

IELTS Cue Card Practice Questions

Common IELTS Cue Card Topics (Part 2)

Cue cards generally fall into a few recurring categories. Here are examples from each, so you can practise across the full range of what might come up.

People

- Describe a person who has influenced you.
- Describe someone you admire for their achievements.
- Describe a family member you are close to.
- Describe a person who is good at their job.

Places

- Describe a place you visited that you found interesting.
- Describe a city you would like to live in.
- Describe a quiet place you like to spend time in.
- Describe a place near water (river, lake, sea) you have visited.

Objects

- Describe an object that is important to you.
- Describe a piece of technology you find useful.
- Describe a gift you received that you liked.
- Describe something you own that you would like to replace.

Events/Experiences

- Describe a celebration or festival you enjoyed.
- Describe an event that made you happy.
- Describe a time when you were surprised by something.
- Describe a mistake you made and what you learned from it.

Activities

- Describe a hobby you enjoy in your free time.

- Describe a sport you like to watch or play.
- Describe an outdoor activity you enjoy.
- Describe a skill you would like to learn.

Books/Media

- Describe a book that had a strong impact on you.
- Describe a film you found meaningful.
- Describe a TV programme you enjoy watching.
- Describe a piece of news you found interesting.

Decisions/Achievements

- Describe an important decision you made.
- Describe an achievement you are proud of.
- Describe a goal you have set for yourself.
- Describe a time you changed your opinion about something.

Abstract/Change

- Describe a change you would like to make in your life.
- Describe something you would like to improve about your city.
- Describe a tradition in your country that you find interesting.
- Describe a piece of advice someone gave you that you found useful.

IELTS Cue Card Practice Questions Answers

Model Answers — IELTS Cue Card Topics

People

Describe a person who has influenced you. The person who's influenced me most is my elder cousin, who essentially became a mentor figure throughout my teenage years. She's someone I've known my whole life, but it was really during university that I started actively seeking her advice on everything from career choices to personal setbacks. What stands out

about her is her calmness under pressure — she rarely panics, even when things go wrong, and instead treats problems as puzzles to be solved rather than crises. Her influence shows up in how I approach my own work now; I've picked up her habit of pausing before reacting, which has genuinely made me a more measured decision-maker.

Describe someone you admire for their achievements. Someone I genuinely admire is a former colleague who built a small content agency from scratch while working a full-time job on the side. I know her through work, having collaborated with her on a couple of projects a few years back. What's impressive isn't just the business itself but the sheer persistence involved — she faced multiple failed attempts before finding a model that worked, yet never seemed to lose momentum. Watching her navigate those setbacks taught me that achievement is less about talent and more about refusing to quit at the first sign of difficulty.

Describe a family member you are close to. I'd have to say my younger sister, who I've become considerably closer to in the last few years despite a fairly noticeable age gap growing up. We talk almost daily now, mostly about mundane things, but also about bigger life decisions where I trust her judgement surprisingly more than my own. What I appreciate about her is her honesty — she'll tell me when she thinks I'm making a mistake rather than simply agreeing to keep the peace. That closeness has genuinely become one of the more grounding relationships in my life.

Describe a person who is good at their job. A person who comes to mind is my former manager, who managed a fairly chaotic team with what seemed like effortless organisation. I worked directly under her for about two years, and what made her good at her job wasn't technical brilliance so much as her ability to read people and delegate accordingly. She had this knack for assigning tasks that played to each person's strengths rather than just distributing work evenly, which meant the whole team consistently performed better than the sum of its parts.

Places

Describe a place you visited that you found interesting. A place I found genuinely fascinating was Hampi, an ancient ruined city in southern India that I visited a couple of years ago. I went there mainly out of curiosity about its history, having read that it was once the capital of a major medieval empire. What struck me most was the sheer scale of the ruins scattered across a boulder-strewn landscape — it felt less like a tourist site and more like stepping into an abandoned civilisation. I found it interesting largely because it forced me to reconsider how impermanent even the grandest human achievements can be.

Describe a city you would like to live in. I'd love to live in Kyoto, a city I've only visited briefly but which left a lasting impression. What draws me to it is the way it balances tradition and modern life — centuries-old temples sit comfortably alongside contemporary cafes and efficient

public transport. I think I'd enjoy the slower, more deliberate pace of life there compared to the cities I've lived in, and the strong emphasis on aesthetics and craftsmanship in everyday objects is something I find genuinely appealing.

Describe a quiet place you like to spend time in. There's a small library near my home that I consider something of a personal retreat. I discovered it almost by accident a few years ago while looking for a quieter alternative to cafes for reading. What makes it special is less the collection itself and more the atmosphere — it's rarely crowded, and there's a kind of unspoken agreement among visitors to keep noise to a minimum. I go there whenever I need to think clearly, since the silence has a way of sharpening my focus that I struggle to replicate elsewhere.

