

Sample “Like questions”:

1. Do you like your name?

Sample 1: Well yes, I quite like the way my name sounds in my language. In addition, it is very meaningful because my grandmother picked it for me. It means...

Sample 2: Well, I must admit I'm not a big fan of my name. I think it sounds a little bit stupid and boring. In Persian my name means...

2. Do you like flowers?

Yes, definitely! I find them colorful and beautiful. I think they look great in a garden or in a house. I especially like roses but I'm also a big fan of daffodils and water lilies. But I must confess that I really dislike plastic flowers, you know, the fake ones. I think they just look terrible. They reflect bad taste.

3. What types of music do you like to listen to?

Well, I listen to many different kinds of music, but I particularly enjoy listening to pop music, and I really think that Michael Jackson was the king! In addition, I'm a big fan of an Iranian singer called because he's very creative and his voice sounds amazing.

4. What is your favorite sport?

Sample 1: Basketball, without a doubt! I'm a huge fan of the NBA, and I watch basketball on TV on a weekly basis. In addition, I try to play as often as possible. I really like this sport because it's fun and exciting. I love learning new moves from my friends and trying them out after school. On top of this, basketball is a great chance for me to hang out with my friends and socialize.

Sample 2: I have become addicted to yoga. I really enjoy this sport because it's relaxing and very healthy. I practice every day and attend lessons twice a week at a gym near my house. It's a great chance for me to exercise, and forget about my daily problems at the same time. I would recommend it to anyone without any hesitation.

5. What do you do in your free time?

Well, it really depends, but I'm a big basketball fan, so I try to play as much as possible. I also enjoy reading, and of course I spend quite a bit of time chatting with my friends online or over dinner. On some occasions, I find it great to go hiking in the mountains that surround my hometown. It depends on the weather and on my mood.

6. What sorts of things make you happy?

Well, a lot of things make me happy. It could be anything, really. I find it nice to get together with my friends. I

always enjoy having a great dinner and watching a good movie with them. In addition, I can get some satisfaction from my job when my customers are pleased with the service I provide.

7. Do you enjoy spending time with friends?

Yes, definitely! I love hanging out with my good friends. They are so much fun to be with! We have dinner and we occasionally go shopping. We often get together to watch a movie or play sports sometimes. I really trust them, and it's great to have someone to share stories or laughter with.

8. Do you like studying English?

I'll be honest with you: not really. I can't say I dislike it, but I can't say it's a lot of fun either. I find it hard to remember a lot of new words. In addition, the grammar is very tricky, especially with the prepositions at, by, for, and to. I never know when to use the right one. On the other hand, I really like watching foreign movies in their original version. I find it great to be able to understand what they are saying.

9. What do you enjoy writing most?

I'm keen on writing emails to my friends or short messages on my cell phone. I can type very quickly, and I don't need to worry about the style. It's always very casual. On the other hand, I really dislike writing about literature or philosophy at school. My mind usually goes blank, and I find it hard to come up with new ideas. Most of the time, I just recite what I have read. I think it's so boring (=soooo boring)!

Sample "How often" questions:

1. How often do you use a computer?

On a daily basis. I turn on my computer every morning at work. I work as an accountant so I need a computer to do my job. In addition, I also surf the Internet when I get home. I frequently read the news online and chat with my friends. I download music or movies every now and then. I really use computers a lot for both work and entertainment.

2. How often do you go dancing?

Hardly ever. To tell you the truth, I can't dance. Although some of my friends frequently go dancing, I'm not a big fan of dancing at parties. It's usually too loud and smoky there.

3. Do you often celebrate festivals in your culture?

Not really! We don't have different festivals. The most important is of course Norooz Festival. We celebrate the Iranian New Year, but we also get together on other occasions, such as Yalda Night which is the longest night of the year, Wednesday Festival as we call it Charshanbe soori. People celebrate the last the night before the last Wednesday of the year.

4. Do you often play games with your family or friends?

Yes, quite frequently, especially with my friends. We often play cards as well as video games. Occasionally, when we go out to an Internet café, we play computer games there. On the other hand, in my family, we play Mafia whenever we get a chance, particularly during the holidays. My father and I enjoy playing chess, but we hardly ever play nowadays, since I have been going to college far away from my hometown.

