

Comparing Past and Present

In part 3 of IELTS speaking, you might be asked to compare the past with the present. The examiner will be listening to your use of tenses.

How has teaching changed in your country over the past few decades?

In the past, teachers simply lectured students and the students just listened to what they said. We were given lots of facts to learn and there was no room for creativity or freedom of expression. I remember learning lots of things without thinking about the theory behind it. Now, there's been a movement towards students thinking for themselves. We are taught to have a more questioning attitude and to be active learners in the classroom. For example, teachers set a lot of project work, which gives students more control over their work and more room to be creative.

Are there any differences between the types of people who were seen as celebrities in the past and those who are celebrities nowadays?

Yes, I think there have been some big changes in the types of people who become famous. In the past, before the invention of television, I suppose there were very few national or international celebrities; maybe kings and queens, military, political and religious leaders were the only household names. With the advent of TV and radio, performers such as actors and musicians became more well-known. However, we now seem to have a completely new breed of celebrity as a result of 'reality' television programmes; these are people who don't really have any special skills as performers, but who are famous for just being themselves.

Write an answer to this question and underline the tenses.

How have holidays changed over the past few decades?

Answer these questions without preparation.

What is the difference between hobbies today and hobbies in the past?

Has the size of the family changed in the last few decades in your country?