

## Sample Topic One

### Useful Vocabulary

Useful vocabulary and expressions

turning point

crucial (adj.)

decisive (adj.)

important (adj.)

graduation (n.)

marriage (n.)

marry (v.)

getting married

divorce (n.)

divorce (v.)

birth (n.)

promotion (n.)

death (n.)

die (v.)

give up (n.)

I guess my second year at high school was a crucial year for me.

1999 was a turning point in my life.

2001 marked the beginning of my professional career.

I was hired by a large company.

I was accepted in university for a course in metallurgy.

I got married in the summer and I moved to Tehran with my wife in September.

I was promoted to sales manager in late November that year.

In May, my first child was born and we named her Anahita.

2008 was a great year for me because I gave up smoking and started a new job.

My father-in-law passed away in the winter and left us a sizable fortune!

My father was diagnosed with cancer and we had to move into my parents' house to look after him.

I think the events of this year made me stronger emotionally.

At the end of that year, I was on the road to success in my career.

The financial accomplishments I had in 1998 helped me develop a better life for my family.

### Talk about an important year in your life.

You should say:

how old you were

what important things you remember from that year

where these things happened

and say why you think that year was important.

## Sample Topic Two

### Useful Vocabulary

ancient (adj.)

historical (adj.)

pre-historic (adj.)

antique (adj.)

palace (n.)

castle (n.)

fort (n.)

amazing (adj.)

breath-taking (adj.)

impressive (adj.)

tomb (n.)

burial place

ruins (n.)

statue (n.)

inscription (n.)

monument (n.)

west/east/south/north of Iran

western/eastern/southern/northern parts of Iran

It is located in the western province of Ilam.

It is situated 20 kilometres to the west of Mashad, a major city in the northeast of Iran.

It is in Naghshe Jahan square in the city of Isfahan.

Its historical value is undeniable.

Pasargad is definitely one of the most interesting historical sites in the region.

Persepolis is a symbol of Iranian historical and cultural heritage.

These inscriptions are remnants of the ancient Maad civilisation.

### **Describe an interesting historic place.**

You should say:

what it is

where it is located

what you can see there now

and explain why this place is interesting

## Sample Topic Three

### Useful Vocabulary

visit (v.)  
located (p.p.)  
situated (p.p.)  
famous (adj.)  
climate (n)  
weather (n.)  
cuisine (n.)  
countryside (n.)  
downtown (n.)  
suburb (n.)  
public transportation

Shiraz is located in south-central Iran, about 920 kilometres south of Tehran.

I went there last summer to visit my uncle.

My trip to Tehran was of business nature.

I went there on business.

Isfahan is famous for Zayanderood, a beautiful river that runs through the city.

Shiraz is host to millions of visitors and tourists every year.

There are many museums to visit.

The people are very hospitable and friendly.

The restaurants are fantastic and the local cuisine is excellent.

What interested me most about this city was that it was very clean and orderly despite all the traffic.

I guess what I liked most about Tabriz was the weather.

Getting around was quite easy.

The city had a fantastic countryside with a river and many farms.

### **Describe a city you have visited which has impressed you.**

You should say:

where it is located

why you visited it

what is there to see

and what you liked about it.



## Sample Topic Four

### Useful Vocabulary

novelist (n.)

author (n.)

popular (adj.)

character (n.)

detective (n.)

crime (n.)

thriller (v.)

romance (n.)

science-fiction (n.)

fiction (n.)

novel (n.)

masterpiece (n.)

contemporary (adj)

major author

short story

My favourite author is Jules Verne, a French science-fiction writer who lived in the 19th century.

She usually wrote about human connections and relationships.

His stories are mostly concerned with crime and criminals.

She could develop highly-complicated characters.

The plots are very exciting and thrilling.

His stories are quite imaginable and convincing.

The reason why I'm a real fan of his is that he focused on delicate human emotions such as love.

In this masterpiece, he describes the life of a British businessman in India.

The endings of his novels are fantastic and unpredictable.

### Talk about your favourite writer (author).

Talk about:

who he/she is

what he/she usually writes about

what his or her best work is

and why you like this author.

