

The IELTS test components – additional guidance

LISTENING

- ❖ Each recording in the Listening test is heard once only.
- ❖ You will be given time to read through the questions before you listen.
- ❖ As you listen, write your answers on the question paper. At the end of the test, you will have 10 minutes to transfer your answer to the answer sheet. It is essential that you transfer your answers to the answer sheet as nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.
- ❖ You must write your answers in pencil.
- ❖ An example of a completed Listening answer sheet is given on the next page.
- ❖ 'Completion' question types (e.g. note completion):
 - Pay attention to the word limit. For example, if you are asked to complete a sentence using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS**, and the correct answer is 'leather coat' the answer 'coat made of leather' would be incorrect.
 - Transfer only the missing word (s) to the answer sheet. For example, if you have to complete the note 'in the.....' and the correct answer is 'morning', the answer in the morning would be incorrect.
 - You will hear the word (s) you need to use in the recording. You will not need to change the form of the word you hear.
 - Pay attention to spelling and grammar: you will lose marks for mistakes.
- ❖ You may write your answers in lower case or in capitals.

READING

- ❖ You may write your answers directly on the answer sheet or you may write them on the question paper and transfer them to the answer sheet before the end of the test. You will not be given extra time to transfer answers at the end of the test. Nothing you write on the question paper will be marked
- ❖ You must write your answers in pencil.
- ❖ An example of a completed Reading answer sheet is given on the next page.
- ❖ 'Completion' question types (e.g. note completion):
 - The same rules apply to 'completion' question types as in Listening (see above)
 - The word(s) you use must be taken from the Reading text. You must not change the form of the word(s) in the next.

WRITING

- ❖ You may write your answers in pencil or pen.
- ❖ Pay attention to the number of words required for each task. You will lose marks if you do not write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2.
- ❖ You should spend approximately 20 minutes on Task 1 and approximately 40 minutes on task 2.
- ❖ You must write your answers in full; answers written in note form or in bullet points will lose marks.
- ❖ Pay attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation' you will lose marks for mistakes.
- ❖ You may write your answers entirely in capitals if you wish.
- ❖ You may make notes on the question paper but nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.

RE-TAKING IELTS

There are no restrictions on re-taking IELTS. If you do not get the result you wanted, you can register for another test as soon as you feel you are ready to do so. Please note that your score is unlikely to increase unless you make a significant effort to improve your English before re-taking the test.

ENQUIRIES ON RESULTS

If you are unhappy with your test result, you can apply for a re-mark (Enquiry on Results) at the centre where you took the test. You must make the application no later than six weeks after the test date. You can choose which test components are re-marked. There is a fee for this service which will be refunded if your score on any component is increased. Enquiries on Results take six to eight weeks to complete.

The IELTS test component

LISTENING

Timing: Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes' transfer time)

Question: There are 40 questions

A variety of question types is used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labeling, form completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, summary completion, sentence completion, short-answer questions

Test Parts: There are 4 sections

Section 1 is a conversation between two people set in an everyday social context (e.g. a conversation in an accommodation agency)

Section 2 is a monologue set in an everyday social context (e.g. a speech about local facilities or talk about the arrangements for meals during a conference)

Section 3 is a conversation between up to four people set in an educational or training context (e.g. a university tutor and a student discussing an assignment, or a group of students planning a research project)

Section 4 is a monologue on an academic subject (e.g. a university lecture)

Each section is heard once only.

A variety of voices and native-speaker accents is used.

Skills Assessed: A wide range of listening skills is assessed, including understanding of main ideas and specific factual information; recognizing opinions, attitudes and purpose of a speaker; and following the development of an argument.

Marking: Each correct answer receives 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9 band scale.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

The IELTS test component

SPEAKING

Timing: 11-14 minutes

Tasks: The Speaking test is a 3-part face-to face oral interview with an examiner. The Speaking test is recorded

Test Parts: There are 3 parts

Part 1 Introduction and interview (4-5 minutes)

The examiner introduces him/herself and asks the candidate to introduce him/herself and confirm his/her identity. The examiner asks the candidate general questions on familiar topics, e.g. home, family, work, studies and interests.

