

We Love IELTS

All you need for IELTS Success podcast

Series 2: Episode 3: Commonly confused words in IELTS

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LE: Hi, and welcome to the We Love IELTS podcast. I'm Liz and each episode, I'll be joined by experts from the world of IELTS to help you on your IELTS journey. Remember, if you like this podcast, you can subscribe on whichever channel you're listening to us on. And if there's a topic you'd like us to cover in a forthcoming episode, do get in touch with us on social.

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So far in this series, we've looked at how to reduce anxiety around the test, and also common mistakes around adjectives. So Emma and Liz, what will you be discussing today?

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Emma: Hi, everybody it's Emma Cosgrave and Liz Marqueiro with you again today talking about ways that you can do really well in your IELTS exam.

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So today, we're going to be looking at commonly confused words. So words that we have seen and heard students use incorrectly both in their test and in the classroom. So we're going to start today with some example sentences. And then we're going to have a look and see what's wrong with them. Okay, so Liz, when you're ready,

01:14

Liz: Okay. Yesterday, I went on an amazing travel to an island.

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Emma: Okay, so great. I'm glad to hear you went to an island, but a travel? Now travel is a verb, and you're trying to use it here as a noun. So a better word would be, I went on an amazing **trip** to an island. Because that would mean that would cover the journey, and the visit, and everything. Or I travelled to an amazing island and when I was there I **visited** the fantastic rainforest reserve or something like that.



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Liz: Okay, so the travel is a verb, and it's only used to talk about very general things. And when we're talking about a specific place we went to we use different words like trip and journey, is that correct?

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Emma: That's right. But be careful with the trip and journey, because a journey is talking only about the act of getting from A to B. So if you want to talk about the journey to the island, so the boat ride, I guess it would have been, then you can say, Oh, it was a, it was such an amazing journey we saw so much on the way to the island. Before we even arrived at the island we had seen dolphins and whales and amazing ships in the ocean, we saw a super yacht - that would be part of the journey of getting from one place to the other.

02:57

Liz: So what if I'm talking about the going somewhere? The being there, like so the going to the island? The being on the boat, getting to the island, having a look all around the island and seeing what there was and then coming back? What's that, then?

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Emma: That's a trip.

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Liz: Okay

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Emma: And if you do it in one day like that, you can even call it a day trip. So this is something that we often hear students getting confused with.

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Liz: Yeah, they're very common mistakes.

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Emma: Very common mistakes.

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Emma: Another thing that happens is we have false friends.

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Liz: Yes, my students always used to get false friends mixed up. Now false friends tend to happen if their mostly in Latin languages, Latin based languages. So they happen, for example, my students always used to say to me, I'm a very sensitive person, I know right from wrong, I always do the right thing. And I'd get really confused because I'm like, but that doesn't mean sensitive. Sensitive means something completely different.



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Emma: What word were they trying to use?

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Liz: So what they were trying to say is, I'm a very sensible person, I always know right from wrong, I always make the right decisions, I'm sensible. Sensible, you're using your mind or your brain. Sensitive is somebody who feels things with their heart quite a lot.

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Emma: Okay, so it would depend on the language that you speak

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Liz: Yes.

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Emma: As to what these false friends would be.

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Liz: Yeah.

04:45

Emma: So it's probably worth doing some research and finding out what the false friends are for your own language. I remember when I was working in Japan, that many of my students would get bread, they would not know the word for bread, but they would say pan because in Japanese, often people will call certain kinds of bread pan and assume that because it's a non-Japanese word that is English. In fact, it came from the Portuguese who brought bread, a certain kind of baking. There was also another false friend was a bankour, which instead of a swing when I was working in Japan, which again, I believe came from Portuguese, but I might be wrong.

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Liz: No that does come from Portuguese.

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Emma: So it's worth finding out what the false friends are for your own language, because there will be some, and make sure that you don't make those mistakes.

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Liz: Moving away from false friends now there are other words that people, IELTS test takers, get quite confused. And these words are related to habits, customs and practices. So in the IELTS test, if you are asked to write about or speak about habits, customs and practices, it's really important that you know the differences between these words.



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Emma: Okay, so a habit is something that somebody does regularly in a particular way as part of their everyday life. It's often something you do without thinking about it. So something like people's eating habits have changed. Families no longer eat meals together every day.

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Liz: Okay, so a bit like brushing your teeth. That's a habit, right?

