

PREPARATION
IELTS
assistant



IELTS TIPS AND SECRETS
YOU WISH YOU FOUND EARLIER

INTRODUCTION TO IELTS

VIRTUAL EDUCATION



All our students can be divided into **2 groups**:

- Some of them need to take IELTS and get a certificate, but **they don't know what to start from and what steps to take.**
- Others have taken IELTS before or have already started their preparation for the test, but **look for some useful tips and secrets to make their preparation more efficient and get the desired band as quickly as possible.**

If you are taking your first steps in IELTS preparation, 'Introduction to IELTS' will help you understand what IELTS is all about. If you've been preparing for the test for some time or have taken it before, read this section to make sure that you are doing everything right and that you've taken all the necessary steps. Unlike the information in the other e-books with IELTS tips that we've created so far, the information that you will find here is not unique. But we couldn't just omit it and say 'Well, this information is available online. Find it yourself'. No. We wanted to give you a complete guide because we don't want you to waste your time looking for the information elsewhere.

To sum up, we strongly recommend to read this section even if you think that you know all basic information about the IELTS test.

#1 IELTS TEST FORMAT

Important Information About the Test:

- The IELTS test assesses your abilities in listening, reading, writing and speaking.
- There are two types of the IELTS test: IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training.
- Listening and Speaking are the same for both tests, Reading and Writing differ depending on which test you take.
- The Listening, Reading and Writing components of all IELTS tests are completed on the same day.
- The Speaking component can be completed up to a week before or after the other tests.
- The test will take about 3 hours.

IELTS TEST FORMAT:

Listening

- appr. 30 minutes + 10 minutes (to transfer your answers to the answer sheet)
- 4 sections (conversations + monologues)
- 40 questions
- each recording is played once only

Academic Reading

- 60 minutes (no extra time for the transfer of answers)
- 3 sections (3 long reading passages)
- 40 questions

General Training Reading

- 60 minutes (no extra time for the transfer of answers)
- 3 sections (several short texts + 1 long reading passage)
- 40 questions

Academic Writing

- 60 minutes
- 2 tasks: Task 1 (describe a graph or diagram; appr. 20 minutes; at least 150 words) and Task 2 (write an essay; appr. 40 minutes; at least 250 words)
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General Training Writing

- 60 minutes 2 tasks: Task 1 (write a letter; appr. 20 minutes; at least 150 words) and Task 2 (write an essay; appr. 40 minutes; at least 250 words)

Speaking

- appr. 11-14 minutes
- 3 parts:
 - Part 1 (general questions on familiar topics; 4-5 minutes; 9-10 questions; 15-20 seconds per answer)
 - Part 2 (individual long turn; 1 minute to prepare; 2 minutes to speak)
 - Part 3 (further questions about the topic in Part 2; 4-5 minutes; 5-6 questions; appr. 40-60 seconds per answer)

#2 HOW IELTS IS SCORED

IELTS results are reported as band scores on a scale from 1 (the lowest result) to 9 (the highest result). You get a band score for each test component. These individual scores are then averaged to produce an overall band score.

Example:

Listening: 7.0

Reading 7.0

Writing: 6.0

Speaking: 6.0

$(7 + 7 + 6 + 6) / 4 = 6.5$

Your overall score will be 6.5

In some cases the average of the 4 components will be rounded to the nearest whole or half band.

Example 1:

Listening: 7.0

Reading 6.0

Writing: 6.0

Speaking: 6.0

$(7 + 6 + 6 + 6) / 4 = 6.125$ (This score is rounded to 6.0)

Your overall score will be 6.0

Example 2:

Listening: 7.0

Reading 7.0

Writing: 7.0

Speaking: 6.0

$(7 + 7 + 7 + 6) / 4 = 6.75$ (This score is rounded to 7.0)

Your overall score will be 7.0

IELTS READING AND LISTENING

IELTS listening and reading tests have 40 questions each. You get 1 point for 1 correct answer. After that these scores are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale.

IELTS Listening and IELTS Academic Reading are graded on the following scale.

Band 2.5 - 3 correct answers
Band 3.0 - 4-6 correct answers
Band 3.5 - 7-9 correct answers
Band 4.0 - 10-12 correct answers
Band 4.5 - 13-15 correct answers
Band 5.0 - 16-19 correct answers
Band 5.5 - 20-22 correct answers
Band 6.0 - 23-26 correct answers
Band 6.5 - 27-29 correct answers
Band 7.0 - 30-32 correct answers
Band 7.5 - 33-34 correct answers
Band 8.0 - 35-36 correct answers
Band 8.5 - 37-38 correct answers
Band 9.0 - 39-40 correct answers

IELTS General Training Reading is graded on the following scale:

Band 2.5 - 5-7 correct answers
Band 3.0 - 8-11 correct answers
Band 3.5 - 12-14 correct answers
Band 4.0 - 15-18 correct answers
Band 4.5 - 19-22 correct answers
Band 5.0 - 23-26 correct answers
Band 5.5 - 27-29 correct answers
Band 6.0 - 30-31 correct answers
Band 6.5 - 32-33 correct answers
Band 7.0 - 34-35 correct answers
Band 7.5 - 36-37 correct answers
Band 8.0 - 38 correct answers
Band 8.5 - 39 correct answers
Band 9.0 - 40 correct answers

Note:

The number of correct answers needed for each band can change depending on the difficulty of each test. If you have a difficult test, it may be enough to have 22 correct answers to get band 6. If the test is relatively easy, you won't get band 7 even if you have 30 correct answers. However, you will not be told whether your test is considered difficult or not. This information is strictly confidential.