## Sample Topic Five

### Useful Vocabulary

publicity (n.)

commercial (n.)

advertisement (n.)

ad (n.)

promotion (n.)

promote (v.)

advertise (n.)

business (n.)

plot (n.)

private business

non-profit organisation

A commercial I enjoy watching is an ad for a new car from Ford.

This commercial advertises a new toothbrush from Oral-B.

Sanford is a privately-owned business and makes markers and pens as well as other school or office stationary.

The commercial compares their product with ordinary products from other companies.

The commercial demonstrates the capabilities of a new tool.

The director has employed special effects and animation to display the effects of this new product.

The plot is very amusing.

The comparison is made in a very interesting way.

This commercial has a moral lesson.

### **Describe a TV commercial you like very much.**

You should talk about:

which business or organisation sponsors it

what it is about

whether it has been successful

and why you like it very much.

## Sample Topic Six

### Useful Vocabulary

festival  
festivities  
celebration  
parade  
carnival  
party  
firecrackers/crackers  
fireworks  
bonfire  
chant (n)  
chant (v)

It is held on the last Tuesday night of the Iranian year.  
It is observed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of the Iranian month of Azar.  
This night marks the end of the winter.  
This is the longest night of the year.  
People go out to the streets and the countryside.  
People of all ages indulge in the festivities of the day.  
Young people dance around, holding hands and chanting songs.  
Bonfires are lit here and there.  
It's a day/night of national pride and happiness.  
The reason why I like this day/night is that...  
I love this festival because...  
I always find this a very delightful and enjoyable celebration.  
The reason why this festival holds such significance is that...  
The reason why this is such an important festival is that...

### **Describe a festival that is important in your country.**

You should say:

when the festival occurs

what you did during it

what you like or dislike about it

and explain why this festival is important.

## Sample Topic Seven

### Useful Vocabulary

once  
when  
greatly  
to some extent  
in many ways  
in a way  
somehow  
suddenly  
nostalgic (adj.)  
homesick (adj.)  
happy  
delighted/delighting  
flattered/flattering  
amazed/amazing  
confused/confusing  
depressed/depressing  
embarrassed/embarrassing

irritated/irritating

annoyed/annoying

frightened/frightening

One of the things I can remember most clearly is my first day at school.

I remember once I was thrown out of the class for being mischievous.

One Friday morning, when I was 8 years old, my parents took me to the zoo.

This happened about/nearly 20 years ago when I was 9.

When I was at school, I used to chatter with my classmates during class time.

I had barely learnt how to speak then.

It was really frightening.

I was quite frightened.

This experience influenced my life in a number of ways.

This incident greatly affected my later life.

### **Describe a memory of your childhood.**

You should say:

when it happened

what exactly happened

whether you remember it as a pleasant or unpleasant memory

and explain how it affected your later life.



## Sample Topic Eight

### Useful Vocabulary

stationary store

shoe store

grocery store

clothing store

boutique (n.)

florist (n.)

downtown (n.)

business district

shopping centre

department store

chain store

shopping mall

interior (n.)

exterior (n.)

interior design

windows (n. pl.)

muzak (n.)

promotion (n.)

sale (n.)

bargain (v.)

bargain (n.)

One of the stores I love to shop from is a small boutique, called "Rangarang", which sells designer items and posh clothes.

There's a nice grocery store about half a block from my house, which is one of my favourite places to shop at.

The store has a beautiful decoration.

The store interior is painted in blue and is decorated with stripes of coloured cloth.

The windows are full of colourful items like ties and shirts.

The shopkeeper is very kind and tactful.

The salespeople are polite and helpful.

I usually buy my groceries there every week.

My family and I love to buy our clothes at this boutique.

### Talk about a favourite shop or store.

You should say:

where it is and what it looks like

what it sells

what you like to buy there

and say why you like the shop so much.



## Sample Topic Nine

### Useful Vocabulary

Splendid (adj.)

exotic (adj.)

distant (adj.)

forest (n.)

beach (n.)

spa (n.)

sunny/windy/cloudy/warm

cold/cool/humid/snowy/foggy

snow-covered mountains

ski slopes

go skiing

play volleyball

relax (v.)

meditate (v.)

go fishing

go horseback riding

read books

go shopping

collect seashells

My best choice for a holiday resort is Kish Island in the Persian Gulf.

I usually travel to Sar-Eyn to spend my holidays.

