

ROAD TO IELTS

IELTS preparation and practice

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The basics

The Writing test lasts an hour and is in two parts:

Task 2 is the same for both IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training: you will be asked to write a short essay (min. 250 words) in response to a point of view, a problem or an argument.

Task 1 (min. 150 words) is different:

- **Academic:** you will interpret and describe information in a chart, diagram, table or graph.
- **General Training:** you will write a letter in response to an everyday situation or problem, e.g. looking after someone's house while they are away on holiday.

Background preparation

In order to prepare effectively, you should first look at the marking criteria.

This is what the examiner is looking for:

- ✓ Have you fulfilled the requirements of the task? Is your answer relevant, appropriate and accurate?
- ✓ Can you develop an argument and support your ideas with evidence?
- ✓ Do you express your ideas clearly, e.g. with good organisation and signpost words?
- ✓ Is your vocabulary appropriate, varied and accurate?
- ✓ Is your grammar varied and accurate?

Use these criteria to identify your weak areas. How do you do this? Find some essays you have written in the past. Read through each one five times - each time you read, focus on one of the marking criteria above.

When you have finished you should have a clear idea of your strengths and weaknesses. Focus on improving your performance in your weak areas.

Four

tips for your Writing test



- ✓ Do write in paragraphs. Focus on one idea in each paragraph and introduce it with a topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph should explain, expand on, support or illustrate the idea.
- ✓ Similarly, in Task 2, make sure that you structure your essay with an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The introduction should not be too long, and the conclusion should be a summary of the key points and your final viewpoint.
- ✓ Don't simply copy words from the question paper. Use your own words to paraphrase the question, and make sure you demonstrate the breadth of your vocabulary.
- ✓ Don't use bullet points or note form: you need to write in complete sentences.

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Writing

In the writing test, effective time management is the key to achieving your best possible band score.

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to get the band score you need.

In the test room

1 Remember that Task 2 is worth twice as much as Task 1, so you should spend 20 minutes on Task 1 and 40 minutes on Task 2. Be disciplined: spending too much time on Task 1 is the easiest way to lose marks.

2 You need to manage the time allocated to each Task. Divide the time between planning, writing and reviewing. With the clock ticking, it's tempting to start writing immediately, but without planning, you can't produce a well-structured answer and you can't write continuously and confidently because you have to keep stopping and thinking of what you want to say next. When you've finished you need time to count your words and to check spelling, grammar and punctuation - proof reading your work is an easy and effective way of boosting your band score.



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