Describe a place near water you have visited. A place that stands out is Alleppey, known for its backwaters, which I visited on a family trip a few years back. We stayed on a houseboat for a couple of days, drifting slowly through narrow canals lined with coconut palms and small villages. What made it memorable was the pace — everything moved so slowly compared to city life that it forced a kind of enforced relaxation I wasn't used to. It remains one of the few trips where I actually felt fully disconnected from routine.

Objects

Describe an object that is important to you. An object I hold onto quite sentimentally is an old wristwatch that belonged to my grandfather. I inherited it after he passed away several years ago, and while it no longer works, I still keep it on my desk. It's important to me less for its function and more as a tangible connection to him, given that we were quite close growing up. Whenever I glance at it, I'm reminded of the values he tried to instil in me, particularly around patience and discipline.

Describe a piece of technology you find useful. The piece of technology I rely on most is probably my laptop, though more specifically the note-taking software I use daily for work. I've had some version of it for years now, and I use it constantly to organise research, draft content, and track tasks. It's useful primarily because it's freed me from the chaos of scattered notes across notebooks and sticky notes, letting me search for anything instantly. Given how much of my work depends on quick access to information, I honestly don't think I could function as efficiently without it.

Describe a gift you received that you liked. A gift I particularly liked was a set of vinyl records my partner gave me on my birthday last year. I'd mentioned in passing months earlier that I'd been wanting to get into vinyl, and I was genuinely surprised they'd remembered such an offhand comment. What made it special wasn't just the records themselves but the thoughtfulness behind noticing something I'd barely emphasised at the time. It's become one of those gifts that actually gets used regularly, rather than sitting forgotten in a drawer.

Describe something you own that you would like to replace. Something I've been meaning to replace for a while now is my office chair, which I bought fairly cheaply a few years ago without giving it much thought. Since I spend most of my working day sitting at a desk, the lack of proper back support has started causing genuine discomfort. I'd like to replace it with something more ergonomic, mainly because I've realised that saving money upfront on something used daily often costs more in the long run, whether that's in comfort or in eventual health issues.

Events/Experiences

Describe a celebration or festival you enjoyed. A festival I particularly enjoyed was Holi, the festival of colours, which I celebrated with a large group of friends a couple of years ago. It's celebrated by throwing coloured powder and water at one another, usually accompanied by music and food. What made that particular celebration memorable was the sheer spontaneity of it — plans kept changing throughout the day as more people joined in, and there was this infectious energy that made it impossible to stay indoors. It's one of those events where the joy comes less from any single moment and more from the collective chaos of it all.

Describe an event that made you happy. An event that comes to mind is graduating from university, which happened a few years back after what felt like a fairly gruelling final year. It made me happy not just because of the achievement itself, but because my entire family made the effort to attend, despite some of them travelling a considerable distance. What I remember most vividly isn't the ceremony itself but the dinner afterwards, where my parents were visibly proud in a way I hadn't quite seen before.

Describe a time when you were surprised by something. I was genuinely surprised a couple of years ago when a close friend organised a surprise gathering for my birthday, despite my having explicitly said I didn't want any fuss. I'd walked in expecting a quiet evening and instead found nearly a dozen friends waiting, several of whom I hadn't seen in months. What surprised me most wasn't the event itself but the level of coordination involved, given how notoriously disorganised most of my friend group tends to be.

Describe a mistake you made and what you learned from it. A mistake I made was rushing a major project at work without properly verifying the data behind it, which led to a fairly embarrassing correction being issued afterwards. At the time, I was under considerable time pressure and assumed the initial figures were reliable without double-checking. What I learned from it, ultimately, is that thoroughness shouldn't be sacrificed for speed, no matter how tight the deadline feels — a lesson that's since made me considerably more meticulous in how I approach similar tasks.

Activities

Describe a hobby you enjoy in your free time. A hobby I've genuinely come to enjoy is long-distance running, which I picked up almost accidentally a few years ago after a friend convinced me to join a local running group. I try to run several times a week, usually early in the morning before work. What I enjoy about it, beyond the obvious fitness benefits, is the mental clarity it provides — there's something about the repetitive motion that lets my mind wander productively, often solving problems I'd been stuck on.

Describe a sport you like to watch or play. I've always enjoyed watching badminton, partly because I played it competitively at school and partly because it's fast enough to remain genuinely engaging as a spectator. What draws me to it is the sheer speed and precision required — matches can shift momentum within seconds, which keeps things unpredictable. I don't play as often as I used to, but I still try to catch major tournaments whenever they're broadcast.

Describe an outdoor activity you enjoy. Hiking is an outdoor activity I've grown to appreciate, particularly over the last few years as I've made more of an effort to get out of the city on weekends. I enjoy it mainly for the change of pace it offers — being surrounded by nature, away from constant notifications, has a genuinely restorative effect that's hard to replicate indoors. It's also become a nice way to spend time with friends without the usual distractions of phones and screens.

