

## IELTS Speaking: Making Comparisons

Making comparisons is extremely important in the IELTS speaking test, especially when answering questions which include the words “*differences*”, “*prefer*”, “*which...*”, “*changes*”, “*advantages*” and “*disadvantages*”, as well as Part 2.

However, many students only make comparisons in a very basic way, such as:

“Eating at home is cheaper than eating out”,

But your level will be higher if you also express *how big the contrast is*. For example, “Eating at home is *much* cheaper than eating out”. However, as well as “*much*”, there are lots of other phrases you can use. For example:

“Eating at home is far cheaper than eating out”.

“Travelling with others is a lot more fun *than* travelling on your own”

“Going to a concert live is way more exciting *than* watching one on TV”

“The pace of life in cities is quite a lot faster *than* the countryside”

“Life in the countryside is quite a bit more laid-back *than* life in the city”

“Swimming in the sea is considerably more dangerous *than* swimming in a pool”

(Please note: You can't say “*quite* faster than...”, but you can say “*quite a lot* faster than...” and “*quite a bit* faster than...”)

If the contrast is less, you could say:

“Studying with others is a bit more enjoyable *than* studying on your own”

“Travelling by coach is slightly more expensive *than* travelling by train”

“Newspapers are relatively more informative *than* magazines”

You can also use “*generally*”. For example:

“Photos of people are generally a bit more interesting to look at *than* photos of scenery”

If you have already used “*more*” when making a comparison, then the next time you can use “*less*”, in order to increase the variety of your language. For example:

“Watching a concert at home *is a lot less* fun *than* going to one live”

“Life in the countryside *is generally less* stressful *than* life in the city”

You can also use, “*not as...as...*”. For example:

“Watching a concert at home isn't as fun as watching it on TV”

“Mobile phones are generally not as expensive as they used to be”

### **Comparing the past and present:**

You can use a variety of methods, such as:

Method 1:

“Cities *are a lot more* congested *than they used to be*”

“The air quality in my hometown *isn't as good as it used to be*”

“Life *is* more stressful *than it used to be*”

Method 2:

“Cities *have become a lot more* congested”

“The air quality in most cities *has got quite a lot* worse”

“The quality of films in my country *has improved* quite a bit.”

Method 3:

“Most cities now are extremely congested, whereas in the past, there didn't use to be that much traffic on the roads.”

“In the past, there used to be only a limited variety of restaurants, whereas nowadays, there's a much wider range of places to eat at.”

“In the past, people used to spend a lot of their free time watching television, whereas nowadays, they're probably spending more time on the Internet.”

### **Using “other”:**

Many students just say, “.....*than other*...” For example,

“The service at Starbucks is better *than other* cafes”

But you could express yourself better by saying:

“.....than most other cafes”

“.....than many other cafes”

“.....than a lot of other cafes”

“.....than the majority of other cafes I've been to”