

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 16: GLASS ARTIST

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today we're going to look at how English users indicate *negative meanings*. One of the ways we can do that is with the word 'not'.

And we're going to hear a glass artist talk about his craft. The ancient art of hot glassblowing dates back 5,000 years to the Egyptians. Listen to Mark Douglass, the artist, talking about glassblowing today.

I think people are fascinated about glass, in a sense, I know my grandmother had a beautiful glass vase on her dressing table or whatever, and it was always, "Don't break the vase," you know, it's this precious thing.



The techniques I use for glassmaking aren't that dissimilar than what has been around for, like, centuries.

When English speakers want to give something a negative meaning, they use negative words such as:

'not' - "She's not coming."

'no' - "There's no music."

'nobody' - "Nobody saw the crash."

'nothing' - "There's nothing to eat."

'nowhere' - "He's nowhere to be seen."

All these sentences have only one negative. When constructing negative sentences, English only allows one negative.

Using two negative words, such as 'nobody' and 'not' together in a sentence, can give the opposite meaning to the one intended.

So, for example:

"I did not see nobody."

With this double negative, this literally means:

"I saw somebody".

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

However, watch Mark Douglass again, and see how he uses a double negative to give a positive meaning.

The techniques I use for glassmaking aren't that dissimilar than what has been around for, like, centuries.



Mark says:

“The techniques aren't dissimilar”.

‘Aren’t’ is a contraction of ‘are’ and ‘not’.

So he uses the negative word form ‘not’.

‘Dissimilar’ is made up of the negative prefix ‘dis-’ and the word ‘similar’.

So he uses ‘not’ and ‘dis-’, both negatives, in one phrase.

These cancel each other’s effect, giving a positive meaning:

Look what happens when we leave them both out.

“The techniques are not dissimilar.”

“The techniques are similar.”

By saying “the techniques are not dissimilar”, he is drawing attention to the fact that this may be surprising, and not what you might expect.

He’s saying that it’s surprising that the techniques used today are similar to ancient techniques.

This idea is reinforced by Mark using the negative word ‘unchanged’ when talking about the techniques.

Listen to how he uses ‘unchanged’.

So the basic techniques of gathering, blowing glass, putting a bubble into some glass, shaping it, pretty much have been unchanged for a long time.

Mark says the basic techniques of blowing glass ‘have been unchanged for a long time’.

He does not say the techniques are ‘the same’. He chooses a negative to draw attention or emphasise that something has not changed.

Let’s try another example:

“The student was not unhappy with her test score.”

Cancel out the negatives 'not and un-' and you have:

"The student was happy with her test score."

The two negatives cancel each other out, leaving a positive statement.

However, 'not unhappy' is not the same as 'happy'.

The student may not have received an excellent score, but she didn't receive a bad one either. The student is not happy, but not unhappy either.

So this sentence expresses a subtly different perspective and attitude than the simple positive statement:

"The student was happy."

You can practise this construction by adding the prefix 'dis-' or 'un-' to many words:

'not disloyal',

'not dishonest',

'not uncommon',

'not uncomfortable',

'not unkind'.



Before you know it, it will 'not' be 'unusual' for you to use negative expressions!

In part 3 of the IELTS Speaking test you'll be discussing something linked to the topic you spoke about earlier in the interview.

Let's focus on the features of a good response to part 3.

You'll be expected to use more complex language because of the diverse tasks.

You could be:

describing something,

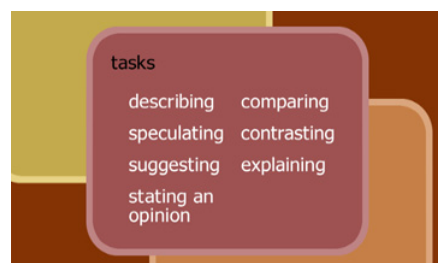
speculating,

suggesting,

stating an opinion,

comparing,

contrasting or explaining.





Let's imagine Mark Douglass is participating in the third part of the interview.

Earlier we heard Mark talking about glassblowing as an art form. As a follow-on question from Part 2, the examiner could ask, for example:

“Do you think some countries value glass art differently?”

Let's listen to how Mark answers this question.

I think Australians' perception of glass is a lot different than European or American. Like, Europeans, because they've had you know Venetian glass around for a long time, they tend to appreciate how hard it is to make glass or the value of it. Australian people tend to look at whether it's mass-produced, then sit it next to a piece of art glass and can't really see the difference in it that much.



It's not as if it's sort of the money of it, I think it's just a psyche of collecting, which, I don't think Australian people have that passion as much as European or American people.

In response to this type of question, you'd be expected to *state your opinion* about people's perception and appreciation of glass art.

Did you notice the words he uses when giving his opinion? He says:

“I think Australians' perception of glass is a lot different.”

“I think it's just a psyche of collecting”.

“I don't think Australian people have that passion.”

“Europeans tend to appreciate how hard it is.”

“Australians tend to look at whether it's mass produced.”

It is clear from his word choices that he is expressing his own views.

You would also be expected to make *comparisons*, like Mark does when he says:

“Australians' perceptions are a lot different than Europeans”.

It's important to *vary your sentence structure*. Mark uses a variety of sentence structures that are grammatically correct.

He makes *complex sentences* – sentences that have more than one clause.

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

He uses the *subordinate conjunction* 'because':

"I think Australians' perception of glass is a lot different than European because they've had Venetian glass around for a long time."



He also uses the *coordinate conjunction* 'or':

"They tend to appreciate how hard it is to make glass or the value of it."

Mark's speech flows smoothly because he uses contractions. He says:

"they've had Venetian glass",

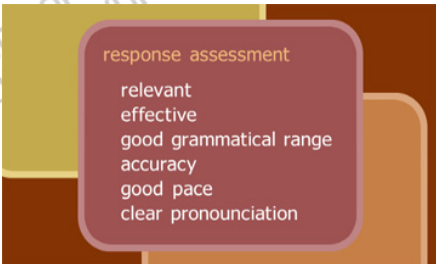
"it's mass-produced",

"can't really see the difference", and

"it's just a psyche of collecting".



How would you assess Mark's response to the question? I think his answer was *relevant* and *effective*.



He demonstrated *good grammatical range* and *accuracy*. He spoke at a *good pace*, and he used *clear pronunciation*.

These are all goals you should aim for too!

To find more information and tips for your IELTS test, just visit our website at abcasiapacific.com/studyenglish.

That's all for today. I'll see you next time on Study English. Bye bye.