Part 2 Individual long turns (3-4minutes)

The examiner gives the candidate a task card which asks the candidate to talk about a particular topic and which includes points which the candidate can cover in their talk. The candidate is given 1 minute to prepare their talk, and is given a pencil and paper to make notes. The candidate talks for 1-2 minutes on the topic. The examiner then asks the candidate one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 3 Two-way discussion (4-5 minutes)

The examiner asks further questions which are connected to the topic of Part 2. These questions give the candidate an opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas.

Skills assessed:

A wide range of speaking skills is assessed, including the ability to communicate opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences and situations by answering a range of questions; the ability to speak at length on a given topic using appropriate language and organizing ideas coherently; and the ability to express and justify opinion and to analyse, discuss and speculate about issues.

Marking:

Candidates are assessed on their performance throughout the test by certificated IELTS examiners according to the four criteria of the IELTS Speaking Test Band Descriptors (fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, pronunciation). The public version of the band descriptors can be found at www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

Scores are reported in whole and half bands

The IELTS test component **READING**

Timing: 60 minutes (no extra transfer time)

Question: There are 40 questions

A variety of question types is used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, identifying information (True/False/Not Given), identifying writer's views/claims (Yes/No/Not Given), matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram label completion, short-answer questions.

Test Parts: There are 3 sections: The total text length is 2,150-2,750 words

Academic Reading:

Each section contains one long text. Texts are authentic and are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. They have been written for a non-specialist audience and are on academic topics of general interest. Texts are appropriate to and accessible to, candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration. Texts range from the descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical. Texts may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustration. If texts contain technical terms, then a simple glossary is provided.

General Training Reading:

Section 1 contains two or three short factual texts, one of which may be composite (consisting of 6-8 short texts related by topic. e.g. gite advertisements). Topics are relevant to everyday life in an English-speaking country.

Section 2 contains two short factual texts focusing on work-related issues (e.g. applying for jobs, company policies, pay and conditions, workplace facilities, staff development and training)

Section 3 contains one longer, more complex text on a topic of general interest

Texts are authentic and are taken from notices, advertisements, company handbooks, official documents, books, magazines and newspapers

Skills assessed: A wide range of reading skills is assessed, including reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail: understanding inferences and implied meaning; recognizing a writer's opinions, attitudes and purpose; and following the development of an argument.

Marking: Each correct answer receives 1 mark scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale. Scores are reported in whole and half bands

The IELTS test component

WRITING

Timing: 60 minutes

Tasks: There are 2 tasks

Candidates are required to write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2

Test Parts: There are 2 parts

Academic Writing:

In Task 1, candidates are presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram and are asked to describe, summarize or explain the information in their own words. They may be asked to describe and explain data, describe the stages of a process, how something works or describe an object or event.

In Task 2, candidates are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. The issues raised are of general interest to, suitable for and easily understood by candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate studies or seeking professional registration.

Responses to Task 1 and Task 2 should be written in a formal style.

General Training Writing

In Task 1, candidates are presented with a situation and are asked to write a letter requesting information or explaining the situation. The letter may be personal, semi-formal or formal in style.

Skills assessed: In both tasks, candidates are assessed on their ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of content, the organization of ideas, and the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar.

Academic Writing:

In Task 1, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their ability to organize, present and possibly compare data; to describe the stages of a process or procedure; to describe an object or event or sequence of events; to explain how something works

In Task 2, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their ability to present a solution to a problem; to present and justify an opinion; to compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

General Training Writing:

In Task 1, depending on the task type candidates are assessed on their ability to engage in personal correspondence in order to: elicit and provide general factual information; express needs, wants, likes and dislikes, express opinions (views, complaints etc.)

In task 2, candidates are assessed on their ability to provide general factual information; to outline a problem and present a solution; to present and possibly justify an opinion; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

Marking: Candidates are assessed on their performance on each task by certificated IELTS examiners according to the four criteria of the IELTS Writing Test Band Descriptors (task achievement/response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy). The public version of the band descriptors can be found at www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score. Scores are reported in whole and half bands.