

Understanding the cue card

The cue card has three parts. Look at this typical example:

Talk about a work of art you have seen. You should say

- What the work of art was
- Where you saw it
- When you saw it

And say whether you enjoyed that work of art

Part 1 – The Topic

Talk about a work of art you have seen. You should say

This part tells you the topic you need to talk about. The topic will always be a general topic. The topic is always personal – something **YOU** have seen

Part 2 – The Detail

- what the work of art was
- where you saw it
- when you saw it

In this part you are asked to add details about the main topic. These details are answers to what/where/when/who questions. The details you are asked to add are descriptions, not explanations.

Part 3 – The Explanation

And say whether you enjoyed that work of art

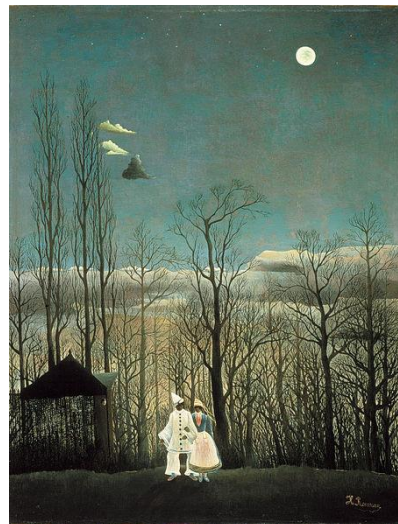
In the third part you are asked to add an explanation and the question is almost always a *how*, *if* or *why* question. It is sometimes easier to say more about this part – explanations tend to be longer than simple descriptions.

Making Notes

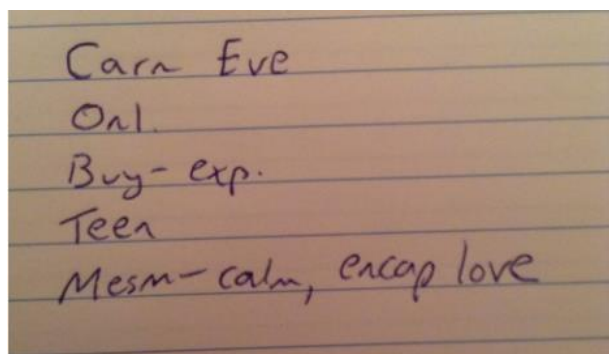
You only have one minute to read the card and make notes. Write down the key words and ideas that you will use. Look at my example of how to answer the card.

Personally, my favorite piece of art is 'A Carnival Evening' by Henri Rousseau (right). When I look at the points on the card, these ideas run through my head:

- I first saw it online
- I bought an expensive copy when I was a teenager
- I was mesmerised by the painting because it looks beautiful and expresses the joy a young couple feels.



The idea is to write words and phrases that remind you of ideas. Don't waste time by writing the whole word. Here are my notes:



Here is my full response. Remember that saying (erm) when you're trying to think of right word and pausing (...) is ok; it sounds natural.

My favorite piece of art is a painting called 'A Carnival Evening' by the French artist Henri Rousseau. The picture features two lovers walking in the evening, in a field lit by moonlight.

(Erm) I can't remember exactly when I saw the picture, but it must have been when I was a teenager because I was still living with my parents. I found the painting on the internet when I was searching for interesting paintings, I didn't

really know what I was looking for, I just wanted to find something cool (...) Compared to all the other paintings, 'A Moonlight Evening' really stood out (...) I was so mesmerized by it that I bought a copy and stuck it on my bedroom wall. It cost quite a lot of money, (erm) I think about sixty pounds, so I must have really loved it.

The painting looks really beautiful. It is set in the winter and features a dark forest illuminated by the moonlight. The young couple is wearing gypsy clothes and they look (...) (erm) really good in the moonlight, like (erm) they are glowing. The picture is set in winter, but the couple looks warm. You can really see that they are so happy and relaxed together. The painting makes me feel calm. In my view, the picture symbolises the joy that a young couple feel together. This appealed to me when I was a teenager because I was (erm) quite idealistic about love.

Practice Question

Describe your favourite movie

- What the film is about
- Where you saw it
- When you saw it

And say why you enjoyed the film