldn't answer exactly the question you were asked in the situations below, e.g. because you didn't go to university.

Why did you choose your university major?

What is your typical day like?

How long have you been in this city?

Are you from the country or the city?

What do people your age do in their free time?

What's the most interesting part of your town/ village?

Where is your family from?

What kind of jobs do people in your town/ village do?

Can you tell me something about your hometown?

How is your hometown changing?

What changes would you like to make to your hometown?

Is your hometown famous for anything?

On what occasions do you eat special meals?

What's your main meal of the day?

What would be your perfect job?

Do you prefer cooking at home or eating in a restaurant?

Why did you choose to take the IELTS?

Match the answers below with the questions above.

- In my country most people choose the university rather than the major and then just get on the best course they can, so it's not really possible to answer that question.
- To be honest, I don't really have a typical day.
- Actually, I was born here.
- Neither, really. I was brought up in the very distant suburbs.
- I'm not sure it's possible to generalise, but people I know mainly play computer games and go shopping.
- Frankly, there isn't anything interesting there. The surrounding countryside is nice enough though.
- They moved around so much that it is difficult to say. My grandparents on my father's side were born in Kyushu.
- I can't speak for most people, but I know a lot of people in tourism.
- Can I talk about Tokyo instead? I don't really remember much about where I was born.
- I'm not sure if it's changing right now. It grew a lot in the bubble years, though.
- There's nothing I'd want to change, really. In fact, I'd like to stop it changing.
- No, nothing at all. The nearest thing to a claim to fame is that a television celebrity was born there.
- I don't think "special" is the right word for it, but we always have KFC on Xmas Day.
- There's no real main meal in my country. All three are about the same size.
- To be frank, I'd prefer not to have to work! If I had to choose though, I'd be a helicopter pilot.
- Can I pick a third option? I prefer to buy ready prepared food and take it home.
- I wouldn't describe it as a choice. Everybody who wants a promotion has to take it.

Underline the generally useful language above. Can you think of any other phrases which would have the same function?

Ask each other the questions on the first page. You can of course actually answer the question if that is easier than finding a reason not to!

Answer key

- Why did you choose your university major? – In my country most people choose the university rather than the major and then just get on the best course they can, so it's not really possible to answer that question.
- What is your typical day like? – To be honest, I don't really have a typical day.
- How long have you been in this city? – Actually, I was born here.
- Are you from the country or the city? – Neither, really. I was brought up in the very distant suburbs.
- What do people your age do in their free time? – I'm not sure it's possible to generalise, but people I know mainly play computer games and go shopping.
- What's the most interesting part of your town/ village? – Frankly, there isn't anything interesting there. The surrounding countryside is nice enough though.
- Where is your family from? – They moved around so much that it is difficult to say. My grandparents on my father's side were born in Kyushu.
- What kind of jobs do people in your town/ village do? – I can't speak for most people, but I know a lot of people in tourism.
- Can you tell me something about your hometown? – Can I talk about Tokyo instead? I don't really remember much about where I was born.
- How is your hometown changing? – I'm not sure it's changing right now. It grew a lot in the bubble years, though.
- What changes would you like to make to your hometown? – There's nothing I'd want to change, really. In fact, I'd like to stop it changing.
- Is your hometown famous for anything? – No, nothing at all. The nearest thing to a claim to fame is that a television celebrity was born there.
- On what occasions do you eat special meals? – I don't think "special" is the right word for it, but we always have KFC on Xmas Day.
- What's your main meal of the day? – There's no real main meal in my country. All three are about the same size.
- What would be your perfect job? – To be frank, I'd prefer not to have to work! If I had to choose though, I'd be a helicopter pilot.
- Do you prefer cooking at home or eating in a restaurant? – Can I pick a third option? I prefer to buy ready prepared food and take it home.
- Why did you choose to take the IELTS? – I wouldn't describe it as a choice. Everybody who wants a promotion has to take it.

Extra phrases

As a matter of fact,...

In my case,...

I can't exactly answer that question, but...

It's impossible to say