

ACADEMIC ENGLISH HELP. IELTS SPEAKING EXAM. BAND 9. MADINA. TRANSCRIPT

Madina: My first name is Madina, and my surname is Sayadova. Please call me Madina.

Adrian: Okay, Madina. For Part One, I will ask you a couple of questions to get to know you better and some questions on a general topic. Where do you live?

Madina: I live in the capital city of Azerbaijan, which is Baku, in the suburbs, in a three-bedroom house with my family.

For this first icebreaker question, Madina does a good job letting the examiner know the country where she lives and then the city, using an adjective clause: "which is Baku." It's these kinds of adjective clauses and grammatical range that will help you reach that Band 9 score.

Adrian: Do you have any hobbies?

Madina: Yes, I have several. I like collecting seashells from the places that I have visited, such as the Black Sea or Caspian Sea. Also, I love to dance. I do jazz ballet at least twice a week.

Madina answers the question about her hobbies well. She gives an original answer, letting the examiner know that she collects seashells and providing specific details, like collecting seashells from the shores of the Caspian or Black Sea. It's this kind of natural, detailed language that gets Band 9 results.

Adrian: Let's talk about helping people. When do you ask a person for help?

Madina: I believe I ask for assistance when I am in a difficult situation or I'm not able to complete tasks on my own. Just the other day, I asked my colleague to help me with a PowerPoint presentation because I was not able to convey some graphics.

For the first question of Part One, "When do you ask for help?" Madina reaches the Band 9 level because she uses the question and paraphrases the topic word help as assistance. She states, "I usually ask for assistance," then explains her answer: when she is not able to complete tasks on her own. Finally, she includes an example, saying she asked her friend to help with a PowerPoint presentation. This answer-explanation-example strategy is excellent for those high Band scores.

Adrian: How often do you help another person?

Madina: It's tough to say, but I think I give assistance at least once per day, like helping with chores such as dishes or giving life advice to my friends.

Madina answers this question well, sounding natural. She starts by saying, "That's a tough question," and then uses some quantitative language for clarity, saying she assists someone at least once a day, such as with chores or doing the dishes.

Adrian: Where are good places for you to seek help?

Madina: I believe it depends on the situation. For relationship advice, I go to my family and friends, usually to my mom or my good friend Leila. For work, I look towards my colleagues, and generally, a good place is searching online. There is plenty of information on YouTube and blogs.

For this question, Madina gets a Band 9 because she's able to produce multiple top-level responses. She states that for relationship advice, she looks toward family, noting the use of idiomatic language, "looking toward family." It's this kind of subtle, natural use of idioms that helps to improve lexical resource marks. Then, she also talks about professional advice and getting help from the internet.

Adrian: Why is it important to help people?

Madina: I think it's crucial for the happiness and success of humans because it is what makes us special as a species. I mean, when we help each other, we can avoid having bigger problems and also expect that people will help us in the future.

Madina uses nice real conditional language in this response to show that she has mastered not only vocabulary but also grammar, stating that it is crucial to help others. She then creates a real condition: "When we help others, we can expect help in return."

Adrian: Have the ways people help each other changed compared to previous generations?

Madina: Yes, I think in some ways it has. Nowadays, people are able to assist each other remotely with the help of technology. Like the other day, I was lost. I called my friend, and she was able to help me using the video chat function on my phone. Also, I think some societies have become less willing to give assistance, while others are more willing to help.

Again, this is a band 9-level response because Medina clearly is able to not only grasp but reflect the grammar of the question. The question is in present perfect: "Has giving help changed?" Immediately, she says, "Yes, I think it has," and then she cleverly adds that, with technology, we have been able to give assistance remotely. It's this kind of acknowledgment and reflection of the grammar of questions that is critical to getting those perfect band 9 scores.

Adrian: If you could help one part of society, what would it be?

Madina: It's tough to say because there are so many people that need help in the world. But if I had to choose, I would give food and medical aid to the people who are victims of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because they have gone through war and so much suffering and difficulty.

Again, for this conditional, Medina reflects the grammar of the question and gives a genuine and original response. She says, "If I had to choose," and even starts with a very natural leading expression, "That's a tough question because there are so many ways in which society needs help." It's this kind of full answer with a beginning, middle, and end that is required to get those high band scores. Make sure not to over-speak and be sure to finish your answers.

Adrian: Talk about a person you think is usually positive. Your one-minute preparation time begins now.

Talk about a person you think is usually positive.

Who is this person?

What do they look like?

Why do you think they are so optimistic?

What can you learn from this person, and how will this help you?

Madina: Well, one of the most positive people I've met is my good friend Leila. We are friends from middle school, and I'm not sure if I've ever seen her sad, let alone depressed. She's always wearing a smile and is really optimistic about life.

Leila is about my height, 166 centimetres. She has long, dark, wavy hair, dark eyes, and is quite fit. I think the reason why Leila is such an optimist is because she was born this way and because of her upbringing. She was raised with great family ideals and great parenting. I've met her parents on several occasions, and they are also very cheerful people. Whenever they do not see eye to eye, they don't fight about it. Instead, they discuss the problem and come to a resolution. Clearly, these good communication skills and sensibility rubbed off on Leila as well.

Since Leila is so positive, she has a big social circle, including a lot of Instagram followers. She always has people to boost her confidence. In fact, Leila has finished her master's in sociology, and now she works as a life coach, helping others find their direction in life. I think the best lesson to learn from Leila is that staying positive helps to have really good relationships and also to reach your goals. In order to do this, it's better to talk about problems rather than fight about them.

This is an excellent example of a band 9 cue card response. When talking about a person, Medina cleverly first describes the appearance of her friend Leila as being approximately her height, 166 centimetres, with dark, wavy hair. This enables the examiner to visualize this unknown person. Then, she gives a bit of background about Leila's upbringing, using complex grammar and correlative conjunctions like "both her character and her upbringing contribute to her positive behaviour."

Notice her advanced vocabulary and the use of several idioms throughout the response, such as "seeing eye to eye" and "rubbing off on others." Can you count how many idioms she uses in this response?

Of course, Medina backs up her friend's personality with actions, stating that she gets a confidence boost from her friends on Instagram and that she has completed her master's. When talking about a person, it's this structure of appearance, personality, and actions that gets those high band scores, while making sure to answer all the questions on the cue card with good grammar and advanced vocabulary. Practice this for your next IELTS exam.

VOCABULARY

assist (verb) - to help

boost her confidence (phrase) - to increase self-esteem

catch up (phrasal verb) - to learn about past events

chore (noun) - regular housework

commerce can boom (phrase) - business is increasing rapidly

crucial (adjective) - very important

feel better for it (phrase) - to feel good in response to doing some action

hit the books (idiom) - to study hard

keeping hope alive (phrase) - to stay hopeful or optimistic

positive outlook (noun phrase) - an optimistic view of the future

rubbed off on (phrasal verb) - to influence another person

see eye-to-eye (phrase) - to agree

sociology (noun) - the study of society

wearing a smile (phrase) - to smile