

# ROAD TO IELTS

IELTS preparation and practice

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## Issue 6

### Preparing for IELTS

Here are four ideas for you to prepare for the IELTS test.

"I have three weeks to prepare for IELTS. How can I get the band score I need?"

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to get the band score you need.

#### 1 Make sure you understand the IELTS test

Do you know what you have to do in each of the four tests: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening? Understanding the task types is the first critical step on the road to the band score you need.

The proof? An analysis of 130,000 British Council IELTS candidates showed that those who practised the most with Road to IELTS improved their performance by up to 64%. This does not mean that their English improved 64%. It means that because they understood the questions much better they were able to perform much better and achieved much better scores.

There are lots of IELTS online resources and books available. We would recommend Road to IELTS, the official British Council preparation resource.

#### 3 Clarify your objectives

You will not significantly change your overall level of English in three weeks. But you can make a big difference in specific areas. For example, you could work on:

- Paragraphs and topic sentences to help you to structure your Writing Task 2
- Backing up your statements with reasons in the Speaking test
- Proof reading to eliminate errors (and therefore save marks) in the Reading, Listening and Writing tests
- Predicting topics, words and phrases in the Listening test by looking at past papers. This will make listening easier on test day. (Three past papers for each of the Listening, Reading and Writing tests are available in Road to IELTS.)

#### 2 Analyse your strengths and weaknesses

You have a limited amount of time to prepare for the IELTS test. You need to spend that time where it will have the greatest benefit. So if you are good at speaking, but less good at writing, you should focus your time on improving your writing. This seems obvious, but research shows that students often practise the skills they are already good at. It's easier!

You probably have an idea of your strengths and weaknesses, but to be sure:

- Talk to your English teacher (if you have one)
- Try some practice tests and compare the band scores you achieve in each module
- Practise on Road to IELTS which has a function enabling you to compare your scores with hundreds of thousands of other people using it online.
- For Speaking and Writing, find out what the examiner is looking for. (See the relevant IELTSpractice.com info sheets in this series.) Then audit your abilities against these criteria.

#### 4 Organise and schedule your time

Let's say you have three weeks to study before your test. There are other things you need to do in that time: you will sleep and eat; you may need to cook, work, exercise. Calculate how much time you actually have, and when it is.

Perhaps you have just two hours per day to study - it certainly won't be as much as you think! You should allocate this time based on your strengths and weaknesses as described above. Before you even start studying, make a schedule where you allocate time to Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. If possible, be more specific:

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♥ Good luck at your IELTS test!