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Emma: That's a habit, exactly, yes. Or separating rubbish out for recycling. We do it so often, it's now become a habit.

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Liz: Okay, or scrolling through your phone while you're having lunch has become a bad habit.

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Emma: Yes, I have that bad habit as well,

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Liz: Me too. What about custom though? So what's the difference between a habit and a custom?

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Emma: Okay, so a custom is something that people in a particular country, or people from a particular religion or ethnic group, do because it's been part of their cultural way of life for many years.

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Liz: Okay.

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Emma: So you could say something like, oh, at university, I studied the culture and customs of Spain, as part of my Spanish degree, for example. Or the custom of decorating eggs at Easter goes back an awfully long way.

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Liz: Okay. And so for example, the custom of giving money at New Year is a Chinese custom. Is that correct?

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Emma: That's a Chinese custom. Yes. Not only in China.

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So that's, so that's the difference between a customer and a habit. Then we've got practice.

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Liz: So what's that then?

08:00

Emma: So a practice is a method of doing something which is usually used, especially in a particular country or industry. In this sense, practice is a countable noun. So, an example might be it is common practice to tip your hairdresser in the United States, or the practice of working from home is very common in 2020. Liz have you got any more examples there?

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Liz: Yeah, I've got a plural example. So modern day farmers are returning to traditional agricultural practices.

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Emma: Please note the spelling is with a 'c'.

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Liz: Yes, because it's a noun.

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Emma: Okay, so we've been talking about habits, customs and practices. So what we'd like to do now is just go through a couple of multiple choice questions, actually, and see if we can work out what the answer should be from what we've been talking about. So Liz, can you choose the correct word in this sentence for me? As a tourist, you should show respect for local customs or habits. Which one?

09:17

Liz: Okay, that's a good question. So if I'm a tourist and I'm traveling to other places, and I need to show respect for something, I'm talking about showing respect for people's traditions, maybe their way of life, maybe things that they do like practices that they have, so I would use the word customs there, respect, local customs, am I right?

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Emma: Yes, excellent. Okay, how about this one? It is now a common practice or custom to allow calculators in maths lessons.

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Liz: Okay, now, all the context here is like learning maths at school. So we're not actually talking about somebody's traditional way of life, we're talking about a type of industry. So I would go with practice. So it's now a common practice to allow calculators in maths lessons.

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Emma: Exactly. So it's a method of doing something, isn't it?



Liz: Yes. Okay. I've got one for you Emma

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Emma: Okay.

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Liz: So parents need more control over their children's viewing habits, or practice.

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Emma: Okay, so parents need more control over their children's viewing habits, I would say, because this is something that we do regularly and as part of our everyday life. So viewing habits, that means what they're watching on TV, that's something they're going to be doing often and probably without thinking about it.

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Liz: Very good.

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Emma: Am I right?

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Liz: Yes, absolutely. Good. Do we have any more?

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Emma: I've got one more for you, if you'll do it?

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Liz: Okay.

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Emma: It is sometimes difficult to keep local habits or customs alive in a global age.

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Liz: That's a tricky one. So local, global. Again, I don't think we're talking about individual people and what they do in their day to day lives. I think we're talking about things that happen in a particular country, and the things that they do to celebrate certain things. So I think its customs, it's sometimes difficult to keep local customs alive in a global age.

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Emma: Excellent, perfect.



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Emma: Okay, so we hope that you have enjoyed today's podcast. Don't forget to look out for those false friends. They're going to be very particular to whatever other languages you speak. So it's impossible for us to give you all of the false phones because we don't know what languages you're speaking.

12:06

Liz: That's right. Look out for those commonly confused words that we've touched on here.

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Emma: So today, a lot of our examples came from the IELTS Common Mistakes at bands 6.0 to 7.0 book. So, if you want to have more of the same, then you can always find that in the book. We'll see you soon. Bye.

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Liz: Bye

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LE: That's great. Thank you both.

12:27

You can find a link to the book that Emma references, IELTS Common Mistakes. in the show notes for the episode. And that's it for today. Thank you to Emma and Liz for their help and advice and thank you to everyone who listened to the podcast.

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If you like this podcast, don't forget to subscribe to make sure you never miss another episode. And more information about preparing for IELTS can be found on our website weloveielts.org. You can also find us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube where we'll be sharing even more useful information and advice.

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Whatever you have planned for the week ahead, we hope it's a good one. Bye

