IELTS Speaking band descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and Coherence	Lexical Resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	▪ speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar ▪ speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features ▪ develops topics fully and appropriately	▪ uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics ▪ uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately	▪ uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately ▪ produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech	▪ uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety ▪ sustains flexible use of features throughout ▪ is effortless to understand
8	▪ speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language ▪ develops topics coherently and appropriately	▪ uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning ▪ uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies ▪ uses paraphrase effectively as required	▪ uses a wide range of structures flexibly ▪ produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors	▪ uses a wide range of pronunciation features ▪ sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses ▪ is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	▪ speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence ▪ may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction ▪ uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility	▪ uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics ▪ uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices ▪ uses paraphrase effectively	▪ uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility ▪ frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist	▪ shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	▪ is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation ▪ uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately	▪ has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies ▪ generally paraphrases successfully	▪ uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility ▪ may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems	▪ uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control ▪ shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained ▪ can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times

5	▪ usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going ▪ may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers ▪ produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems	▪ manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility ▪ attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success	▪ produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy ▪ uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems	▪ shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	▪ cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction ▪ links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence	▪ is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice ▪ rarely attempts paraphrase	▪ produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare ▪ errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding	▪ uses a limited range of pronunciation features ▪ attempts to control features but lapses are frequent ▪ mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	▪ speaks with long pauses ▪ has limited ability to link simple sentences ▪ gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message	▪ uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information ▪ has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	▪ attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances ▪ makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions	▪ shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	▪ pauses lengthily before most words ▪ little communication possible	▪ only produces isolated words or memorised utterances	▪ cannot produce basic sentence forms	▪ speech is often unintelligible
1	▪ no communication possible ▪ no rateable language			
0	▪ does not attend			