* [IELTS Speaking Part 3: 'history' topic](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/11/ielts-speaking-part-3-history-topic.html)
* Questions in part 3 of the speaking test follow on from the topic you were given in part 2. So, after last week's [historic event](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/11/ielts-speaking-part-2-event-in-history.html" \t "_self) question, you might be asked some further questions about history and events. For example:
* 1. What do you think we can learn by studying events of the past?
* I think we can learn a lot by studying history. Just as individual people learn from their mistakes,
* societies can learn from the mistakes made by previous governments or leaders.
* For example, from what I've read in the newspapers, many economists are looking back to the time of the Great Depression, around 80 years ago, in order to understand the financial crisis that is currently affecting many countries around the world.
* Even if we don't always learn from mistakes,
* I think it's fascinating to study history because it gives us an insight into who we are and where we come from.
* 2. What important events do you think might take place in the future?
* It's really difficult to predict what will happen in the future; most of the big, historic events of the past would have been impossible to foresee. For example, I don't think that anyone living 100 years ago could have imagined that people would one day walk on the moon! If I had to guess what might happen in the future, I'd like to think that scientists will invent cures for diseases like cancer, and we'll all live longer.
* [IELTS Speaking Part 3: 'politeness' topic](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/07/ielts-speaking-part-3-politeness-topic.html)
* Two weeks ago I showed you a part 2 question about [a situation in which you were polite](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-speaking-part-2-choose-your-topic-quickly.html" \t "_self). Let's have a look at some related questions for part 3 of the test:
* In your country’s culture, how do you show that you are being polite?
* We really value politeness and good manners in the UK, and there are many types of polite behaviour. One of the first things we learn as children is to say "please" and "thank you". As adults, I think we are careful not to be too direct in the language we use. For example, we would never say "Bring me the bill" in a restaurant because this kind of direct instruction would sound rude. It would be much more polite to say "Could we have the bill, please?".
* Are we less polite with members of our families than with people we don’t know?
* I suppose it's normal to be a bit more relaxed about politeness with family members. Most people tend to speak in a more informal way at home; in the UK, we still say "please" and "thanks", but it's fine to use colloquial language and things like nicknames that you would never use with someone you didn't know.
* [**IELTS Speaking Part 3: common question types**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-speaking-part-3-common-question-types.html)
* Here are 3 common question types that the examiner could ask you:
* Compare and contrast.
* Give an opinion.
* Imagine.
* If the topic is 'cities', the examiner could ask:
* How is life different in cities compared to rural areas?
* How do you think life in big cities could be made easier?
* What do you think cities will be like in 50 years time?
* In my answers below I've underlined a few 'markers' that show comparisons, opinions and future predictions.
* Firstly, the cost of living in cities is much higher. Housing is much moreexpensive in cities compared to rural areas; everything costs more. I think life in cities is more difficult. There are more people, so there's more competition for jobs. Life is a lot slower in rural areas, everyone knows each other and there's a sense of community. I don't think rural areas experience the social problems that you find in cities, like crime and homelessness.
* In my opinion cities need to be well-planned. Good public transport can definitely make life easier because there are so many people and it can be really stressful just to move around. Public areas like parks are alsoimportant because people need space to relax, and I think cities should be made into healthier places to live and work.
* I imagine cities will be less polluted because we'll have electric cars and better public transport. More people might work from home so maybe cities won't be so busy. But I think there will probably still be problems because more and more people are migrating to cities. SoI'm not so optimistic about issues like crime, homelessness and unemployment.
* [**IELTS Speaking part 3: rivers, lakes, sea**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-speaking-part-3-rivers-lakes-sea.html)
* ***1. What do you think are the functions of rivers nowadays?***
* Rivers have various functions. In the UK, they were probably more important in the past because they were used for the transportation of goods, but I suppose this is still the case in many parts of the world. Rivers can be used as a source of renewable energy in the production of hydro-electric power, and they are also a source of fresh water for drinking and irrigation. Leisure activities are another function: fishing, canoeing, swimming, bathing... I'm sure there are many other things I haven't thought of.
* ***2. What do you think of boats and ships as forms of transportation?***
* I'm not really a fan of boats and ships. If I'm going abroad, I like to get to my destination quickly, so I prefer travelling by plane. Of course, ships are vital for the transportation of oil and other heavy cargo.
* ***3. Why do some people like to live near rivers, lakes or the sea?***
* Well, the view is probably a major factor; most people like to look out to sea, or across a river or lake. I'd much prefer to look out of my window onto a natural landscape than an apartment building in a city. Then there's the lifestyle: if you live by the sea, for example, you can lie on the beach, go for a swim, or do water sports like surfing or waterskiing. I definitely wouldn't mind living near a beach at some point in my life!
* **Note:**  
  These answers are less formal than the essays I write for the writing test, and I say things like "probably" or "I suppose" when I'm not sure about the facts.
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* [IELTS Speaking Part 1: short, simple answers](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/03/ielts-speaking-part-1-short-simple-answers.html)
* [**IELTS Speaking Part 3: competitions**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-speaking-part-3-competitions.html)
* The following questions come from Cambridge IELTS 7. I've underlined some of the good words and phrases in my answers.
* ***1. Why do you think some school teachers use competitions as class activities?***
* I think teachers use competitions to motivate the children in their classes. I'm sure that teachers try all kinds of activities to engage their pupils, and competitions might be one of the best ways to keep children interested or get them excited. Children love winning things.
* ***2. Is it a good thing to give prizes to children who do well at school? Why?***
* It might be a good idea to encourage children to do well in games or sports, but I don't think we should give children prizes for their academic work. Children need to learn that the reason for studying is to learn useful things that will help them in their lives. I don't like the idea of children thinking that they will only work hard if there is a prize.
* ***3. Would you say that schools for young children have become more or less competitive since you were that age? Why?***
* I'd say that they have become more competitive since I was young. Children now have to take exams from a much younger age, so I think there is more of a focus on doing well in tests. Parents also seem to be getting more competitive; I think that many parents push their children to do extra homework rather than lettingthem play with friends.