It's a 2-hour ride from Tabriz in Western Iran.

It's located about 55 kilometres north of Tehran on the coast of the Caspian sea.

There are exotic beaches and the sun always shines.

The weather is splendid, usually warm and sunny all year round.

The slopes are usually covered with snow all winter long.

I often go there to relax.

We can go fishing and horseback riding all day long.

### Talk about your favourite holiday resort.

You should say:

where it is

when you last visited there

what you can do there

and explain why you like this place very much.

# Sample Topic Ten

## Useful Vocabulary

Admire (v.)

respect (v.)

look up to (v.)

sceptical (adj.)

fabulous (adj.)

admirable (adj.)

approve of (v.)

make great friends

study (v.)

review lessons

watch films

go shopping

chat (v.)

talk on the phone

Sanaz has been one of my best friends for the past three years.

I have known Mehdi for about fifteen years.

My parents initially were sceptical about her, but as they got to know her more, they started to like her too.

My parents look up to him very much and approve of our friendship.

He is a wonderful friend and a brilliant student.

We usually get together to review and study university lessons.

We like to chat on the phone every now and then to catch up on each other.

We go hiking and mountain climbing together on holidays.

I admire her very much for a number of reasons.

The reason why I respect him is that he has always been very hardworking and responsible in his career.

## Describe a friend whom you admire very much.

Talk about:

how long you have known him or her

whether your parents like him or her too

what you do together

and explain what is very admirable about him or her.

## **1. Advertising**

### **Positives of Advertising**

Advertising is a key part of modern business

Companies need to tell customers about their products

Advertisements inform us about the choices we have

Advertising is a creative industry that employs many people

Without advertising we would have less choice

Without advertising there would be higher unemployment

Advertising is a form of modern art

People enjoy adverts

### **Negatives of Advertising**

Advertising manipulates people

It aims to persuade people that buying a product will make them happier

Advertisers focus on selling a brand image

They use glamorous, successful people

We now live in a consumer culture

We are persuaded to follow the latest trend

We are encouraged to associate certain brands with a higher status

Advertisers often aim their marketing at children

Children can easily be influenced by advertisements.

Children put pressure on parents to buy them things

### **Opinions about Advertising**

Advertising should be regulated

Advertising aimed at children should be controlled or even banned

Unhealthy foods should not be marketed in a way that attracts children

Products that can be risk to healthy should display warnings

In some countries it is illegal to advertise cigarettes on television

Warnings must be displayed on cigarette packets

However, advertising is necessary in free market economies

It creates demand for products

Governments should only censor false information or products that are harmful

### **3. Cities**

#### **Reasons for Urbanization**

People move to cities in search of job opportunities

Cities offer greater employment possibilities and a higher standard of living

People migrate to cities from the countryside

Traditional activities like farming need fewer workers nowadays

#### **Negatives of City Life**

Life in cities has its drawbacks

The cost of living is higher than in rural areas

Some people do not manage to find work

Housing is usually much more expensive

Homelessness and poverty are common in cities

There is a gap between rich and poor

Life in cities can be extremely stressful

There are problems like traffic congestion and crime

Cities lack a sense of community

People do not even know their neighbors

Cities are sometimes described as "concrete jungles".

#### **Pedestrian Areas**

Pedestrian zones in city centre can improve the local environment

Banning cars encourages people to walk or cycle

Many European cities have built bicycle lanes

Dependence on cars is linked to health problems like obesity

People who walk or cycle regularly are generally healthier

Pedestrian areas are safer and more attractive for both residents and tourists



## **5. Education**

### **Benefits of education**

Education gives people knowledge and skills

People with qualification are more likely to find work

They can earn a higher salary

They can contribute positively to society

Schools aim to teach young people moral values such as tolerance and sharing

Schools prepare children to be members of a society

### **Benefits of Studying Abroad**

Foreign institutions may offer better courses

Many students want to attend a prestigious university

The best universities employ teachers who are experts in their fields

Qualifications gained abroad can open the door to better job opportunities

Living abroad can broaden students' horizons

Overseas students are exposed to different cultures and customs.

