

IELTS™

Information for candidates



www.ielts.org



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

The test that opens doors around the world

IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is designed to assess the language ability of candidates who want to study or work where English is the language of communication.

IELTS is recognised by over 6,000 organisations worldwide, including universities, employers, professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies. For a list of organisations that accept IELTS scores, visit <http://bandscore.ielts.org>

Accessible and convenient

IELTS is offered up to four times a month in more than 125 countries. Tests are usually on Saturdays or Thursdays. To find out test dates in your area, please contact your nearest IELTS test centre. A list of all IELTS test centres worldwide is available at www.ielts.org

The international test

IELTS is internationally focused in its content. For example, a range of native-speaker accents (North American, Australian, New Zealand, and British) is used in the Listening test, and all standard varieties of English are accepted in candidates' responses in all parts of the test.

The test that's tried and trusted

IELTS has been developed by some of the world's leading experts in language assessment, and is supported by an extensive programme of research, validation and test development.

The level of the test

IELTS is designed to assess English language skills at all levels.

There is no such thing as a pass or fail in IELTS. Results are reported as band scores on a scale from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest).

The IELTS Band Score Scale	
9	Expert user
8	Very good user
7	Good user
6	Competent user
5	Modest user
4	Limited user
3	Extremely limited user
2	Intermittent user
1	Non user
0	Did not attempt the test

Preparing to take IELTS

Make sure you are ready

It's important to familiarise yourself with the format of the test as outlined in this booklet. Further information on the content of the test can be found at www.ielts.org/teachers.aspx

You may find it helpful to do a practice test. *Official IELTS Practice Materials* may be purchased from test centres or online at www.ielts.org/candidates.aspx These materials include a full practice test with answers, and sample Writing and Speaking performances with examiner comments.

More samples of IELTS test material and information about the test are available from the following websites:

www.ielts.org
www.britishcouncil.org/learning-ielts.htm
www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/academic-english/ielts.html
www.idp.com/examinations/ielts/about_the_test.aspx
www.ieltsusa.org

You don't have to attend a preparation course, but many candidates find that doing so helps them improve their performance. If you would like assistance with test preparation, IELTS centres and language schools around the world offer IELTS preparation courses.

Know the IELTS rules and regulations

It's important to familiarise yourself with the IELTS rules and regulations. These are laid out in the *Notice to Candidates* which is included with the application form. When you sign the application form declaration, you are confirming that you have read and understood the IELTS rules and regulations and agree to abide by them.

Register as soon as possible

When you feel you are ready to take the test, you need to register with your nearest IELTS centre. Contact the centre as soon as possible, as the number of candidates who can take the test on a particular date may be limited. You will need to pay the test fee when you register.

Test results

The Test Report Form

You will receive a Test Report Form which reports a score for each of the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking), as well as an overall band score. Half band scores may be awarded to indicate a strong performance within a particular band. You can find more information on score processing and score interpretation at www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

Results are issued 13 days after the test. At some test centres candidates may collect their results on the 13th day; at others, results are mailed on the 13th day. Test centres are not permitted to give results over the phone or by fax or email.

You will receive only one copy of the Test Report Form. It's important that you keep it safe as replacement Test Report Forms cannot be issued. Test centres will send copies of the Test Report Form to up to five recognising organisations free of charge.

Test Report Form validity

Recognising organisations will not usually accept a Test Report Form that is more than two years old unless you provide evidence that you have actively maintained or tried to improve your English since taking the test. The IELTS Test Partners cannot confirm the validity of test results that are more than two years old.

Test format

There are two modules to choose from – Academic and General Training.

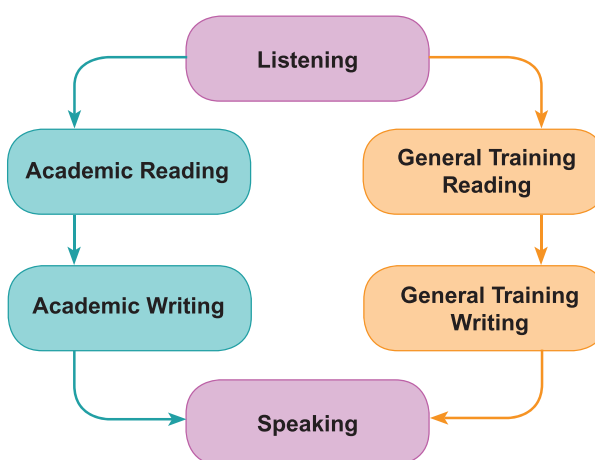
The Academic module is for candidates wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and for those seeking professional registration

The General Training module is for candidates wishing to migrate to an English-speaking country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK), and for those wishing to train or study at below degree level

Each recognising organisation sets its own entry requirements. In some cases both modules may be accepted. If you are in doubt as to which module to take, you should contact the organisation you are applying to in order to check their requirements.

