

IELTS Speaking Part 2 - A hypothetical situation

Hypothetical Situation

Lesson 7

Sometimes in part 2 of the speaking test you are asked to describe things that involve a hypothetical situation.

If something is hypothetical, then it is an *unreal situation in the future*. It is just an idea or imagined.

The grammar for this is connected to conditional type II 'if clauses'. Take a look at this:

Question: *If you won the lottery, what would you do?*

Answer: *I'd buy a large house in the countryside.*

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Of course the person has NOT won the lottery – so it is just an imagined or unreal situation.

In the 'if' part of the clause, you'll notice that the **past simple** (won) is used, even though the imagined future is being referred to. **'Would'** is used in the second part.

For the IELTS task card, you'll just be seeing the 'would' part.

Take a look at this sample task 2 question:

Describe an interesting job you would like to have

You should say:

- What the job is
- Who normally does this job
- What skills are needed for the job

Explain why you would like this job.

So when you talk about a hypothetical situation, you need to make sure you use the correct grammar.

Remember that 'I would...' is usually shortened to 'I'd...' when we are speaking.

Take a look at this model answer. The uses of 'would' are in red.

Model Answer

I'm going to talk about a job I'd like to have.

Ok, if I could choose any job, it would be an air hostess. They are the people who take care of customers who are travelling on planes – serving the food, making sure the travellers board and depart the plane safely, and taking care of any other issues.

This type of job can be done by men or women, but there are usually certain requirements. For instance, you have to be at least 19 years old in most cases when you first apply and usually a certain height, not too small. Also, your weight needs to be in proportion to your height. So in other words, not overweight unfortunately. They also really prefer people who are younger. So not just anyone can do it. Those who do the job usually want to travel as much as they can to see the world, or maybe to make money as in some developing countries it is a lot better paid than many other jobs.

Regarding the skills, one of the most important things to be is outgoing. I think you need to be very confident and happy to chat with anyone! You also need to be patient as I'm sure you can sometimes get passengers who complain, but you still have to continue to be

nice to them. For qualifications, you have to have good GSCE marks. I think that is it.

The reason that I'd like a job like this is because I'd really like to see the rest of the world and I'd like to meet lots of new people from different cultures and countries. It's actually something I've wanted to do for a very long time, since I was young, which is why I know so much about the requirements. I'm quite a confident person and very outgoing, so I think I have all the qualities that are needed for such a job.

If I was given the chance to do this job in the future, I'd be very happy. It's my dream so hopefully one day it will come true.

As you'll notice, only a few parts of this response are using 'would'. The amount you use it will depend on what you are saying.

In much of the response the candidate is talking about facts regarding the job, which are always true, so the present simple is being used. She's not referring to the future.

She only refers to a hypothetical situation a few times in her response.

Here are some examples for you to practice with:

Example Hypothetical Situation Speaking Card 1

Describe a beautiful place in your country that you **would like** to visit.

You should say:

- Where it is
- Who you **would go** with
- When you **would go**

Explain why you **would like** to visit this place.

Example Hypothetical Situation Speaking Card 2



Describe a house you **would like** to buy in the future.

You should say

- What kind of house it **would be**
- Where you **would like** it to be
- Who you **would like** to live there with

Explain why you **would like** to buy a house like this

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