

IELTS OVERVIEW: KEY INFORMATION

What is IELTS?

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) assesses English proficiency for non-native speakers in two formats: Academic (higher education) and General Training (work and migration).

Scoring

Band scores range from 0 to 9, assessed individually for each skill.

Test Frequency

Paper-based: 48 times a year (selected Thursdays and Saturdays)
Computer-delivered: Up to 7 days a week, 3 times a day

Results

Paper-based: 13 days
Computer-delivered: 2 days

Paper-Based vs. Computer-Delivered IELTS

Paper-based: (a) Ideal for those with low computer skills; (b) fewer distractions; (c) 10 minutes to transfer answers (vs. 2 minutes on computer); (d) less screen fatigue
Computer-delivered: (a) No handwriting issues; (b) easy corrections; (c) adjustable font size; (d) on-screen timers and word counters; (e) flexible scheduling; (f) faster results



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STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Structure

- Comprises 4 sections (conversations and monologues) with 10 questions each.
- Questions may be MCQ, matching, labelling, and different completion formats.
- Paper-based: 30 minutes (recording)+ 10 minutes (transfer answers).
- Computer-delivered: 30 minutes (recording)+ 2 minutes (check answers).

What to Expect from the Audio Recording

- You will hear various accents (British, American, Canadian, Australian) from native speakers.
- The recoding is played only once.
- Time is provided to review questions during the recording.

Marking

- Each question is worth 1 mark.
- Both American and British spellings are accepted, but be consistent.
- Spelling errors count as incorrect.
- Hyphenated words (e.g., mother-in-law) count as one word.
- Grammar matters; using a singular noun instead of a plural is incorrect.
- Answers must be legible; unclear handwriting is marked incorrect.

Listening Techniques for IELTS Excellence

- Read the questions before each section and highlight keywords.
- Follow instructions carefully and note word limits.
- Listen for signal words (e.g., firstly, to sum up) to track your progress.
- Pay attention to linking words (e.g., however, in addition) for context.
- Identify synonyms or keywords in questions to locate answers.
- Cross out incorrect alternatives while listening to help find the correct answer.
- In some questions, answer choices may be in alphabetical order, not the order heard.
- Multiple formats for dates are acceptable (e.g., 28th July, July 28, and 28 July).
- Avoid spending too much time on missed questions.
- Answer every question; if unsure, guess— there are no penalties for wrong answers.
- Do not transfer answers between different sections.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Structure

- Lasts 1 hour and includes 2 tasks.
- a) Task 1 (Academic): Describe visual data (graph/chart/table/diagram)
- b) Task 1 (General): Write a letter (formal, semi-formal, informal)
- c) Task 2: Write an Essay (responding to a point of view, argument, or problem)
- Word count:**
- a) Task 1: minimum 150 words (no maximum)
- b) Task 2: minimum 250 words (no maximum)

Marking Criteria

- Task Achievement (Task 1) / Task Response (Task 2): Address all parts
- Coherence and Cohesion: Organize ideas logically
- Lexical Resource: Use varied vocabulary accurately
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy: Employ diverse grammatical structures correctly

Writing Techniques for IELTS Excellence

- Allocate about 20 minutes for Task 1 and 40 minutes for Task 2.
- Maintain a formal tone; avoid colloquialisms and contractions.
- Leave time to check for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Writing Task 1 (Academic) - Tips

- Read the prompt carefully to understand the data type (e.g., charts, graphs, tables, diagrams).
- Use relevant vocabulary for data analysis (e.g., rise, drop).
- Highlight significant trends and changes.
- Structure: introduction, overview, detailed paragraphs.
- Stick to factual reporting; avoid personal views and personal pronouns.
- Don't speculate on data reasons (e.g., This might be because).

Writing Task 2 - Tips

- Identify the type of task (opinion, discussion, problem-solution, advantages-disadvantages).
- Outline main points and examples before writing.
- Organize your essay: introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion.
- Fully respond to the task with relevant examples and details.
- Use varied vocabulary and sentence structures.

LISTENING



WRITING

READING

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Structure

- Consists of 3 passages and 40 questions to be completed in 1 hour.
- Question types include MCQ, identifying information, matching, labelling, different completion formats, and short answer questions.

Marking

- Each question is worth 1 mark.
- Both American and British spellings are accepted, but be consistent.
- Spelling errors count as incorrect.
- Hyphenated words (e.g., part-time) count as one word.
- Grammar matters; using a singular noun instead of a plural is incorrect.
- Answers must be legible; unclear handwriting is marked incorrect.

Reading Techniques for IELTS Excellence

- Read questions before the passage to identify key information (e.g., numbers, dates, places, names).
- Focus on titles, headings, highlighted words, and diagrams for context.
- Use skimming for general ideas and scanning for specific details.
- Be aware of synonyms, antonyms, and paraphrased information.
- Discourse markers (e.g., however, for instance) clarify the flow of ideas.
- Answers follow the order of questions.
- The first passage usually has the easiest questions, with difficulty increasing.
- Allocate time: 15 minutes for the 1st passage, 20 for the 2nd, and 25 for the 3rd. Aim for 1-1.5 minutes per question.
- If short on time, guess instead of leaving answers blank.
- Write answers directly on the answer sheet; no extra time is given for transfers.
- Watch word limits in questions to avoid losing marks.
- Both figures and words (e.g., 500 or five hundred) are acceptable unless stated otherwise.
- Use only words from the passage for answers.
- Don't dwell on unfamiliar words; focus on the overall context.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Structure

- Duration: 11-14 minutes.
- Consists of three parts:
- a) Introduction and interview (4-5 minutes)
- b) Individual long turn (3-4 minutes)
- c) Two-way discussion (4-5 minutes)
- Difficulty increases with each part.

Marking Criteria

- Fluency and Coherence: smoothness in speaking in English and connecting ideas
- Lexical Resource: vocabulary usage
- Grammar: correct spoken grammar
- Pronunciation: clarity, rhythm, and intonation

Speaking Techniques for IELTS Excellence

- Utilize the 1 minute to plan for Part 2.
- If you can't recall a real situation, create one; the examiner prioritizes your speaking skills over factual accuracy.
- Speak clearly and provide detailed responses.
- Use appropriate vocabulary, idioms, and phrasal verbs.
- Vary your language; mix simple and complex sentences.
- Avoid rehearsed responses and focus on your next idea rather than correcting grammar.
- Minimize repetition, self-correction, and hesitation.
- Politely ask the examiner to repeat questions if needed.
- You can ask for clarification on words you don't understand.
- Your evaluation is based on language proficiency, not the quality of opinions.
- Aim for correct pronunciation; sounding native isn't required.
- Don't worry about timing; the examiner will manage it.
- Avoid speaking too slowly or pausing excessively, as it may result in losing marks.

SPEAKING