

Hello Ekaterina,

In today's English lesson we practised the following:

Reading:

IELTS / ΟΓΘ exam style reading exercise. You read (firstly to yourself for practise, and then aloud to me) a short text of approximately 140 words. I listened carefully to your pronunciation and fluency, and we compared your delivery today against our previous observations:

Fluency:

- *read aloud the whole word, don't omit the ending (e.g. 'small-est', 'low-est', 'argue-s', 'issue-s).*
- *don't omit articles ('a', 'an' and 'the') before nouns (e.g. 'the sun', 'the sky').*
- *make a clear distinction between certain words (e.g. is ^ the).*
- *match the 'person' with the correct verb conjugation (e.g. 'she eats' not 'she eat').*
- *avoid using a rising tone at the end of a sentence, otherwise it sounds like a question.*

Pronunciation:

- *'v' sound (e.g. 'covers').*
- *'s' sound following 'th' (e.g. 'this' not 'thith').*
- *'son' and 'sun' (uh).*
- *'her' and 'were' (er).*
- *the definite article strong and weak forms (e.g. 'th-uh dog' vs. 'th-ee elephant').*
- *'low', 'both' (oh) compared to 'now' (ow).*
- *'n' sound (e.g. 'thin') and 'ng' sound (e.g. 'thing').*

Speaking:

IELTS / ΟΓΘ exam style question and answer exercise. I asked six questions, and for each response you aimed to give succinct, concise answers within the stipulated response time whilst trying out different response structures (see below), vocabulary and being mindful of your pronunciation and fluency.

We also diverged from the rules and agenda from time-to-time to explore some of your answers in much more depth and to practice 'ad-hoc' conversational skills.

Response structure examples:

- *Time-fillers:*
 - *That's a great question ... / Let me think about this ...*
- *Short answer, agreement / disagreement, or a generic expression:*
 - *Yes, I do ... / Definitely not ... / Without doubt ... / Almost every day ... / Well ...*
- *Supporting evidence / information / facts:*
 - *You can see people doing ... / My house is far away ...*

- Reasoning / Cause and effect / Opinion:
 - I think that ... / It seems to me that ...
- Conclusion / Justification
 - Therefore ... / Thus ... / Evidently ... / On the whole ... /

Listening:

I read aloud the following description of a fictional character. You listened carefully, made notes, and accurately recounted most of the significant detail.

Last week when I was on holiday in Italy, I met a lady called Stephanie. She didn't tell me her age but from the colour of her hair and the wrinkles on her face, I guessed that she was around 60 years old. She told me that she was interested in history, and she liked 'digging up the past'. This made sense because her clothes were dusty, her bare knees were covered in a thin layer of mud and all of her skin was tanned from working outside in the sun. Stephanie spoke English very well, but her native country was Germany. She was born in Munich in the south of the country and had a younger brother and an older sister. We chatted for about twenty minutes. I told her I was also interested in archaeology, and she wrote her website on a serviette. I promised her I would look it up and keep in touch.

You were also able to summarise the information from your notes using the technique: *context - main point - consequence*.

Grammar:

We studied the meaning and application of 'inversion' and learnt of the following two grammatical constructs:

- When the verb comes before the subject. For example: in the hallway *stood Ekaterina*.
- When the auxiliary comes before the subject. For example: Never *had she seen* the moon so bright.

Creative Writing:

We finished today by starting to read a brief extract from 'Flowers for Algernon' by Daniel Keyes taken early in the narrative and you already noted that the author was deliberately writing the character's diary exactly as the character would have written it (i.e., with phonetic spelling and mostly basic, repetitive, high-frequency words) to portray the character's literary competence at that particular stage of the story.

Vocabulary and Idioms:

Some examples that you heard me say in today's lesson, and that you noted, were:

- going through the motions
- gnawing at your mind
- to plant the seed
- gregarious
- earworm

Our Speaking Objectives:

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Fluency and Coherence

Lexical Resource

Pronunciation