

# IELTS Speaking Part 3 - Describing Changes

## Speaking About Change

### Lesson 3

Questions that will involve you **speaking about change** are common in part 3 of the IELTS test.

Therefore you need to make sure that you are the grammar and phrases to be able to do this.

Often you are asked to **compare a situation now** with the same situation **in the past**.

Common time periods include; 20 years, 30 years, when your parents were young and when your grandparents were young.

This lesson will provide you with some useful **grammar for speaking about change** in the IELTS test, and how to spot these types of question.

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Examples:

- *How are the eating habits now in your country different from eating habits in the past?*
- *Are the types of leisure activities that are popular today the same as those that were popular when your parents were young?*
- *How have shopping habits changed over recent years?*
- *Have the types of transport people use changed much over the last few decades?*

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Used to



One way of describing how things have changed is to use “**used to**”. We use it to refer to facts or situations that were true in the past but are not true now. When the change occurred is not important.

Example:

*“Vietnam **used to** be a colony of France, (but now it is independent)”*

*“Jimmy Carter **used to** be the President of the United States, (but now he isn’t.)”*

This can, of course be used to give personal information.

*“I **used to** smoke, (but I gave up 2 years ago.)”*

*“Mike **used to** be a detective in the CID, (but now he’s a teacher)”*

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## Comparatives

In these types of questions the function being tested is “**compare**”, so using comparatives is obviously a good way of answering the question and speaking about change.

Example:

*“Thirty years ago, the streets **were much quieter than** now.”*

*“I think that reading **was much more popular** in the past.”*



When talking about how things are different now, the **present perfect** is often used as well as the **present simple**.

*"The streets **have become** much noisier these days." (Notice, a specific time is not needed)*

*"Reading **is** much less popular than it was in the past."*

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## Speculation

Particularly for some of the longer periods, you may not be sure of exactly how things have changed and it is all right to **speculate**.

"**Would**" can be used for strong speculation.

Example:

*"I think it **would have been** harder for my grandfather to find out about international news, because there was no radio or T.V in his village."*

*"In the past, people **would have travelled** less often."*

When you are not so sure you can use other words. (*perhaps, possibly, might, may, etc.*)

*"I'm not sure but, **perhaps**, they **might have studied** less science thirty years ago"*

*"**Possibly**, in my father's day, people **could have played** more sport."*

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## Question types

Questions about changes tend to be phrased in ways like these:

*“How do you think ... is different from thirty years ago?”*

*“In what ways has ... changed from when your parents were young?”*

*“How is ... different from twenty years ago?”*

Of course, the examiner may choose to word the question in other ways.

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