Both modules cover all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking. Everyone takes the same Listening and Speaking tests. There are different Reading and Writing tests for the Academic and General Training modules.

The Listening, Reading and Writing tests must be completed on the same day. There are no breaks between the three written tests. The Speaking test may be conducted within 7 days prior or 2 days after the written test.



The test components

Listening

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

Questions: There are 40 questions

A variety of question types is used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, 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 a 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; recognising 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

Reading

Timing: 60 minutes (no extra transfer time)

Questions: 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 illustrations. 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. hotel 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; recognising 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

Questions 21 and 22
Complete the sentences below.
Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.

Environmental Project

Harry and Katy have to concentrate on coastal change for next project.

21 Their work could be delayed by the

22 Before they go to the beach, they need to visit the

Questions 23 – 26
Who will do each of the following tasks?

A	Katy
B	Harry
C	Both Katy and Harry

Write the correct letter, **A, B or C**, next to questions 23-26.

Tasks

23 take photographs

24 collect samples

25 interview people

26 analyse data

Questions 27 – 30
Choose the correct letter, **A, B or C**.

27 Why does Harry want to do the presentation?

A	to practise skills for his future career
B	to catch up with his course requirements
C	to get a better mark than for his last presentation

Listening example task

Questions 33 – 35
Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 33-35 on your answer sheet, write

YES if the statement agrees with the views of the writer
NO if the statement contradicts the views of the writer
NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

33 It is debatable whether levels of innovation are increasing or decreasing.

34 Governments can exert an unhelpful influence on innovation.

35 The focus of industry on older technologies gives the impression of declining innovation.

Questions 36 – 39
Complete the summary using the list of words, **A-K**, below.

Write the correct letter, **A-K**, in boxes 36-39 on your answer sheet.

Respondents to the survey mentioned several factors they think reduce **36** in engineering design and thus innovation. Among them were the development costs associated with high-tech products, globalisation and **37** justified on safety grounds, all of which inhibit the freedom of designers to design. The trend towards inter-company **38** on the subject of, for example, patents gives further cause for concern. On the other hand, some respondents deny that there is any great problem, welcoming an improved system of **39** For this reason, there is, these respondents argue, the possibility that innovation is on the increase. Certainly, they would not be surprised if that was so.

A	excellence	B	standards	C	production
D	diversity	E	communication	F	regulations
G	disputes	H	specifications	I	agreements
J	selection	K	rivalries		

Academic Reading example task

Questions 21 – 26
Complete the flow-chart below.
Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text for each answer.
Write your answers in boxes 21-26 on your answer sheet.

Air Flight Attendants – Recruitment and Training Process

Candidates go online to complete their **21**

Suitable candidates are then invited to come to a **22**

After having satisfactorily completed a **23**, successful candidates will then go to the Assessment Centre.

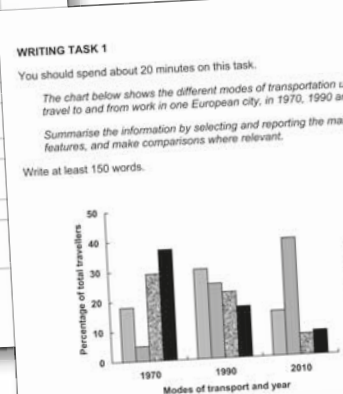
The airline then asks for **24**, and candidates are required to undergo a medical check.

If there is no immediate need for flight attendants, successful candidates are put into a **25**

When the need arises, these candidates will then be given a **26**, after which they may be offered a job.

On starting the job, a five-week training programme is provided which includes how to look after passengers and what to do in an emergency.

