



Live Lesson Notes

Challenges and Problem Solving

Contents

1. Useful links
2. IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: Challenges and Solving Problems
3. Idioms
4. Listening Bingo
5. Model Answer

Some useful links

Learn vocabulary effectively when you join the **Vocabulary Vault**
<https://courses.keithspeakingacademy.com/p/the-library>

My **GOLD** online course for **IELTS Speaking**
<https://keithspeakingacademy.com/ielts-band7-gold-yt>

Follow me on **social media**

<https://www.youtube.com/@EnglishSpeakingSuccess>

<https://www.facebook.com/keithspeakingacademy>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KeithIELTSMastermind/>

https://www.instagram.com/keith_speaking_academy/

Warm Up

Challenges of Modern Life

Technology

- learning new skills
- it can replace jobs

Jobs

- Finding and losing one
- being laid off or fired
- stress

Recessions - weak economy

Social media

- addiction
- privacy

Mental health

Choosing a partner

Raising children

Pollution and climate change

Staying Healthy

Which is the biggest challenge for you?

IELTS Speaking Vocabulary: Challenges and Problem Solving

A challenge (n.) /'tʃæl ɪndʒ/

1] a difficult situation that needs great effort to do well

*Finding a job is a **real challenge***

A/An _____ challenge

big
sig**n**ificant
real
new
exc**i**ting

Learning a second language is an exciting challenge

It's a challenge to _____

find a job
give up smoking
stay in shape

Synonyms of 'challenge'

A struggle
A battle

It's a struggle to stay in shape

Synonyms of 'problem'

A **difficulty**
An **issue** /'ɪʃ.u:/

For a problem that you need to deal with so you can make progress, we can say,

A hurdle

An **obstacle**

A **stumbling block**

A **setback**

The biggest hurdle to learning English is the grammar

A **snag** (a small problem in something that is mostly good)

Learning to drive is easy, the only snag is parking.

He fixed my phone, the only snag is now the battery is dead.

To face a challenge / a problem / a hurdle / an obstacle / a setback
= to deal with

Teenagers face many challenges these days.

I have faced a lot of obstacles in my career.

To rise to the challenge
= to be willing to try and do it

*It's not easy for her to stop smoking, but I am sure she will **rise to the challenge***

To overcome a challenge
= to succeed

I faced many challenges when I moved here, but I overcame most of them

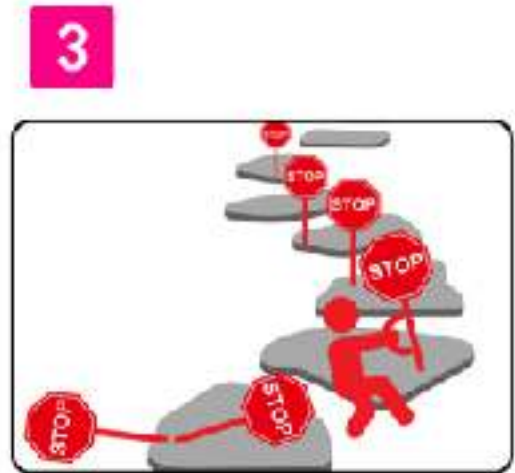
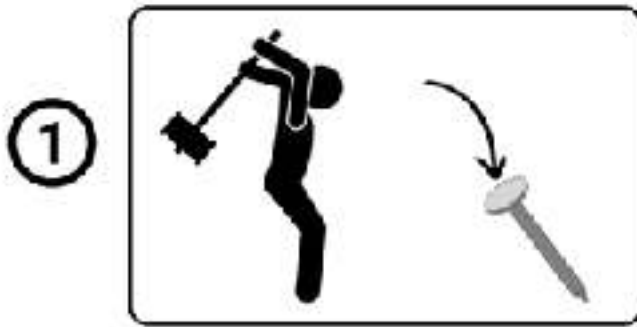
To solve a problem
= to find a solution

To sort a problem
To fix a problem

My brother is good at sorting financial problems.

IELTS Speaking Idioms: Challenges and Problem Solving

Can you guess these idioms?



Answers at bottom of PDF

Listening Bingo:

Listen to someone talking about the challenges teenagers face.



<https://soundcloud.com/keithohare/teenager-challenges-in-modern-life>

1) How many challenges related to technology are mentioned?

Answers at bottom of PDF

2) Listen again. Mark the boxes that contain the *exact* words you hear. When you have a line of 3, **type** BINGO (and the words) in the chat.

Under pressure	Offer presents	Skip the queue
Be an obstacle	Building block	Rise to the problem
Up against the wall	Long deadlines	By any means

Answers at bottom of PDF

Full script on next page

Full Script

I think teenagers face a **huge number of** problems these days and one of the biggest is social media where they are **under pressure** to have **an online presence** as well as an **off-line presence** and they have to manage it **every single day**.

Comparisons **abound** (=there are a lot of them) and they are **under pressure** to appear to be as good and happy as their friends.

They may **inadvertently** (=accidentally) share photos or opinions they may later regret.

This can lead to a loss of friendships or even **be an obstacle** to them later getting a job.

All of this can lead to **severe mental health problems**.

What's more, many **are addicted to** their phones, and this can be a **stumbling block** when it comes to studying well or building real, face-to-face friendships.