We would recommend you to use the following IELTS Band Score calculator.
<http://ielts.calculator.free.fr/> In our opinion, this is the most reliable calculator of all.

IELTS WRITING

At first, examiners give a separate grade for each, Task 1 and Task 2, using the band descriptors. When grading each task, examiners award a band score (from 1 to 9) for each of the four criteria:
 Task Achievement (for Task 1), Task Response (for Task 2)
 Coherence and Cohesion
 Lexical Resource
 Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Each criterion accounts for 25% of your mark for each essay. Follow the links below and have a look at the IELTS writing band descriptors.

Task 1: <https://bit.ly/2IG64fy>

Task 2: <https://bit.ly/2kiSC3s>

Then IELTS examiners use a Writing Test Score Sheet that blends the score for the Task 1 with the score for the Task 2 to give your final Writing Test score. As you can see, the Task 2 has a bigger impact on your final writing score.

WRITING TEST SCORE SHEET

Task 2
→

	0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0
0	0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.0
0.5	0	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0
1.0	0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0
1.5	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	6.5
2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0
2.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0
3.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	7.0
3.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.0
4.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0
4.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	7.5
5.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0
5.5	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0
6.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.5	8.0
6.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	8.0
7.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.0
7.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	8.5
8.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0
8.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0
9.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.5	9.0

↑ Task 1

IELTS SPEAKING

When marking your speaking performance, examiners award a band score (from 1 to 9) for each of the four criteria:

- Fluency and Coherence
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy
- Pronunciation

Each criterion accounts for 25% of your speaking score. Follow the link below to have a look at the IELTS speaking band descriptors.

IELTS speaking band descriptors: <https://bit.ly/2N2uDCb>

#3 WHAT TO START FROM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Before you start preparation, you need to:

1. find out whether you need IELTS Academic or General Training (it depends on your visa); find out whether you need IELTS UKVI or standard IELTS
2. find out what band score you need for your visa and find out which of the following conditions is more important in your case, an overall band score, sub-scores, or both. For example, IELTS Academic with an overall minimum score of 6.0 (with no single test score below 5.5)
3. familiarise yourself with the test format (read the information above)

RETURN TO YOUR STEP-BY-STEP PLAN AND TAKE STEP 2

#4 HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE YOU TO GET FULLY PREPARED FOR THE IELTS TEST?

In planning your IELTS prep, you probably want to know how long you need to study. Is it weeks or months? Is it dozens of hours or hundreds? The answer to these questions depends on a variety of factors, including your target score, your mock test results and the amount of time you can dedicate to studying.

Let's imagine that your target band in IELTS listening is a 7. It's 30-32 correct answers. If you want to have a guaranteed result, you should book the test only when you regularly get band 7.0 or higher during your mock tests. If you get 28-29 correct answers, you may expect to get Band 7.0 in your real IELTS test. But it's risky. If your target band is 7.0, and your result now is 5.0, I'm afraid you have little chance of achieving the desired result in a month, especially in IELTS writing. In this case, if you decide to take the test, you will just waste your money. And remember that every attempt to take the test costs more than \$200. As you see, it is very important to get fully-prepared for the test before booking a test.

How much time does it take to increase the IELTS band score?

On average, it takes people 2-6 months of hard work to achieve the desired band score.

If you start from band score 3.5-4.5...

- If your mock test result is band 3.5-4.5, you will need about 6-8 months of hard work in order to get band 5.0-6.0.
- If your mock test result is band 3.5-4.5, and you need to get band 6.5-7.0, get ready to work for a few years.
- If your current result is band 3.5-4.5, and you need to get band 8.0, look for other ways to move abroad or choose another visa or you will have to spend half of your life on achieving this band score.

If you start from band score 5.0-5.5...

The majority of our students start from band score 5.0-5.5 There are 2 cases. Some people have good knowledge of English, but they still get low band scores in their mock test (usually 5.0-5.5). Why does this happen? The problem is that they don't know the test format, some important rules of writing essays, or strategies of dealing with IELTS questions. For example, they hear everything almost word for word, catch correct answers, but make spelling mistakes. These people may see significant improvements even after a few weeks of studying. For example, they can improve their band score by 0,5 - 1 for a few lessons and 1-2 for 1 or 2 months. Some people don't know English well. So, they shouldn't expect to get results fast. It is very important to have a realistic study plan and realistic expectations.

- It normally takes about 1-2 months to get band 6.0.
- If you need band 7.0 overall, you should allow about 2 months if you know English well, but don't know how to deal with IELTS test tasks effectively. If minimum required scores in the IELTS are an overall score of 7, with sub scores of 7 each, you should allow at least 6-12 months.
- We're afraid that getting band 8.0 is an unlikely occurrence in the near future, or you may spend half of your life on it.

If you start from band score 6.0-6.5...

If your mock test result is band 6.0-6.5, you can expect to get 6.5-7.5 in 1-3 months. Some of our students even get band 8 quite fast.

Is it possible to get band 9?

Some people claim that their target is band 9. Of course, band 9 overall score is achievable. However, we strongly doubt that even a person who got 8.5 can get band 9 within a month or two at the first attempt. When people write that their current result is band 5, their target is band 9.0 and the test date is in 2 months, we think that either people don't understand what band 9.0 is or they are just kidding. We have never heard of any organizations that require band 9.0. Even if you want to study in Harvard, you need the IELTS band score of 7. The most important thing is to have realistic goals and expectations.

We hope that now you understand how much time you need to get the desired score. The ideal scenario is when you have as much time as you need to get it. If you need help, feel free to contact us!

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