General Training Reading example task



Academic Writing example task

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, summarise 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

In Task 2, candidates are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. The essay can be slightly more personal in style than the Academic Writing Task 2 essay

Topics are of general interest

Skills assessed: In both tasks, candidates are assessed on their ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of content, the organisation 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 organise, 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

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 turn (3-4 minutes)

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 organising ideas coherently; and the ability to express and justify opinions 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

Example Part 2 task

Candidate task card:

Describe a teacher who has greatly influenced you in your education.

You should say:

- where you met them
- what subject they taught
- what was special about them

and explain why this person influenced you so much.

You will have to talk about the topic for 1 to 2 minutes.

You have 1 minute to think about what you are going to say.

You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

Example Part 3 (extract)

Let's consider first of all animals and conservation ...

- In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of keeping animals in zoos? Why?
- Apart from keeping animals in zoos, how do you think humans can protect animals from extinction?
- Some people think that governments should spend more money on helping human beings rather than trying to protect animals? Do you agree? Why?

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You are interested in doing a computer course at your local college. Write a letter to the college. In your letter

- explain why you want to do this course
- give information about your educational background and computer skills
- ask some questions about the course

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Speaking example task

General Training Writing example task

The 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 answers 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 text.

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.

Special Requirements

In order to ensure that the language ability of all candidates is assessed fairly and objectively, IELTS provides a comprehensive service for candidates who have special requirements, including specific learning difficulties, hearing difficulties and visual difficulties.

If you require a modified version of the test, for example in Braille, you must give the test centre three months' notice. This notice period is necessary for the modified test version to be prepared. If your circumstances require only special administrative arrangements to be made, such as extra time, you must give the test centre six weeks' notice. Please contact your test centre to discuss your requirements.

Pencil must be used to complete the answer sheet

Write your candidate number in the boxes indicated and shade the corresponding boxes

Write your
name in capital
letters

Shade the boxes  to indicate the best date

Write your answers in the boxes

if you want
to change an
answer, erase
or cross out the
original answer
and write in the
new answer

Do not write anything in the //X columns

Write your language code in the boxes indicated and shade the corresponding boxes. (Your language code will be written on your desk label)

Write your
name in capital
letters

Write your candidate number

Shade a box
to indicate your
gender

Shade a box to indicate which module you are taking

IELTS – your five steps to success

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1. Enquiry

Contact your nearest IELTS test centre to ask for an application form and find out about available test dates and fees. Contact details for all IELTS test centres worldwide can be found at www.ielts.org. You can also download the application form from the IELTS website.

2. Registration

Read through all the information you receive with the application form carefully. Fill in the application form and either send it or take it to your test centre. You will need to enclose the test fee and two identical passport-sized colour photographs (not more than 6 months old).

Make sure you enter the number of your identity document (your passport or national identity card) on the application form. You will also need to attach a photocopy of your identity document to the application form. The document must be valid at the time of registration and on the day of the test.

3. Confirmation

The test centre will give you written confirmation of the date and time of the test. If your Speaking test is on a different day, the centre will also confirm this.

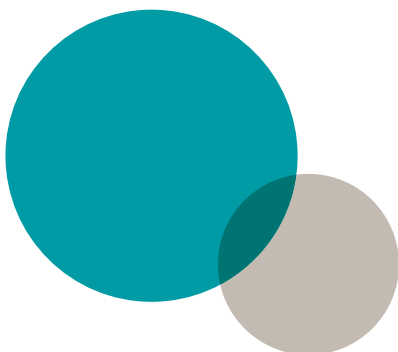
4. Test day

Your identity will be checked on the day of the test and before the Speaking test. You must present the same identity document that you used when you registered for the test. Your photograph may be taken as an additional security measure. A member of the test centre staff will tell you where and when to go for the test. You will be assigned a desk with a label showing your name.

5. Results

Results will be issued 13 days after the test. At some test centres candidates can collect their results on the 13th day; at other test centres results are mailed to candidates on the 13th day. Test centres are not permitted to give results out over the phone or by fax or email.

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IELTS is jointly managed by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL). The IELTS test is designed and set by some of the world's leading experts in language assessment to give a true picture of a candidate's language skills.

IELTS is accredited by OFQUAL, the government's regulator for examinations in England, and by its counterparts in Wales and Northern Ireland.

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