Describe a skill you would like to learn. A skill I'd like to learn is public speaking, or more specifically, the ability to present confidently without relying heavily on notes. I've always found it slightly nerve-wracking, despite being comfortable with one-on-one conversations. I'd like to learn it because I think it would open up opportunities professionally, particularly as my role increasingly involves presenting ideas to larger groups, and right now I feel that nervousness sometimes undermines how well my ideas actually come across.

Books/Media

Describe a book that had a strong impact on you. A book that left a lasting impact on me is *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari, which I read a few years ago during a fairly reflective period in my life. I picked it up out of general curiosity about human history, not expecting it to reshape how I thought about broader questions like progress and belief systems. What impacted me most was its central argument that shared myths, from religion to money, are what allow large-scale human cooperation — a perspective that's since coloured how I interpret a lot of social and economic behaviour.

Describe a film you found meaningful. A film I found genuinely meaningful is *The Pursuit of Happyness*, which I first watched as a teenager and have revisited a few times since. It's

meaningful to me because of how unflinchingly it portrays struggle without resorting to easy sentimentality — the protagonist's persistence despite repeated setbacks felt far more relatable than the typical triumphant narrative arc. It's a film I tend to return to whenever I need a reminder that difficult periods, however prolonged, aren't necessarily permanent.

Describe a TV programme you enjoy watching. A programme I've enjoyed recently is a documentary series exploring various global cuisines, which I've been watching intermittently over the past year. I enjoy it partly for the food itself, but more for the cultural context each episode provides, connecting dishes to local history and traditions. It's become something of a relaxing ritual for me, usually watched in the evening as a way of unwinding after work.

Describe a piece of news you found interesting. A piece of news that caught my attention recently was coverage of advances in renewable energy storage, which I came across while browsing tech news. I found it interesting because it addressed a problem I hadn't fully considered before — that generating clean energy is only half the challenge, with storing it efficiently being equally critical. It left me somewhat more optimistic about the pace of progress in tackling climate-related issues than I'd previously been.

Decisions/Achievements

Describe an important decision you made. An important decision I made was choosing to switch career paths entirely a few years into my first job, moving from a purely technical role into content and marketing. The alternative was staying in a stable, well-paying position I'd already invested years into. I made the decision after realising that stability alone wasn't sustaining my motivation, and ultimately prioritised long-term satisfaction over short-term comfort — a decision that, despite some initial uncertainty, has proven to be the right one.

Describe an achievement you are proud of. An achievement I'm genuinely proud of is completing a half-marathon last year, something I hadn't seriously considered attempting a couple of years prior. I trained for several months, often struggling with motivation on particularly demanding weeks. What makes me proud isn't just finishing the race but pushing through moments where quitting seemed like the easier option — it's taught me that persistence, more than natural ability, tends to determine outcomes.

Describe a goal you have set for yourself. A goal I've set for myself is to become fluent in Spanish within the next couple of years, something I've been working towards gradually through apps and occasional conversation practice. I set this goal partly out of personal interest and partly because I think multilingualism opens up both professional and social opportunities. It's proving more difficult than I initially expected, mainly due to inconsistent practice, but I remain fairly committed to it.

Describe a time you changed your opinion about something. I changed my opinion fairly significantly about remote work after initially being quite sceptical of its effectiveness. I used to

assume that being physically present in an office was essential for productivity and collaboration. However, after experiencing an extended period of remote work myself, I realised that, with the right discipline and tools, output didn't suffer at all — if anything, it improved due to fewer daily distractions.

Abstract/Change

Describe a change you would like to make in your life. A change I'd like to make is establishing a more consistent sleep schedule, since irregular hours have been affecting my concentration lately. I want to make this change because I've noticed a clear link between poor sleep and reduced productivity, something I'd previously underestimated. It wouldn't necessarily be difficult in principle, but breaking an established habit of late nights has proven surprisingly hard in practice, largely due to work demands bleeding into personal time.

Describe something you would like to improve about your city. Something I'd like to improve about my city is its public transport infrastructure, which remains fairly limited outside the main commercial areas. I'd like to see this improved primarily because it would reduce dependence on private vehicles, which contributes significantly to both traffic congestion and pollution. Given the city's growing population, I think this is becoming an increasingly urgent issue rather than a mere inconvenience.

Describe a tradition in your country that you find interesting. A tradition I find genuinely interesting is the practice of touching elders' feet as a sign of respect during festivals and family gatherings back home. I find it interesting because it encapsulates a broader cultural emphasis on hierarchy and respect for age that isn't always as explicitly expressed in other cultures I've encountered. Even as social norms shift, it's a tradition that's largely persisted, which says something about how deeply it's embedded in the culture.

Describe a piece of advice someone gave you that you found useful. A piece of advice I found genuinely useful came from a former mentor, who once told me that clarity matters more than perfection when communicating ideas at work. At the time, I was spending excessive effort polishing presentations rather than ensuring the core message was actually clear. That advice has since reshaped how I approach most of my work — I now prioritise getting the main point across simply, rather than getting lost in unnecessary details.