They become more independent

They are responsible for cooking, cleaning and paying bills

They will learn a foreign language

### **Drawback of studying abroad**

Living and studying abroad can be difficult

Students have problems with paperwork such as visa applications

The language barrier can be a problem

Students have to find accommodation and pay bills

Studying in a foreign language is challenging

Living alone in an unfamiliar culture can cause homesickness

## **7. Family**

### **Family size**

Families in many countries are not as large as they used to be

We tend to live in small nuclear families rather than large extended families

Parents tend to have fewer children

Young children are no longer expected to work

Nowadays both parents often work

It costs so much to bring children up

It is more difficult to raise a large family

### **Working parents (also see “gender” topic)**

Children and their parents seem to be less close nowadays

Parents spend less time with their children

Women traditionally stayed at home to cook, clean and look after children

Nowadays both parents often work full time

Children may be left alone, or with nannies or babysitters

Busy parents have less contact with their children

Many families no longer eat meals together

Children spend more time with friends or surfing the Internet

### **Negative effects on Children**

The lack of closeness in families can have a negative effect on children

Many parents have no idea how their children spend their time

Friends, television and the Internet become the main influence on children’s behavior

Teenagers are influenced by peer pressure

Some of them join gangs

Juvenile delinquency is on the increase

Parents should be more involved with their children’s upbringing

Young people need positive role models

## **10. Global issues**

### **Problems in developing countries**

Developing countries face a range of problems

Standards of healthcare and education are low

Life expectancy is usually lower than in developed countries

There is a lack of infrastructure, employment and good quality housing

Many people are forced to live in poverty

Food, drinking water and basic medicines are in short supply

### **How to help developing countries**

The best form of help for developing countries is development aid

Richer nations can help by investing in long-term projects

Governments and charities can help by building new houses and schools

Globalization may also help developing countries

Multi-national companies can create jobs in developing countries

On the other hand, many people emigrate to find work in richer countries

They often send money back home to their families

This money helps to improve the standard of living in developing countries

### **Positives of Globalization**

Business is becoming increasingly international

Multi-national companies do business across the world

Companies like MacDonalD's can be seen on high streets in most cities

Goods are produced in one country and sold in many others

A global economy means free trade between countries

This can strengthen political relationships

Globalization can also create opportunities for employment

It encourages investment in less developed countries

It could reduce poverty in the developing world

### **Negatives of Globalization**

Globalization is not always beneficial to everyone

Companies can move to countries where labour is cheap

This creates redundancies, or job losses

Employees cannot be confident that they have stable jobs

Companies sometimes exploit their employees in developing countries

Global trade creates more waste and pollution

## **6. Environment**

### **Global warming**

Gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat from the sun

This causes global temperatures to rise

This process is known as the greenhouse effect

Human activity is a major factor in the rise of the greenhouse gases

Factories and vehicles produce emissions and exhaust fumes

Many developing countries are becoming industrialized

The number of cars on our streets is growing

Cheap air travel is allowing more people to fly

### **Effects of Global Warming**

Global warming will have a significant impact on our planet

Rising temperature will cause melting of the polar ice caps

Sea levels will rise

We can expect more extreme weather conditions

Flooding and droughts may become more common

### **Impacts of humans on the environment**

The increasing world population is putting pressure on natural resources

Fossil fuels like oil and gas are running out

We are destroying wildlife habitats

We have cut down enormous areas of rainforest

Government campaigns should promote recycling

Natural areas and wild animals should be protected

Individuals should also try to be greener

We should take fewer flights abroad for holidays

We should take public transport rather than driving

We should choose products with less packaging

We should recycle as much as possible



### **13. Health**

#### **Diet**

The human body requires a balanced diet

An unhealthy diet can cause various health problems

Obesity, diabetes and heart disease are on the increase

Many people nowadays rely on fast food or pre-prepared meals

These foods often contain too much fat, salt and sugar

They are cheap to buy and very easy to prepare

Many young people have grown up on a diet of convenience foods

Populations in developed countries are increasingly overweight

#### **Exercise**

Regular exercise is essential in maintaining a healthy body

Exercise burns calories and helps to build healthy bones and muscles

Doctors advise exercising at least three times a week for 20 minutes

Most people nowadays lead a sedentary lifestyle

We tend to walk less and do desk jobs

Most adults relax by watching television

Children play video games rather than doing outdoor sports

In the past, people were more active in their jobs and at home

#### **Government's Role**

Governments have a significant role to play in reducing obesity

More and more people, including young children are seriously overweight

They are at risk of heart disease and diabetes

This situation will increase the burden on hospitals and taxpayers

Hospitals rely on the government for money and resources

Governments should promote a healthy diet and regular exercise

There should be more time for sports on school timetables

Unhealthy junk food should be banned from school menus

People need information about what foods contain

Food packaging must show the food's nutritional content

The British Government recommends eating five portions of fruit and vegetables per day