On top of that, there's the pressure to study hard and to find a good job. Most teenagers **rise to the challenge**, **the only snag is** of course, in times of recession, jobs are **scarce** (*there are few of them*).

And then the once they've got a job, they are really **up against the wall**. New employees are put under **incredible pressure** to perform and prove themselves. Long working hours, overtime and **stressful deadlines** are the norm (=to be normal).

So, in order to **overcome these challenges**, teenagers need the support of their friends, family and teachers. It's **by no means** (=not at all) an easy ride.

Visualisation

A relaxing technique to review vocabulary.

Close your eyes and listen to this meditation all about a challenge you have.

Relax and let the words flow over you!

Click the image below to start.

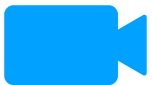


IELTS Speaking Model Answer 1

Describe a problem you have solved

1) Watch the model answer (with subtitles) and answer this question:

How long did he have to wait for the solution?



Click the image below to watch



Answers at bottom of PDF

2) Listen again and note any useful collocations

Full Script on next page

Full Script

Well, a problem I have solved. I remember once I was driving and I got **a flat tyre**. I was actually driving to a **wedding party** and I had left home **with** plenty of **time to spare**, or so I thought.

And then I got the flat tyre. I thought it wasn't going to be a big problem because I had insurance for the car, which included **roadside assistance**. So I thought that would help.

The only snag was that my phone had **run out of battery**. And the other issue was I didn't have a spare tyre, so I couldn't **change the tyre**.

Then I got out of the car and I tried **flagging down** (=to stop a car in the street) some other drivers to get some help. Eventually, one stopped and he helped me call the roadside assistance.

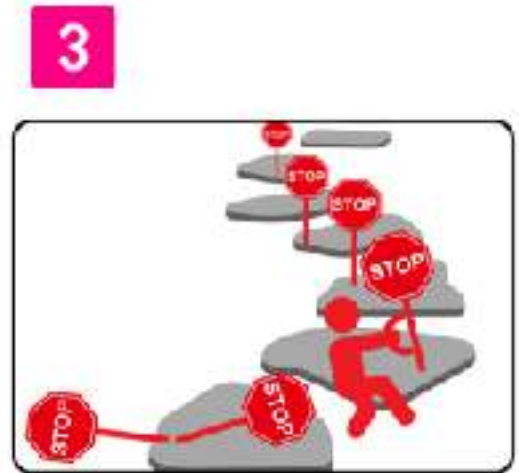
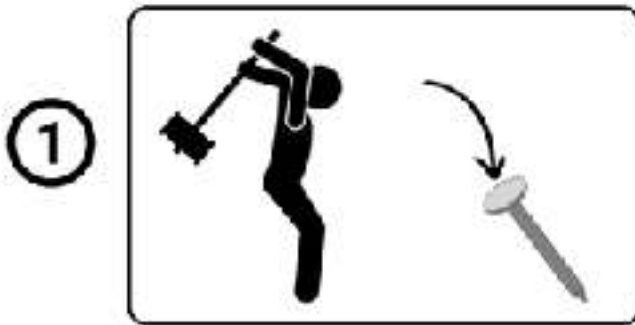
That was the good news. But the setback was that I had to wait 30 minutes for them to arrive. So I felt I was getting **my back against the wall** because it was getting **later and later** and I was meant to **give a speech** at the wedding party.

Well, eventually the guy arrived, he changed the tyre for me and **sorted the problem**. And, yes, I managed to get to the wedding **just in time** to give my speech.

Virtual background from <https://www.freepik.com/>

ANSWERS

IELTS Speaking Idioms: Challenges and Problem Solving



1. To hit the nail on the head

= to get the perfect answer or solution

You hit the nail on the head when you said the government needs to change direction.

Other idioms:

To nail it

= to do something perfectly

2. To be up against the wall

= To be in a difficult situation with no easy solution.

I was up against the wall when my boss moved the deadline forward one week.

Similar idioms:

To have your back to the wall

To be between a rock and a hard place

Other idioms:

To rack your brains

= to think hard of a solution

To blow your mind

= to amaze you (positive and negative)

3. To pull out all the stops

= to do everything possible to overcome a challenge

To meet the deadline, we pulled out all the stops and worked through the weekend.

Other idioms:

To remove the roadblocks

= to remove the hurdles or obstacles

Listening Bingo:

Listen to someone talking about the challenges teenagers face.

1) How many challenges related to technology are mentioned?

Answer

Two - one is social media the other phone addiction.

2. Bingo answers

Under pressure	Offer presents	Skip the queue
Be an obstacle	Building block	Rise to the problem
Up against the wall	Long deadlines	By any means

Dad Jokes

1. Why was the maths book so sad?



Answer

Because it had so many problems

2. Who is the best person to solve your personal problems?



Answer

Tommy, because **Hilfiger** it out!

Tommy Hilfiger is a famous clothing brand.

Hilfiger = he'll figure (it out) = he will solve it

IELTS Speaking Model Answer 1

Describe a problem you have solved

1) Watch the model answer (with subtitles) and answer this question:

How long did he have to wait for the solution?

Answer

30 minutes