

**November 2022**

Thank you so much for attending the session today! It was great to see you and I think we achieved such a lot in 60 minutes!

Please let me know if there's anything I missed,  
 Best wishes  
 Fiona

**Here's the replay (the link will start at about 8 minutes into the lesson):**  
<https://youtu.be/TLj8b3zW48w?t=489>

We mainly talked about

- overwhelm
- Task 2 level of formality (what examiners think)
- Conclusions in the Speaking Test
- How Speaking helps Listening
- Cambridge Practice Tests - how realistic are they?
- Prepositions

**Q1: How do I cope with so much information? (Thank you Sally)**

Think about what your goal is:

| Goal | Feeling        | Members Academy | Aim in life | <a href="#">Taxonomy of Learning</a> |
|------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6ish | I'm interested | Watch the video | Survival    | Remember. Understand.                |
| 7ish | I'm committed  | Do the practice | Work/Study  | Analyze. Apply.                      |
| 8ish | I'm obsessed   | Do the extras   | Expert      | Evaluate. Create.                    |

You don't need to do all the extra links that I include in the Members Academy.

As long as you're clicking on links that could help develop your English, being distracted by them is not such a bad thing!

**Q2: Does it matter if I don't have time for a conclusion in the Speaking Test?**

You don't need a conclusion. Ignore the bullet points.

BUT try to construct a story, rather than a description. Description leads to repetition.

You can use your FLIP tapescript to analyse what you said. Here's the [video and an example](#).

**Q3: Is the level of difficulty in the real Reading test the same as the Cambridge practice tests?**

Yes, it is a basic principle of good test-writing that every test is 'fair, valid and reliable'.

A test with different levels of difficulty would be unfair, invalid and not a reliable indicator of a person's ability.

BUT! Texts may be easier or more difficult depending on your background knowledge of the topic. That's why it's important to read widely and make the most of the Vocabulary course, which covers the key topics you can expect in the test.

**Q5 Listening tips (thank you Stefano and Anh for your questions and answers)**

Stefano pointed out that Listening is NOT a 'passive' process - it's very active, and you have to go back to the tapescript to look for all kinds of clues and signals, including vocabulary, grammar and features of connected speech.

Anh had some tips on what to do with the tapescript:

- Listen and repeat (using tapescript) Sentence by sentence.
- Listen and explain in your own words (listen only, explain then check)
- Listen and read

And Isabel suggested that sometimes it's better to not rely on the tapescript e.g.

- Try NOT to read the script the first few times so you can identify the speakers and the functions
- Use the script to examine the distractors afterwards

We also discussed how closely connected Listening and Speaking are because of the sound-spelling problems that English causes. If you practise getting the sounds right, you'll be more likely to hear them and spell them correctly.

## Q6: Grammar: TO or OF?

[I made a Takeaway about this!](#)

- 'There are many disadvantages **TO** this situation'.
- 'There are many disadvantages **OF** this situation'.

## Q7: How formal is formal in Task 2?

Great question from Anh - we could maybe explore this more next time when I've had a good look at the examples.

***How can self-study students like me know whether a word or a phrase is formal enough for writing?***

*On the Internet, especially some IELTS 'experts' or IELTS 'former examiners' can have a conservative perspective. They absolutely avoid **phrasal verbs and idioms** (such as "deal with / run out / place a heavy burden on / take one's toll on sth / play an integral role in / ...") in IELTS writing, arguing that this usage can be INFORMAL (fine for band 8.0 in LR and/or CC but not in band 9).*

All of those examples you give above are perfectly acceptable and would not be considered too informal.

Let's explore this more next time.