5. How often do you exercise?

I try to work out as much as possible. Usually I go running twice a week, and I frequently play basketball with my friends. From time to time my friends invite me to play badminton, and I think it's also a great way to keep fit. In the summer, I really enjoy swimming, and I go to the pool on an almost daily basis during my holiday.

6. How often do you go shopping for things apart from food?

Sample 1: Not that often (= not so often). I'm not a big shopping fan. I find it annoying to go window shopping, wandering in a mall for hours. My friends used to complain about the fact that I never wanted to go shopping with them... but now they've gotten used to it.

Sample 2: Quite frequently! I like going shopping with friends, or with my mother. I think it's a great chance to hang out with the people I like to be with. We often go to a new shopping mall in the city center. There are so many shops and restaurants that we can spend the whole afternoon there. In addition, shopping for clothes is a lot of fun, although I seldom buy the clothes I try on because my budget is a bit tight as a college student.

Sample "How important ...?" Questions:

1. How important is English to you?

English is extremely important to me, because next year I plan to go to the U.S. I'll need English in order to communicate with the people over there, you know, to make friends at university. If my English is limited, I won't be able to understand my teachers either, so my results at school won't be satisfactory.

2. How important is age as a factor in learning?

I think it depends on what you are learning. For example, if you want to learn how to play an instrument, I don't think age is that important. But I believe motivation is fundamental. On the other hand, if you are learning a foreign language, I think it's essential to start as early as possible, because kids have a better memory, and the younger you start, the better your pronunciation will be.

3. How important are friends to you?

Friends play a significant part in my life. I try to see my friends as often as possible. We frequently get together to chat and have a good time. My friends are a fundamental part of my life and I really depend on them, especially when I have good news, or whenever I don't feel so cheerful. I think it's essential to have friends you can trust and rely on.

4. How important is sport in children's social and physical development?

I think that sport is an essential part of children's daily routines, because sports can make kids stronger and healthier. They need to run and jump to make their muscles work. In addition, there is no doubt that playing sports is a great way for them to socialize. They can make friends through sports. On top of this, they can learn the notions of "team-work" and "team-spirit", which are fundamental in today's world.

5. How important are clothes as an expression of personality?

Well, I think that clothes can definitely reflect a person's tastes since everyone usually picks his or her own clothes. Someone who likes to wear dark clothes all the time might want to keep a low profile: he might be a little shy. On the other hand, it's extremely important to remember that it would be a mistake to judge someone's personality according to his or her clothes only. A man wearing a suit might look serious and cold, but he may well be a party-animal as soon as he leaves work! Frequently, clothes represent someone's profession more than their personality. As you say in English, "You shouldn't judge a book by its cover."

6. How important is it to have free time on the weekend for students and working people?

It's fundamental to allow yourself some rest every so often, because if you work too much, you will get tired, and you might not be as efficient as you could be. You might even get irritated and angry because of all the stress you can't get rid of. Workaholics might even get sick in the long term; I mean both physically and psychologically sick. It's essential to take breaks on a regular basis in order to recharge your batteries and be able to work more efficiently later on.

7. How important is tourism for a country?

Tourism can be extremely important for a country's economy, because the tourist industry often creates many jobs and can bring a lot of money to a region. When foreigners visit Iran, they spend their money in restaurants, hotels, organized tours and transportation. It's extremely beneficial to the local economy. In addition, tourism is definitely an essential way for local cultures to spread outside their borders. If a Frenchman comes to Iran, he

will learn about Iranian traditions and history. When he goes home, he will share his pictures and insight on Iran with his friends and family, who will find out more about our country.

8. How important is it to laugh together in a relationship?

Well, it's essential to laugh with friends and relatives. Laughing means that we are in a healthy relationship. When my friend or my father says something funny, I am going to pat them on the shoulder, or slap their leg to tell them it's a good story. Laughing can bring people closer together. If you have a boyfriend/girlfriend, and you never laugh together, you definitely have a problem...

9. How important is it to save money for the future?

I think it's fundamental to save money for the future because you never know what could happen. In case of emergency, if our parents get sick or if we get into an accident, we will need money to cover the damage. In addition, if you want to enjoy life, if you want to go on holidays, or buy a new car, or even get married, it's essential to have money set aside.

