IELTS Speaking Part 2: describe a place

Describe a river, lake or sea which you like.
You should say

      what the river, lake or sea is called
      where it is
      what the land near it is like

and explain why you like this river, lake or sea.

Here's my example description from the video lesson. It took me exactly 2 minutes, and I simply followed the points above. I've highlighted the good language that I think an examiner would notice.

I'm going to describe the best known river in England, the river Thames.

The river Thames is in the south of England, and it's famous because *it flows right through* the centre of London. *It goes winding through* all of the most *iconic, famous tourist attractions and landmarks* of the city. For example, it goes past the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament, with Big Ben, and it goes under Tower Bridge, probably the most famous bridge in London.

So the land around this river, or on either side of this river is *hectic, thriving, city-centre London*. It's right *in the heart of the city*, and of course it's *a cosmopolitan mix of cultures, business, tourism* all around. It's where everyone goes to do sightseeing in the centre of the capital, and it's got a lot of the *history and heritage* of London based around that area, *in close proximity* to the river itself.

The reason I like this river, the river Thames, is because it's such *an iconic location*. It's a great… it's *a backdrop to these great landmarks* of the city: the historic buildings and famous tourist sites in the city. And I've got *good memories of being there* on a New Year's Eve one year recently. In London, New Year's Eve *celebrations are all focused on* the river, with the river and some of the landmarks as *the backdrop to a big fireworks show*. And so *the river's all lit up*, and there's a *spectacular fireworks display put on*, and lots of tourists and local people all watch it there together. That was really *an unforgettable experience*, and *the river was central to it*.

Notice that here is a lot of 'content', but I don't worry about linking. Your focus should be on the task: describing the place using good ideas and vocabulary. Examiners are not impressed by memorised linking phrases.

With regard to grammar, I'm not trying to use any 'special' structures. My focus is on answering the question. But of course we should try to avoid making grammar mistakes!

Notice also that I tell a story in the last paragraph. This helps me to keep speaking for the full 2 minutes.

Here's the second question from the video lesson:

Describe a restaurant that you enjoyed going to.
You should say

> **where the restaurant was**
> **why you chose this restaurant**
> **what type of food you ate**

and explain why you enjoyed eating in this restaurant.

Here's my example description from the video lesson. Again, it took me exactly 2 minutes, and I followed the points above. I've highlighted the language that I think an examiner would like.

I'm going to describe a restaurant that I went to quite recently for the birthday party of a friend of mine.

The restaurant that we went to was right **in the heart of London, overlooking the river** Thames. It was quite near to Tower Bridge, the famous bridge in London, and we had a great view from our **vantage point** above the river; we had a great view of all the famous London **landmarks** in that area.

My friend chose the restaurant because of this location, because of the **great backdrop**; out of the window of the restaurant we could see all of these **iconic places** in London, and he thought it would be a good place to have a celebration, a place that would be **memorable for everybody**. But also, we'd heard that the food in this restaurant was **delicious**, and that the staff were **warm and welcoming**, and the service and the quality was all round really good.

The type of food that we ate there, well, it was **a fusion restaurant I think they called it**, which meant that there was **a variety of food choices** from all over the world. There were Mexican food choices, Mediterranean, Persian, but also hamburgers and pizzas, that kind of thing. I think I actually had a pizza **with various toppings on it** myself, and it was really nice - it was a fantastic meal.

The reason I enjoyed eating in this restaurant: Firstly, it was **a great chance to get together with** friends and **chat about what we'd been up to**, and **catch up** with some of my good friends. But also, the restaurant itself really did **make the night special**. The service was fantastic, the waiters and the staff really **made us feel at home**, they were **thoughtful and attentive to all of our needs**, and we were really surprised at the end when they **brought us a cake to celebrate** my friend's birthday.

Note:
The description above is not true. I invented it to show that we can use our 'theme' ideas and even adapt ideas that we have prepared for a different question.

Notice also that I'm speaking naturally, so it's often difficult to tell when my sentences begin or end because the ideas flow and merge together. This is normal in spontaneous, spoken language.