

➤ Cue Card

Describe a time when you were very busy

You should say:

- **When it was**
- **Where you were**
- **What you did**
- **And explain why you were busy**

Please Note:

Our model answers teach you useful language and give you ideas. However, it is not a good idea to try and memorise them and repeat them in the IELTS exam.



Prepare for {IELTS}

If your life is **hectic**, it is full of activity and very busy

If your life is **frantic**, it is almost out of control, because there is so much activity, stress and worry

If something is **overwhelming**, it is so big or powerful that it is difficult to fight against

If an explanation goes **right over your head**, it is too difficult or complicated for you to understand

If you are **out of your depth**, you don't have the knowledge, skill or experience needed to deal with the situation you are in

to be **underprivileged** = not to have the opportunities, education or money which most normal people have

Prepare for {IELTS}

Looking back, I'd say my first semester at uni was **hectic**. My life was so **frantic**. I was having to attend lectures and seminars, write up my notes and complete assignments. To be honest, I found it **overwhelming**, partly because most of what the lecturers said went **right over my head**. I was **out of my depth**.

But the problem was that I also had a part-time job as a waiter. I come from an **underprivileged** background, and although I got a scholarship, that only covered my tuition fees. I had to earn money for rent. So when I heard on the grapevine that a restaurant was hiring, I sent in my resumé straightaway.

It was chaotic there. I spent my shifts running between tables. I didn't know whether I was coming or going. I was burning the candle at both ends. I was sleep-deprived and permanently grouchy.

After a while, I realised that something had to give. I'd got behind with my studies and couldn't catch up. I'd asked for extensions to deadlines, and my tutors were warning me to pull my socks up. I honestly thought I might fail my exams and get expelled. At work, I kept getting orders muddled up, and customers were getting cheesed off.

In the end, I plucked up the courage to come clean, and told my supervisor. She was sympathetic and organised a loan to keep me going. I resigned from work to focus on my studies – what a relief!

a **scholarship** = money which a school, college or university gives very poor or very clever students to pay for their education

tuition fees/academic fees = money which students pay to a school, college or university for their teaching

If you hear information unofficially and informally, probably from a person who heard it from somebody else, you get this news/information **on/through the grapevine**

A **shift** is a period of time during the day or night when a worker does a job (especially when working hours are unusual or regularly change)

If you **don't know whether you are coming or going**, you are confused and do not understand what you should do

Prepare for {IELTS}

Looking back, I'd say my first semester at uni was hectic. My life was so frantic. I was having to attend lectures and seminars, write up my notes and complete assignments. To be honest, I found it overwhelming, partly because most of what the lecturers said went right over my head. I was out of my depth.

But the problem was that I also had a part-time job as a waiter. I come from an underprivileged background, and although I got a **scholarship**, that only covered my **tuition fees**. I had to earn money for rent. So when I heard **on the grapevine** that a restaurant was hiring, I sent in my resumé straightaway.

It was chaotic there. I spent my **shifts** running between tables. I **didn't know whether I was coming or going**. I was burning the candle at both ends. I was sleep-deprived and permanently grouchy.

After a while, I realised that something had to give. I'd got behind with my studies and couldn't catch up. I'd asked for extensions to deadlines, and my tutors were warning me to pull my socks up. I honestly thought I might fail my exams and get expelled. At work, I kept getting orders muddled up, and customers were getting cheesed off.

In the end, I plucked up the courage to come clean, and told my supervisor. She was sympathetic and organised a loan to keep me going. I resigned from work to focus on my studies – what a relief!

to **burn the candle at both ends** = to work or do things from very early in the morning until very late at night, and so not get enough sleep

to be **grouchy** = to be easily annoyed and bad-tempered; to quickly complain

If you **can't catch up**, it is impossible for you to get to the same level or standard as other people who are ahead of you or at a more advanced level

If you ask your teacher for an **extension**, you want extra time to complete your homework, and want to hand it in later than other students

to **pull your socks up** = to work harder; to put in more effort

Prepare for {IELTS}

Looking back, I'd say my first semester at uni was hectic. My life was so frantic. I was having to attend lectures and seminars, write up my notes and complete assignments. To be honest, I found it overwhelming, partly because most of what the lecturers said went right over my head. I was out of my depth.

But the problem was that I also had a part-time job as a waiter. I come from an underprivileged background, and although I got a scholarship, that only covered my tuition fees. I had to earn money for rent. So when I heard on the grapevine that a restaurant was hiring, I sent in my resumé straightaway.

It was chaotic there. I spent my shifts running between tables. I didn't know whether I was coming or going. I **was burning the candle at both ends**. I was sleep-deprived and permanently **grouchy**.

After a while, I realised that something had to give. I'd got behind with my studies and **couldn't catch up**. I'd asked for **extensions** to deadlines, and my tutors were warning me **to pull my socks up**. I honestly thought I might fail my exams and get expelled. At work, I kept getting orders muddled up, and customers were getting cheesed off.

In the end, I plucked up the courage to come clean, and told my supervisor. She was sympathetic and organised a loan to keep me going. I resigned from work to focus on my studies – what a relief!

If you **are/get expelled**, an organization such as a school, a university or a club makes you leave it

to **get/be muddled up** = to arrange things in the wrong order; to mix things up

to **get/be cheesed off** = to be annoyed and a bit disappointed

to **get/pluck up (the) courage** to do something = to force yourself to do something, even though you are frightened about it

to **come clean** = to tell the truth about something which you have kept secret

If you are **sympathetic**, you show that you understand and care about the suffering of another person

to **resign** = to tell your boss/employer that you are leaving your job

Prepare for {IELTS}

Looking back, I'd say my first semester at uni was hectic. My life was so frantic. I was having to attend lectures and seminars, write up my notes and complete assignments. To be honest, I found it overwhelming, partly because most of what the lecturers said went right over my head. I was out of my depth.

But the problem was that I also had a part-time job as a waiter. I come from an underprivileged background, and although I got a scholarship, that only covered my tuition fees. I had to earn money for rent. So when I heard on the grapevine that a restaurant was hiring, I sent in my resumé straightaway.

It was chaotic there. I spent my shifts running between tables. I didn't know whether I was coming or going. I was burning the candle at both ends. I was sleep-deprived and permanently grouchy.

After a while, I realised that something had to give. I'd got behind with my studies and couldn't catch up. I'd asked for extensions to deadlines, and my tutors were warning me to pull my socks up. I honestly thought I might fail my exams and **get expelled**. At work, I kept getting orders **muddled up**, and customers were getting **cheesed off**.

In the end, I **plucked up the courage to come clean**, and told my supervisor. She was **sympathetic** and organised a loan to keep me going. I **resigned** from work to focus on my studies – what a relief!