

Preparing for the Topic discussion – ISE IV

Aims:

- ▶ To review the format of the task
- ▶ To match functions and example sentences
- ▶ To prepare for the discussion of your presentation

Activity 1: Knowing the Topic discussion

What do you know about the Topic discussion?

Answer the following questions about the Topic discussion:

1. Who is responsible for leading the discussion – the examiner or you?
2. Does the examiner give opinions or ideas?
3. How long does the task last for?
4. What kind of language do you need to use in this task?

Activity 2: Watching a Formal topic presentation and Topic discussion

Recognising key points for discussion

- a) You are going to watch an ISE IV presentation entitled 'Nostalgia for Communism in Germany'. Before you watch, think about the topic. What do you expect the candidate to talk about?
- b) Watch Leda's presentation: trinitycollege.com/ISE-IV-interview

As you watch, make some brief notes about points you think the examiner could ask her about in the Topic discussion.

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶

c) Now watch the Topic discussion (from 6.18 mins). Did the examiner pick up on the same points as you?

d) If you were the examiner, what questions would you have asked Leda? Write your questions below:

Activity 3: Thinking about the examiner's questions

What is the purpose of the examiner's questions and statements?

Examiners are trying to encourage the candidate to use language of the level, and each comment they make or question they ask is usually focused on eliciting one of the following functions: **asserting, denying, contradicting, affirming, softening and downplaying.**

After listening to a topic presentation on the implications of bilingual education in Spain, the examiner asks the candidate the following questions or makes the following statements. What function is the examiner trying to get the candidate to demonstrate in their answer? Match a function to the question/statement. Some questions and statements could elicit more than one function.

1. **You mentioned** the fear of loss of identity. **What makes you think that's** an issue for people?
2. **Are you saying that** Spanish children who have studied subjects in English are at a disadvantage when they go to university?
3. **So, what you're saying is** 'the laws have gone too far'?
4. **Yes, but you're sort of admitting to the fact that** the government has done research and sees English as a priority – **surely they are justified?**
5. **It sounds as if you're saying that** this system should be amended?
6. **There are people who think you are being** unnecessarily pessimistic.

What questions might the examiner ask about your topic?

Think about the areas of your topic the examiner might pick up on. What questions might they ask and how will you answer them? Use the stems in **bold** in the exercise above to make examiner questions about your topic. Then write your answer. Remember to demonstrate a function in your answer and use language of the level.

Examiner question : _____ ?

Your answer: _____

Examiner question : _____ ?

Your answer: _____

Examiner question : _____ ?

Your answer: _____

Examiner question : _____ ?

Your answer: _____

Preparing for the Topic discussion – ISE IV Answers

Activity 1

1. The discussion is led by you, the candidate – it's important that you initiate and encourage the examiner to comment and give their opinion.
2. Yes, they do – they will challenge your opinions and views. This is not personal, it's so you have the chance to use the functions of the grade.
3. Up to 5 minutes.
4. Refer to the communicative skills, language functions and phonology listed in the ISE IV Exam Information booklet.

Activity 2

- a) The candidate might talk about why some Germans feel sentimental about aspects of the Communist regime of the past in their country.
- b) Leda talks about how some things Germans enjoyed during communism disappeared, people felt frustrated with the West's patronising attitude, they had happy memories of their daily routine and objects associated with that time, it may be a response to capitalism and consumerism, it could be seeing it through rose-tinted glasses and ignoring the oppressive side.
- c) The examiner asked Leda how she felt about it personally, she asked her to expand on her point about 'the patronising attitude' of the West and she asked about whether enough people feel strong enough that they want to go back to that time.

Activity 3

(suggested answers, depending on response)

1. Affirming
2. Softening and downplaying
3. Softening and downplaying, contradicting
4. Contradicting, asserting, denying
5. Softening and downplaying
6. Asserting