## **15. Language**

### **English as an international language**

English is widely used around the world

It is becoming a global second language

It is the dominant language of technology, science and international business

International business meetings are regularly held in English

The most important textbooks and journals are published in English

The ability to speak English is a necessary skill in the modern world

### **Negative of English as an International Language**

If one language is dominant, other languages may disappear

The dominant language brings its own culture

American culture has become popular around the world

Other cultures may be damaged

As an alternative to English, a new global language could be invented

It would have no nationality or culture attached to it

This could help to promote international peace and understanding

Esperanto is an example of a language that was invented with this aim

## **16. Money**

### **Money and Society**

Society has become increasingly materialistic

People aspire to earn more money

They want a bigger house or a better car

We connect wealth and material possessions with happiness and success

Brands like "Armani" or "Mercedes" are status symbols

Advertising creates new desires and needs

It persuades us to buy the latest styles

### **Positives of Consumerism**

Consumerism creates employment

It helps to reduce poverty

It encourages innovation and creativity in business

We live in a global economy

We have a better quality of life

### **Negatives of Consumerism**

Consumerist societies create more waste

They use more natural resources

They cause damage to the environment

Consumerism creates a “throw-away” culture

Advertisers tell us who we are and what we want

Wealth does not lead to happiness

Materialism causes greed and crime

We should return to traditional values like sharing

## **17. Personality**

### **Happiness**

Happiness means different things to different people

It can be described as a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment

People enjoy spending time with family and friends

Hobbies, sports and games can be a source of fun and enjoyment

Some people see money as a source of happiness

Other people define happiness as something deeper

In order to be truly happy it is necessary to live a good life

We need to feel that we are doing something useful with our lives

Some people get a sense of achievement from their work

Others find happiness in bringing up their children

Religion or a sense of purpose can also be a source of happiness

### **Success**

People define success in different ways

Some people get a sense of achievement from raising a family

For others, success is defined by wealth or status

We often think of rich and famous people as being successful in life

## 19. Television, Internet, Phones

### **Positives of the Internet**

There are many advantages to using the Internet

It gives us instant access to information on almost any subject

Shops and other services are now available online

People can buy goods and services from the comfort of their homes

The Internet is starting to replace other forms of entertainment

It has revolutionized communication

We can keep in touch by email or instant messenger services

Video messaging is becoming common for business meetings

Parents find it difficult to control what their children see online

They do not always know who their children are chatting to

With so many websites it is difficult to search for good information

Criminals increasingly use the Internet to steal people's money

### **Internet compared to newspaper and books**

Newspapers and books are now published online as well as in print

We can read the news in any language from any country in the world

It costs nothing to publish or access information on the Internet

The Internet allows anybody to publish their own writing

Newspaper articles and books are written by professionals

Professionals produce better quality writing than amateur

People still buy newspapers and books because they are portable

People do not like reading from a screen



## **20. Tourism**

### **Positives of Tourism**

Tourism is a popular leisure activity

People go on holiday to relax and have fun

Tourists can experience different cultures

They can sunbathe on beaches or go sight-seeing

Travelling abroad opens our minds

We can learn to speak other languages

The tourist trade is vital for some economies

It creates employment in services like accommodation, transport and entertainment

Some areas rely on tourism for their income

Tourists spend money

Tourism attracts investment from multi-national companies

It helps to improve the standard of living

Low-cost airlines are making it cheaper to travel abroad

### **Negative effects of tourism**

Tourism can have a negative effect on the natural environment

The building of facilities and infrastructure can destroy the habitat of wild animals

Beautiful beaches are spoilt by the building of hotels

Tourism creates pollution and waste

It puts pressure on local resources

Local traditional and cultures may be endangered

A rise in the cost of living affects local people

The price of goods, services and housing may increase significantly