10. How important is music for a country?

Well, music is a significant aspect of a culture. Every country produces its own distinctive music, so we could say that music represents one's identity. For example, a national anthem can create feelings of nationalism. In addition, music can definitely bring people closer together, in happiness or in sorrow. Music is essential for the people of each country.

Sample "Why ...?" Questions:

1. Why do you want to take the IELTS test? (= one reason only)

Well, I am taking the IELTS test today because I intend to study overseas next year. I have applied to 3 different universities in Australia, and they all required me to take this test in order to prove my ability to use English in different situations.

2. Why do the people in cities want green spaces?

Well, I think the answer is very obvious: it's due to the fact that parks and green areas are pleasant places for people to relax, and people in urban areas don't have so many opportunities to get away from the city with its noise and traffic (=hustle and bustle). If there is a park not far from their house, families can go for a walk and children can play there safely. In a word, everyone can enjoy a better lifestyle.

3. Why are writing skills so important in education and learning?

Well, it's due to the fact that writing is the basis of all knowledge. Writing is always associated with reading.

Our society's education system depends on books and reading. I mean, we teach knowledge through books, and teachers test their students' ability to think through writing.

For most "Why...?" questions, you should have more than one reason to give.

It is a good opportunity for you to use "First...In addition...On top of this..."

4. Why do you want to study abroad?

I chose to study in Australia for a multitude of reasons: I plan to get a Master's Degree in Computer Engineering, and after doing some research, I know that Sydney University offers a great program in this field. In addition, Australian universities have a great reputation in my country. This experience overseas could open up a lot of doors for my future. I will definitely have more choices in terms of career. I could either stay in Australia, or work in another country, or come back to Iran to find a good position. Studying abroad will be a great chance for me to experience something new: I will meet new people, speak English every day, experience a new culture, and get a chance to travel.

5. Why is it sometimes important for people to be alone?

Well, I guess that we all need time to ourselves at some point. I am sure I can think of a variety of reasons why people might need time alone: some people might need tranquility to think carefully. A lot of students need time alone in order to focus on their lessons before an important test. Some others might just not feel like talking because they are grumpy, or sad, or irritated. We definitely all want time on our own to make a private phone call, or simply relax. There could be multiple reasons why people sometimes need privacy.

6. Why do many people want to be successful?

Well, the most significant reason might be that, nowadays, success means wealth. If people become successful in business, or sports, or science, they will be more likely to get a high salary. With that money, they could lead a very comfortable life, travel, buy anything they want, in other words make their dreams come true. In addition, I guess that being successful must feel great deep inside. It must create a sense of achievement, you know, your family and friends must be proud of you. People who are very successful might enjoy being recognized too, although I am sure that fame also comes with some disadvantages.

7. Why is it important for companies to plan ahead?

Well, companies must plan ahead for a number of reasons. First of all, in business, if you don't know where you want to go, you will never get there. If they want the company to be successful, the managers must fix some goals for everyone to achieve. In addition, planning ahead makes everything simpler: you can control costs, prepare schedules for employees, and also motivate staff to reach targets.

8. Why do people buy newspapers?

Several factors contribute to the fact that people still buy newspapers (=There's a combination of factors that causes people to continue to buy newspapers) nowadays. First of all, newspapers are reliable. They offer clear and precise articles on a daily basis. In a few pages, you have access to everything you need to know about current events. In addition, newspapers are very cheap in my country: they only cost 1 or 2 yuan. On top of this, they are interesting and fun to read. Compared with mobile phones or computers, I'm sure that people enjoy reading the newspaper more because it's more comfortable for the eyes. Finally, it creates a special feeling, especially when it's your own newspaper and no one else unfolded it before. A newspaper is like a gift, where every page is a surprise.

9. Why do some people enjoy traveling?

People enjoy traveling for a variety of reasons. First of all, it's fun and relaxing. People can forget about their work or their studies. They can leave their stress behind. In addition, we always travel to see some new places, usually some impressive scenery, and we can also try some new activities. Tourists are curious and adventurous. On top of this, traveling can be a great opportunity to learn new things about another region or country. Travelers can find out about local history, local food and local customs. It's quite refreshing and enriching.