



IELTS Speaking Practice Test 08 Topic: Foreign Cultures

Speaking Part 2

Here is an audio of the sample answers given below. Please listen to it for more clarity on the Speaking Test.

Describe a foreign culture that you are interested in

You should say

- what this culture is
- how you learned about this culture
- what you know about this culture and explain why you feel this culture is interesting.

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Sample Answer

I have spent most of my time learning Chinese and Chinese culture. But I did have an interesting experience about a year and a half ago that inspired me to learn about Costa Rican culture.

One of my friends spent a semester abroad in Costa Rica in early 2005, and I spent two weeks at the beginning of the summer visiting him there. Prior to visiting, I knew almost nothing about the culture, but staying there, even for such a short time, really opened my eyes. Costa Rican culture is extremely different from either American or Chinese cultures. Two of the phrases most often used in Costa Rica are a good illustration of their culture: *Pura Vida* and *Tranquilo*. *Pura Vida* means “pure life” and *Tranquilo* means “calm”. Both are used in situations where the level of stress is rising. When Costa Ricans say this phrase, they are telling themselves “Don’t worry. Chill out.” It’s an extremely **laid-back**, relaxed culture. Their main goal in life is to be happy. Workdays tend to be shorter, and since the country is so small and borders both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it is really easy to go to the beach, so many do just that. When I was there, it was routine to see people getting up around 6 am, go to the beach and surf for

two or three hours, work from 10-4, go home and eat, then go back to the beach.

It was great to see a culture with such a different outlook on life.

Vocabulary for Cue card

- **Outlook:** A person's point of view or general attitude to life.
Eg: Everyone should have a practical outlook towards their life
- **Illustration:** A picture illustrating a book, newspaper, etc.
Eg: "Isn't this an illustration of a book named five feet apart?"
- **Chill out:** Relaxed mood
Eg: I think dad is chilled out today because of the chess match he won

Speaking Part 3

1 Do you think it's important to know about other cultures?

I do think it's extremely important to learn about other cultures. Not only can you find out interesting things, but it makes it easier to interact with those people if you ever come in contact with them. Also, it makes it a lot easier to do business with those cultures. It's important to be educated about the world and not just shut yourself into your own country.

2 How can we benefit from learning about other cultures?

Several ways that people can benefit from other cultures are in business, personal relationships, and just in self-improvement. In business, it is necessary to know a little bit about whatever culture you plan to work with. For instance, I think in Muslim cultures, shaking hands with your left hand is considered extremely rude. If you didn't know that, it could hurt your chances of doing business. Also, it's important just to improve yourself by learning as much as you can, and culture is a good subject.

3 What do you think is the best way to learn about another culture?

Obviously, the best way to learn about a culture is to go there and experience it. If you can get a feel for the culture firsthand, it will be a lot easier to pick things up, But I also believe that you can learn a ton about other cultures just by reading books about them. Reading about people's experiences in foreign lands is the next best thing to being there.

4 Do you think that learning foreign languages can help us understand foreign cultures?

I'm not sure that just learning the language is a good way to learn about a culture, but most places where you would learn a language would help you learn about the culture, so indirectly, yes. The language alone isn't great for understanding culture. For instance, German is a really harsh language, but Germans aren't harsh people. You really need to study more than the language if you want to get to know a culture.

5 Do you think it's better to go overseas to study a foreign language or to study it in your home country?

I think it is better to study a language in its native country. When you do that, you are engulfed in the language and forced to encounter it outside of the classroom. Otherwise, your only exposure to the language is when you're studying or in the classroom. I know firsthand that when learning a foreign language in your home country, it is easy to lose what you have learned.

6 What is your understanding of the term "globalization"?

Globalization, in my mind, is the idea that the world is becoming smaller, so societies can interact and exchange culture more easily and more efficiently. Unfortunately, because some countries are richer and have more influence than others, certain cultures get spread around more than others. On the whole, however, globalization is a good thing because it is not the only culture that gets spread, but things like information and medicine can help people.

7 Do you think globalization is a good thing?

Yes, globalization has its problems, but for the most part, it is good for most people involved. Some people have different opinions because they are really concerned with the loss of culture, but for me, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. People have access to more information, so diseases can be better treated, food can be made more efficiently, and goods that make people's lives easier are now available.

8 Do you think it's easier to learn about other cultures today than it was before?

Yes, of course, it is. All you have to do is to look at art from long ago, about foreign cultures and you can see the lack of knowledge people had. Today, with the Internet and the number of books available, it is almost impossible to be ignorant. It is so easy to learn about anything you want.

Vocabulary for Speaking Part 3

- **Ignorant:** Uneducated or unsophisticated.
Eg: Sneha was made to believe that she is really an ignorant person
- **Drawback:** A disadvantage or problem
Eg: Every situation has advantages and drawbacks
- **Harsh:** Rude
Eg: Mr. Smith was very harsh with the students.
- **Outweigh:** Be heavier, greater
Eg: He has his faults, but his good qualities outweigh them
- **Engulfed:** (of a natural force) sweep over (something) so as to surround or cover it completely.
Eg: Sorrow engulfed him when he sold his property



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